

Parsonage Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102312
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	323617
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	John Collins

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	424
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	Mr D Seagroat
Headteacher	Mrs P Beaton
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Farm Road Rainham RM13 9JU
Telephone number	01708 555186
Fax number	01708 556025

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The great majority of pupils from this much larger than average-sized primary school are of a White British background. Proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups are lower than usually found, as are those pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not/believed not to be English is much lower than usual. More pupils than normal start and leave the school at times other than usual and this varies considerably between year groups. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage through the two Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is held in high regard by the great majority of its parents. One summed up the feelings of many when writing, 'I regard Parsonage Farm School as the best in the area.' Many parents are particularly pleased with the level of care given to their children and see it as 'a wonderful caring school where children are valued and nurtured to achieve their full potential', as one parent commented. This is an inclusive school where all groups of pupils get on well with each other. The school has sound plans for the development of community cohesion but needs to develop further pupils' understanding of multicultural communities beyond its own immediate experience.

Good assessment and tracking systems are now becoming well established and enabling the school to quickly identify any pupils at risk of underachievement. This enables the school to provide very effective support so that all groups of pupils achieve equally as well as each other. Levels of skills on entry to Reception classes are below expected levels, especially in calculation, language and social skills. In 2008 standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were slightly below average due to the impact of the particularly low levels of skills on entry in calculating and letter/sounds recognition. By the end of Year 6 standards in 2008 were average in English, mathematics and science. From their below average starting points this represents good achievement.

This good progress has been brought about by very good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by an effective and challenging governing body and senior management team. A number of senior managers, who are subject leaders, are new to their posts but are already proving to be effective managers. The school is developing their leadership roles so that they have a stronger impact on raising standards and achievement.

Teaching is good and the well-designed curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with statements of special educational needs. With the additional help of outside agencies when needed, these groups of pupils are able to achieve equally as well as others. The newly introduced schemes of work for English and mathematics are having a positive impact on pupils' performance. The school has plans to extend similar learning opportunities so that all pupils are able to build on the good start being made by younger pupils. The school is aware of the need to make the provision for more-able pupils more effective and already has plans for additional support for them. A managed learning environment has recently been set up and is enhancing greatly the quality of the curriculum, through its impact on homework which is helping to further raise standards in computer skills.

Behaviour is good and is very well managed in classrooms. This promotes a positive learning atmosphere that is appreciated by both pupils and parents. Pupils enjoy coming to school because 'learning here is fun'. They say teachers are helpful and many say marking is good because 'it helps you get better'. Relationships between pupils and all adults are very good, reflecting the strong ethos of inclusion. As one parent put it, 'Children are well cared for and everyone's point of view is taken into account.' Pupils say they feel safe and valued and greatly enjoy the additional responsibilities they undertake, such as the school council and acting as play leaders for the younger children.

The good start children make, good teaching and a developing curriculum, the increasingly effective use of tracking and assessment data, and the drive and vision of the leadership team are strong evidence of its good capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables the great majority of children to make good progress and most are achieving the expected learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Leadership and management are good and monitoring is closely focused on improving achievement. The school had previously identified through its analysis the need to improve reading and writing skills. The very successful introduction of the 'Read Write Inc.' programme is beginning to support children's progress and achievement, particularly in early reading and writing skills. Involvement in the newly adopted whole-school mathematics scheme has been identified as an area to develop.

Relationships are very positive because all adults have outstanding commitment for children's welfare at all times. Children thrive in the safe and caring environment, settle quickly and focus on their play and their work. Parents are extremely positive in their praise of how well their children have settled and are achieving. One said that, 'we are so lucky to be at this school'. Personal development and social skills are promoted very well by the motivation and encouragement children receive. They benefit also from the challenge of explaining their play and work to their peers. They learn to share and work together during their activities. Children are very happy and they place great trust in their teachers. An example of this was seen in the very sensitive way a child was supported over a friendship issue.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by developing the leadership role of subject leaders so they have a clearer focus on raising standards and achievement.
- Expand current planning for community cohesion so that pupils are able to develop a better understanding of multicultural communities beyond their immediate experience.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From below average starting points most pupils reach average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. This represents good achievement, particularly in mathematics and writing where attainment on entry is well below that which is normally expected. The latest school tracking and assessment data shows that by the end of Year 2 current standards are likely to be average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. The impact of the new mathematics scheme, together with the new linked reading and writing scheme, is helping pupils to make good progress, especially in writing. Current monitoring shows that this year standards are similar for Year 6 pupils with average standards in English and mathematics and science. This particular group of pupils has one third of its pupils joining the school later than usual. The school's assessment data, together with lesson observations during the inspection, shows that the majority of pupils continue to make good progress in English, mathematics and science, notably so in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour in lessons is good and often better. This enables lessons to take place in a caring and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils' positive enjoyment of learning also shows in their good attitudes to learning and to each other. Attendance is average and improving. The very good relationships within the school enable pupils to build up a strong sense of caring for each other. Older pupils willingly take on other responsibilities, such as being playground leaders, because they feel they are contributing something to their school community. Pupils are proud of their school and they readily celebrate the success of others as quickly as their own. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Talking to pupils shows they have a well-developed awareness of right and wrong and their fund-raising activities help them build up a sense of caring for others less fortunate than themselves. They understand the importance of keeping fit and healthy through exercise and the healthy food choices promoted by the school meals service.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' high expectations and skilful behaviour management promote a positive learning environment. In the best lessons lively, interesting teaching, such as playing guitar and singing a song about the properties of different shapes, leads pupils to engage strongly with what is being taught. The positive relationships that teachers build with their classes mean that pupils are motivated to please their teachers by working hard. The match of planned activities to the learning needs of different groups is good, enabling all groups to achieve well. The impact of specialist teaching was particularly evident in a French lesson in which the high quality of teaching, together with lively methods used, resulted in the Year 3 pupils attaining standards well above those typically found. Occasionally, when the pace and flow of lessons slows, the overall progress that pupils make is inhibited. There is some variation in the effectiveness of the marking of pupils' written work which reduces the effectiveness of its support for pupils' improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The grouping of pupils by ability in English and mathematics helps to meet learning needs effectively. The curriculum helps pupils understand how to stay safe and lead healthy lives. Through their lesson activities pupils are able to make a good contribution to the local community, for example, through their involvement in the 'Big Tidy Up'. Citizenship studies and activities help to prepare them well for adult life. Recent changes to the curriculum are helping to raise standards. For example, the introduction of a new system for teaching early reading skills has led to better progress in reading and writing. A new mathematics programme is also helping to raise standards. The many trips and visits, such as Year 6's visit to an outdoor centre, significantly enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. The good range of after school clubs adds further depth to their learning, are very popular and are one of the reasons for the success the school enjoys in local sports competitions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has a strong partnership with the great majority of its parents and carers. Both parents and pupils regard the school as a safe and secure place to learn. Child protection procedures, risk assessments and health and safety procedures are robust and contribute strongly to pupils feeling safe. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with statements of special educational needs are well supported in class through the work of the Learning Support Manager and well-trained team of dedicated teaching assistants. Academic guidance is good, but sometimes marking is not effectively used in some classes. The newly introduced systems of assessment are beginning to be established and enabling teachers to track even more successfully how well pupils are doing. It is used well to identify any pupils in need of additional support and this leads to effective and successful interventions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and her drive and vision for the school are notable in all she does. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and the governing body. Governance is very good and the governing body has a very clear vision for the school and its further development. The headteacher has established an extremely clear direction for the school with a determined focus on raising standards. The newly formed senior management team are good and have developed their management roles effectively. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the new senior leaders is developing well. Comprehensive reviews and training are laying the foundations to support their development as curriculum leaders. They are equally enthusiastic and determined to raise achievement and standards. The school knows itself well and has analysed its strengths and weaknesses accurately and honestly. Although planning for community cohesion is satisfactory, senior leaders are aware of the need to expand further to take account of the multicultural communities beyond the school environment.

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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?	2
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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

03 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parsonage Farm Primary School, Rainham, RM13 9JU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. It was very helpful to us. You behaved well and are very polite. The school council and others told us this is a good school and we agree.

Here are some of the things your school does well.

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and senior teachers are doing a good job in running the school and looking after you.
- Read Write Inc. and the new mathematics work are helping to raise your standards in English and mathematics.
- You have good teachers who help to make learning fun so you enjoy your time in school.
- All the adults in the school are good at helping you to grow up to be more mature and responsible.

These are two things your school could do better.

- Help you to reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave school.
- Help you to learn more about the different customs and beliefs of the many different kinds of communities in our country and around the world.

You can help by continuing to try hard in all you do and enjoy your time in school. Remember to ask your teachers if you need help; we are sure they will help you to make even better progress.

Our best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Collins

Lead Inspector