

Park Lane Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101509
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	323470
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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)	305
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carole Bevis-Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Jean Gordon-Reynolds
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Park Lane Wembley HA9 7RY
Telephone number	020 8902 5006
Fax number	020 8903 7939

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This primary school is located in an urban area of Wembley and has recently grown to accommodate additional pupils from the area, so that it is larger than average. The very large majority of pupils represent a rich diversity of minority ethnic groups, and there are many languages spoken. There are a large number of pupils from families with refugee status. A far higher proportion of pupils than is found elsewhere are at an early stage of learning English. Slightly over double the national average of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Compared with the national average, there is a high proportion of pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Of these, the majority have moderate learning difficulties, with a small minority having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A few pupils have speech, language and learning difficulties. The school has achieved the Activemark.

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. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to instil a positive ethos and good attitudes to learning so that - with the exception of writing, particularly at Key Stage 2 - pupils make satisfactory progress overall. As the school has recognised, teaching has improved, although there are still inconsistencies to be resolved. The school is improving, a view also recognised by parents, as shown by the comment, 'The new headteacher and the teachers, and the whole of the staff team are working really hard...so much improvement has been done in the school.'

The school is popular in the local community, and pupils are welcoming and polite, and show great empathy for the different cultures represented in the school. This diversity is celebrated in the school, and pupils get along well. They know the main requirements of living a healthy life and staying safe, although not all of them are confident about making such choices for themselves yet. They are lively during free time, and the school ensures that there is a good range of activities and resources to help them focus their energy in a positive way. Although carefully managed by the staff, a few children let themselves down through over-boisterous behaviour.

Children start school with skills that are well below those typical for their ages. Many face considerable challenges in their lives, and obstacles to their learning. The school helps them to overcome these barriers, and they make satisfactory progress. Strategies that have been put in place are proving effective, so that standards are rising and are now broadly average. However, standards in writing are below average by the end of Year 6, because there has been an inconsistent approach in the past, and pupils are not clear about how to construct more complex text, for example, appropriate to the higher levels. The school recognises that this needs to be tackled in order to ensure that standards continue to rise. The school is well on its way to achieving the challenging targets it set itself for this year.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most pupils are keen to learn because of the good relationships between adults and pupils. While the proportion of good or better lessons is increasing, inconsistencies remain, and this slows pupils' progress. Teachers' marking is inconsistent across classes, so pupils do not always receive a clear message about how they can improve their work. In some lessons, the learning is not always as effective as it should be because of the poor behaviour of a few pupils. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties, as well as those with speech, language and learning difficulties, achieve well - better than other pupils. This is a result of very good support by the teaching assistants, and has come about through the use of careful planning that incorporates intervention programmes, including support from other partners and specialists. Those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, like other pupils, make satisfactory progress.

The satisfactory curriculum gives pupils appropriate opportunities, with a helpful emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. The new approach of planning around topics is helping to make the curriculum more relevant to pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Senior leaders provide strong direction for the school. They monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively to bring about improved achievement for pupils. Many subject and middle leaders are new to their roles and are not yet confident in identifying needs and putting in place appropriate strategies. However, their determination to make the most of professional

development, alongside the clear vision of senior leaders, means that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are given a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school works closely with parents and carers to help children, including those who speak little English, to settle quickly and happily into school. They soon become familiar with school routines. All areas of learning are carefully planned, and the children's development is carefully observed and recorded. This enables teachers to set appropriately challenging work. Children make good progress in their communication skills, because there is a clear emphasis on developing speaking and listening, and the teaching of letters and sounds is good. Children look forward to school each day, demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, and build trusting and caring relationships with adults and with each other. Consequently, children feel happy, safe and secure. Children are taught to pay attention to their own and others' safety, and they learn to share and take turns. They very much enjoy the chance to be independent and exercise choice in their learning. The adults use their knowledge and skills well to provide valuable learning opportunities, both inside the classroom and out of doors. Children's progress is tracked systematically to ensure that individual learning and development needs are thoroughly met. Strategies to involve parents in supporting their children's progress are a strength. While the school waits for the newly appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader to take up her post, the headteacher has secure oversight of the provision for all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly at Key Stage 2, by improving writing across the school.
- Improve teachers' marking and the use of targets, so that pupils know how to improve their work and take the next steps in their learning.
- Develop the role of the middle leaders, so that they are effective in monitoring and leading improvements.

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

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress, and this continues through Key Stage 1, where they reach standards which are broadly average. In particular, standards in mathematics have improved because the school has had a focus on providing a range of mental strategies. At Key Stage 2, most pupils reach standards which are broadly average. In the 2008 tests, at the end of Year 6 standards overall were well below average, as the number of pupils joining the school in the last couple of years was high, and many of these were at the earliest stages of learning English. Although the pupils reached standards that were well below average, this constitutes good progress, and, for some, quite exceptional progress in relation to their low starting points. In the work seen during the inspection, and recent data for the current Year 6 pupils, standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. National test results show that across Key

Stages 1 and 2, the majority of pupils from ethnic minority groups reached higher standards than similar groups nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils like school and feel safe, and really enjoy learning. They are friendly and engage willingly in conversation. The vast majority behave well in most lessons, and they know what is expected of them. However, some need adult supervision to remind them of how to behave, particularly at break times, and the school have ensured that these adults are well trained, for example, to help pupils participate in active games. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, because they are thoughtful and proud of their diversity. Pupils are keen to learn about the customs and values of others. They appreciate the different faiths represented in the school, and they show respect and kindness to each other; they are happy to contribute to and participate in assemblies, which are sensitively presented. These factors contribute to their good personal development. They have a developing understanding of how to lead a healthy life and of what makes a healthy meal. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility through membership of the school council, becoming Year 6 prefects and acting as playground monitors. However, their role in improving the school is yet to be fully developed. Pupils' attendance is now satisfactory, due to the effective strategies that the school has put in place. Their adequate grasp of basic skills gives a satisfactory platform for success in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Strategies to improve teaching, such as the use of different tasks appropriate to different groups of pupils, are beginning to have an impact. Learning is only satisfactory at present, because learners are not always sufficiently independent to make the most of their opportunities. The school's tracking system is being developed into a useful tool to help ensure that work is matched accurately to pupils' widely varying needs. In the best lessons, teaching is brisk, lively and confident. In other lessons, the behaviour of a few pupils can disrupt learning; the pace slows as the teachers manage this. The good use of interactive whiteboards helps to provide engaging lessons. Pupils have learning targets, but these are not yet sufficiently embedded to help them to strive for their next stage of learning. Teaching assistants support groups and individuals effectively, and those at an early stage of learning English are exceptionally well supported.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad, balanced, and responsive to local circumstances. It meets national requirements in literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication technology (ICT). There is good curricular provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils at the early stages of learning English benefit from very strong provision that has been recognised nationally. Innovative activities and resources, such as the use of walkie-talkies to promote confidence in speaking, are used, so that these pupils quickly benefit from the rest of the curriculum and develop the personal skills that will enable them to make a good contribution to the community. Planning is not tailored closely enough to the needs of all

pupils. Consequently, teachers do not always prepare work that is sufficiently demanding, of more-able pupils in particular. The curriculum is currently being reviewed to provide more creative links across all subjects, making learning more meaningful for pupils and developing their thinking skills. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs and educational visits, as well as opportunities to use the adjacent park, for example to explore the diversity of nature and observe growth of plants. These activities widen their experience and contribute positively to their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and supported in their personal and social development. Expectations for behaviour are clearly communicated and consistently applied, which is helping pupils to improve their behaviour patterns. The school draws on a wide range of external agencies and support staff to provide well-targeted assistance. This includes the social inclusion worker, who provides additional help to pupils and families with emotional and social difficulties, as well as to those with learning difficulties such as in speech and language. Child protection arrangements are effective, and safeguarding, health and safety requirements are met. The school is developing a good partnership with parents, which is reflected in their generally positive views of the school. Academic guidance has weaknesses. While the school has effective procedures for assessing pupils and tracking their progress, not enough use is made of assessment information to guide and support pupils' learning. For example, pupils are not always sure of their targets or what to do to achieve them. Marking is too often cursory and lacks specific advice on opportunities to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since her appointment a little over a year ago, the headteacher has tackled many significant issues and has moved the school forward. She has a clear vision for the school and is actively distributing leadership and management responsibilities more widely. All energies are focused on raising standards and promoting pupils' achievement. Senior leaders have an increasingly accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. High expectations are set for pupils and teachers; as a result, teaching is improving and the curriculum is being redesigned to maximise enjoyment and enrichment. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have an accurate picture of the school, and are developing their roles to provide challenge alongside their loyal support. Improvements to standards for the current cohort of pupils are reflected in the more effective management of some subjects. For example, the mathematics leader introduced a mathematics scheme, which is already having an impact on the consistency of the teaching and on raising standards. However, more widespread middle leadership is not yet as confident in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, or analysing data. A programme of support is being put in place. Links with parents are becoming stronger, and the school is exploring ways of developing even closer relationships between home and school. Equal opportunities are promoted vigorously, so that all pupils are included fully in what the school offers. The school makes a very significant contribution towards enhancing community cohesion, through its appreciation of all the groups who make up the school community, and its involvement and links with the local and wider communities. For example, the staff provide well-focused learning activities during Black History month, international day and themed weeks such as Carnival.

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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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	2

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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	2
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?	2
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**

02 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Lane Junior and Infant School, Wembley, HA9 7RY

I am writing to thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school. Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. This means that it does some things well, but that there are some things that could be improved.

We enjoyed hearing about the interesting things you do and what you think about your school. Many of you told us that you like your teachers and learning, and that you enjoy going to school and feel happy and safe there. The teachers are working hard to help you know how to learn well.

These are things we liked in your school.

- You cooperate well with each other and your attendance has improved. You deserve a big round of applause for that!
- You get on well with the adults, and there are lots of them who help you in different ways.
- The headteacher is making sure the school is improving.
- You learn a lot about the different communities around you, and value each person, making sure that everyone has the chance to learn well.

We found some things that could be better in your school. We have asked the school to:

- make sure that you do even better in your tests, particularly those of you in Key Stage 2, and especially in writing
- help you know exactly what you need to do to reach the next level of your learning
- develop more leaders to help keep an eye on how well you are doing, and to help make things even better.

You can also help by continuing to behave well and working as hard as you can.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Saunders

Lead Inspector