

Parkway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101437
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	323461
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	240
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	51
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Rice
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Andrews
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Alsike Road Erith DA18 4DP
Telephone number	020 8310 0176
Fax number	020 8311 9799

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Parkway is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost two thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is much higher than average, as is the proportion that has English as an additional language. The largest groups are from White British, Black or Black British African backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Their needs relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, dyslexia, or moderate learning difficulties. There are 82 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including 52 who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. The rest are organised into one Reception class. The school has the Healthy School and Sportsmark awards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is a happy working community that successfully includes families from many backgrounds. There is a good ethos, in which all pupils feel valued and included. The school provides good pastoral care for its pupils and this contributes effectively to their good personal development and well-being, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors were very impressed with pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to express how much they liked their school and enjoyed their learning. Pupils behave very well and feel very safe. Most parents are supportive of the school. One wrote, 'My child is happy and enjoys her learning very much.'

Since the last inspection, the work of the school has been disrupted by over two years of turbulence due to staffing difficulties at senior level. The good leadership of the headteacher, supported well by a teacher in an acting deputy role, has successfully maintained the strong focus on ensuring pupils' good personal development and well-being. The difficulties, however, have meant that the pace of improvement in tackling all the issues from the last inspection has not been as rapid as the school would have liked. Standards vary year on year, and are broadly average or below average. Pupils are currently on track to attain standards that are below average overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Given their starting points, achievement is satisfactory.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong team, which is driving the school forward and beginning to accelerate the pace of improvement. A key focus for their work is to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which are satisfactory. There is some good teaching, but not enough of it to ensure that all pupils make consistent progress in every year group. Recent improvements are evident because of tighter monitoring and effective guidance and support from skilled and experienced senior staff. Teachers do not always make the most of pupils' good personal skills by providing enough opportunities for them to work collaboratively. This sometimes slows the pace of learning. There are some examples of effective marking that informs pupils of where they are and gives helpful points for improvement. This is inconsistent across the school, and some pupils do not always have clear targets for their learning or enough information to know how they can do better.

Relationships between children and adults are good. Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem, and adults successfully encourage pupils to raise their often low expectations and aspirations. These factors contribute well to their good personal development and well-being. As a reflection of pupils' positive views, attendance has improved over time and is average. There are good partnerships with other schools and organisations, which very successfully support pupils' well-being and achievement. Pupils have a heightened awareness of environmental issues. Their work has been acknowledged in the local authority and beyond. They have come first in several competitions, most recently winning a top award for the 'Green Primary School.' The school council has a real voice in the school and is proud of its contribution to school life, such as establishing playground rules. Pupils relish their responsibilities and take them very seriously. They say they would like more.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved, and they work well together to tackle weaknesses. Community cohesion is satisfactory because the school works effectively with its parents and partners in the local community. One parent wrote, 'The school is very

good in working with parents and listening to their opinions.' The school develops pupils' understanding and awareness of global issues satisfactorily through its charity work. Pupils learn about diversity, for example through their work with other cluster schools to raise money to support a quadriplegic sailor's attempt to sail solo around Great Britain, a journey which they tracked through her website. Governors support the school satisfactorily. Several subject leaders and key staff are new to their posts, and their role is developing. They have made a good start, but there has not been enough time to see the full impact of their work on pupils' achievement. Leaders recognise that teaching and learning need to be better and more consistent across the school if they are to more rapidly raise standards. There is satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start school with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their ages. Skills in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development are often well below expectations. Given these starting points, their achievement is satisfactory and they make steady progress, although standards remain below expectations when they start in Year 1. All children are welcomed warmly each morning, good links are established with their parents, and children are well looked after.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Activities are provided that interest and challenge the children. Their attention is quickly secured and maintained through the introduction and use of interesting resources. Where teaching is most effective, teachers and support staff intervene effectively to encourage the development of children's language and number skills at every opportunity. This is not always the case however, and the effectiveness of adults' intervention is too variable. Teachers' planning does not consistently show clearly enough the learning intended in each activity.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is planned to provide useful links between different areas of learning. There is a good link between learning inside the classroom and in the outdoor activity area. Children experience a balance of activities led by adults and those where they can make their own choices. The use of assessment data to track progress is just being developed, and this is beginning to be applied to ensure a smoother transition to Year 1. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new leader has made a good start, but procedures for monitoring and evaluation are still being developed. The school has correctly identified that there is scope to establish greater consistency in procedures and practices between the Nursery and Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement by improving teaching, so that it is consistently good or better in all classes and provides pupils with more opportunities to use their good personal skills to collaborate and improve the pace of their learning.
- Ensure that pupils know their targets, how to achieve them, and what the next steps are.
- Develop the role of some senior leaders and subject leaders to increase their impact and the pace of school improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily. They are on course to reach their realistic targets by the end of Year 6. Standards across the school have varied over the last few years between average and below average. Standards in Year 2 were below average in 2008 and they are on track to improve, but remain below average in 2009. However, the proportion of pupils who are on track to reach the higher Level 3 has increased considerably and is above average. This is particularly evident in writing and mathematics, which have been targets for improvement. The current Year 6 group is also on track to reach standards that are below average. The proportion on track to reach the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics is closer to average. The targets for this group are satisfactorily challenging, considering the below average levels which were achieved when they were in Year 2. Across the school, pupils make the best progress in reading because of the high priority given to this area. A renewed focus on raising standards in mathematics is paying off as pupils are making better progress, although there is still some way to go to reach average levels. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties, including those with moderate learning and speech, language and communication difficulties, make progress similar to that of others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are thoughtful and considerate towards each other. They say that they feel safe and secure and that, although there is no bullying, they are confident that adults would deal with it effectively if it occurred. One pupil said that they like their teachers because 'they listen to you and respect you'. They appreciate social and cultural differences and, as a result, work and play together well. The work the school has done to achieve the Healthy School and Sportsmark awards means that pupils are very aware of living healthy lifestyles through eating a balanced diet, and take plenty of exercise both in physical education lessons and after-school clubs. Pupils contribute well to the local and wider communities and participate in events and charity fund-raising activities. Pupils' good personal skills, and the progress they make in gaining in basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils make sound progress. While some of the teaching is good, this is not consistent across the school. In the best lessons, pupils are very clear about what they need to learn. Teachers maintain a brisk pace and ask challenging questions based on their good understanding of what pupils need to learn next. Good use of information and communication technology captures pupils' interest and extends their learning. For example, in a successful literacy lesson in Year 4, pupils made good use of cameras and recording equipment to capture their thoughts and ideas. Positive relationships and pupils' good behaviour help to ensure that lessons are well organised and run smoothly. Teaching assistants make sure that pupils who need extra help get it. Improvements to planning are helping to ensure that pupils make the progress expected of them, but inconsistencies remain. For example, there are

too few opportunities for collaborative, investigative work, and this slows the pace of learning in some classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum places clear emphasis on improving English and mathematics. There is still more to do to make learning more meaningful and purposeful. Plans are underway to provide stronger links between different subjects, giving pupils opportunities to apply their basic skills across the curriculum. A good range of extra activities enriches pupils' personal development. Pupils value the range of after-school clubs where they can, for example, participate in sporting activities or learn new skills such as gardening. Pupils in the gardening club are very proud of the fact that the school uses the vegetables that they grow in school lunches. Recycling and the reduction of waste are encouraged effectively. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music and French. There is scope to increase the range of termly visits out of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of its pupils. The school's caring ethos means that they are valued as individuals and thrive, growing in confidence. Pupils' social, emotional and pastoral needs are given a high priority. As a result, they enjoy learning and playing in the school's supportive atmosphere. There are good procedures to keep pupils safe and secure, and pupils report that they can approach an adult if they have concerns. Appropriate steps are taken to check on the suitability of adults to work with children. Risk assessments are carefully carried out to ensure safety in and out of school. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Improved procedures to assess and track pupils' progress are starting to ensure that those who find learning difficult get the support they need. Some pupils know the targets they are set for their learning, although inconsistencies in marking mean that pupils often lack awareness of the precise details of how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good strategic leadership, and set a clear direction for the school that is focused on raising standards. Although teaching remains satisfactory as it was in the last inspection, leaders and managers have improved the proportion of satisfactory or better teaching, resulting in better progress for some pupils. Rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress have been established, which are used effectively by leaders to identify pupils who need extra support. Subject leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, and some new senior leaders, have made a good start and make a satisfactory contribution to school improvement, although it is too soon to fully assess the impact of their work on standards and achievement. Governance is satisfactory, and the governing body is developing its programme of visits to help to hold the school to account for its performance. Governors supported the school well through a period of instability at senior management level.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkway Primary School, Erith, DA18 4DP

I am writing to thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us about your work and telling us what you think about your school. Your school is satisfactory, which means that you learn new things steadily, but that there is still more to do to make the school even better.

These are the things that are best about your school.

- You enjoy coming to school, and get on very well with each other and all of the staff.
- Your behaviour is good, which helps you to learn.
- You know how to stay healthy and safe, and you look after each other at work and play.
- Everyone in the school cares for you very well.
- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher do a good job in running the school.
- You care about the environment through your recycling work.

We want the school to work on the following important things:

- helping you to do better in English and mathematics
- making sure that all of you know your targets for learning, and that when teachers mark your work they give you helpful information about how you can improve
- continuing to make sure that the school improves as quickly as possible, which we have asked the staff who have special responsibilities in your school to do.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly and interesting to talk to.

My very best wishes to you all for the future.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector