

# Park Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115539
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326217
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Harlow HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anna Creed
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Elm Road Stonehouse GL10 2NP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453 823108
<b>Fax number</b>	01453 823108

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Park Junior School is smaller than the average sized primary school and is situated in Stonehouse, on the outskirts of Stroud. The school shares its access and site with the infant school and there is a children's centre adjacent to the site. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and numbers on roll have been falling in recent years. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has gained Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Award. It has also received Extended School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'Park Junior School is truly a caring community which allows the children to explore and expand their education.' 'It is child-centred with a long standing, committed team of staff.' 'The sense of genuine care and interest in our children's welfare within the school is manifest. This transmits to pupils, creating a lovely atmosphere in which they can thrive.' 'My child has gone from strength to strength.' 'So much is on offer.'

These parental views are a fitting testament to the special ethos at Park Junior. It is indeed a good school where pupils flourish and make good progress. Consequently, standards reached by the end of Year 6 are significantly above the national average overall and have been for several years. Every family really matters at Park Junior and all the adults 'go the extra mile' to ensure the children receive exceptional levels of care. And they do. This contributes significantly to their personal development, which is outstanding. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent because of the school's commitment to ensuring their needs are met. And they are, superbly.

Pupils respond well to the consistently good teaching they receive in all classes. They work hard and with enthusiasm. Every effort is made to provide them with practical, motivating experiences that stimulate their thirst for learning. However, the use of data and assessment information by teachers to check the pupils' progress is not sufficiently well developed. Although pupils' work is marked assiduously, they are not always informed of what they need to do to improve. The school works exceptionally well with the wider community and there is an excellent range of visits and clubs on offer, which the pupils appreciate. Despite the school's relentless efforts over the years to protect children's safety on arrival and departure at school, there are a significant minority of parents who compromise the children's safety when they drop off and collect their children.

Leadership and management are good. Almost all parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The school genuinely welcomes their views and parents find the adults 'very approachable'. All leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and are tackling weaknesses diligently. Nonetheless, the collation of data at a whole-school level on the progress of individual and groups of pupils is also not sufficiently well developed. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and discharge their responsibilities conscientiously. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection. The drive of all at the school to raise standards further ensures that Park Junior has good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the collation of data at a whole-school level and ensure all staff and governors are confident to use it rigorously to track and monitor the pupils' progress across the school.
- Strengthen the use of assessment information to enhance teachers' awareness of pupils' progress in lessons and ensure marking informs the pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well from their starting points, which are generally above the levels expected for their age. They make good progress as they move through the school and attain standards that are significantly above the national average overall by the time they leave. Recently, the school quite rightly identified the need to improve boys' attainment in writing and implemented a range of successful strategies to do so. This resulted in marked improvement in the 2008 test results. Standards at the higher levels are above the national average, particularly in reading and science, but not significantly so. Good plans are in place to improve these further in writing and mathematics. Standards in physical education are above the expected level for pupils of this age group.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The exceptional commitment exhibited by all the adults to pupils' personal development results in them thriving and believing that they can achieve. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their good attendance and punctuality reflect this. They take pride in their school and value the exciting activities on offer such as the imaginative work on the environment, expertly led by the eco council. Because the school places a high importance on developing pupils' self-esteem, and it does so exceptionally well, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils benefit from a wealth of opportunities designed to cultivate these aspects, for example, through thoughtful assemblies on teamwork and respecting the beauty of our world.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils move sensibly around the school and play happily together. Older pupils read stories to the younger pupils enthusiastically at lunchtimes in the attractive library, which is a hive of purposeful activity. Without exception, pupils are quick to stand back and open doors for adults and each other and greet visitors warmly. The pupils feel the teachers know them well and support them. As a result, relationships between children and adults are harmonious, creating a strong ethos of mutual respect.

Pupils feel they have a voice. Most importantly, they say 'it is heard'. All are encouraged to assume responsibility and this helps them to become articulate, confident young people. The school council influences decision making for the better and leads many initiatives such as raising funds to improve the quality of physical education equipment. Pupils show a good responsibility towards the wider community by participating in numerous events and regularly organising fund-raising activities to support charities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and this is recognised through the Healthy School accreditation and the prominence given to physical education and sport. Pupils feel safe and say that there is always someone to help should a problem arise. They report that incidents of bullying are minimal and, if they occur, 'are taken seriously and dealt with promptly'. Pupils are developing good basic skills that prepare them well for their next school and later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Careful planning coupled with excellent support throughout the school ensures that pupils are developing good attitudes to learning. Activities are appropriately matched to pupils' abilities; they are clear about what they are learning, although at times lengthy explanations limit their progress. Staff possess strong subject knowledge and on occasions, such as the teaching of non-fiction writing, use children's work imaginatively to extend their learning. Pupils are competent 'talking partners' and when working in groups, for example, on interesting science investigations, demonstrate high levels of independence. The very effective use of information and communication technology across the school and the highly skilled teaching assistants contribute significantly to the pupils' achievements. Marking does not always inform pupils what they need to do to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Provision for the development of basic skills is good, although the school recognises that pupils' writing, in particular, requires further improvement. Excellent plans are in place to support those pupils who find learning challenging to ensure they achieve. Good links are made across subject areas and the integration of literacy, through the 'learning journeys', and numeracy, into appropriate aspects of the curriculum, is developing well. The curriculum is enriched with a variety of visits and practical experiences such as the trip to Gloucester Cathedral, which brings learning alive for the pupils. Outdoor learning is particularly well developed and the beautifully kept garden and woodland area are a wonderful educational resource. The extensive range of enrichment activities allows pupils to develop their talents and interests, particularly in music, drama and sport. Strong partnerships with local secondary schools are enabling pupils to receive good specialist teaching in French, science and the performing arts.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils' pastoral care is excellent. Support for vulnerable pupils is a real strength of the school and multi-agency working is well developed. The Breakfast Club provides a positive start to the day and there are effective links with the infant school and the After School Club. Supervision of the difficult site access is vigilant. Procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are robust and reviewed regularly. Pupils are clear about their curricular targets for improvement but not all are aware of their expected national curriculum levels. The use of tracking information and data to extend teachers' awareness of pupils' progress in lessons is developing appropriately.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

Exceptionally caring leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by a skilled senior and staff team, is ensuring that the school does not stand still. All possess complementary strengths; discussions are refreshingly honest and based upon a keen desire to get better. All adults receive

effective professional support; as a result, there is an enthusiastic team spirit permeating throughout the school. Although subject leadership is good, there are not enough opportunities for subject leaders to monitor lessons on a regular basis. The school's systems for checking on its improvements are rigorous and leaders at all levels, including governors, are working tirelessly to ensure the recent improvements in standards are maintained. The school works well with the local community and ensures pupils develop an awareness of different localities coupled with an appreciation of global issues. The governors are highly committed, with a range of valuable skills and expertise. They hold the school to account in an appropriate manner.

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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

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	1

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	2
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**

30 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Park Junior School, Stonehouse GL10 2NP

I am writing to say thank you for giving us such a warm welcome during our recent visit to your school. We were impressed with the way you greeted us so confidently with friendly smiles. We enjoyed talking with you about your work, hearing about the interesting things you do and watching you perform a lovely dance with such style. What delightful children you are! Your school is good and often outstanding in many ways. Here are some of the special things that it does very well indeed.

- Your school looks after you exceptionally well and the adults want to do their best for you.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and everyone in the school cares for each other.
- You make good progress in all year groups and achieve good standards by the time you leave, especially in reading.
- Your teachers plan interesting activities for you which help you to enjoy school.
- The school and eco councils take their responsibilities seriously and help to organise exciting activities for you.
- You achieve well in sports, drama, dance and music. We love your garden!
- There are lots of clubs and visits, which you enjoy; your contributions to the local community are terrific.
- Your headteacher and other adults are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be. They value your views and those of your parents and carers in helping them to do this.

You have such a caring headteacher, fantastic adults and committed governors at the school. We have asked them to make the marking of your work even better and to use data more effectively to check how well you are doing. It was a real privilege to visit Park Junior School. Keep up the good work and, most importantly, continue to enjoy your learning.

Best wishes for the future; we hope that you achieve great things!

Yours sincerely

Mrs Harlow

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lead inspector on behalf of the inspection team



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Lead inspector on behalf of the inspection team