

Park Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121280
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327444
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ripley HMI

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	221
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 C Wood
Headteacher	Mr A Calverley
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Park Grove York City of York YO31 8LG
Telephone number	01904 659 727
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the standards and achievement of pupils; the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being; the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage; and the quality of the curriculum. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, plans for further improvement, nationally published assessment data and scrutiny of other documents. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and the school's improvement partner. Questionnaires returned by the parents were considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Park Grove is an average-sized primary school which draws its pupils from quite a wide area in York. A Reception class delivers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. The pupils are mostly of White British heritage, with few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below the national average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has received several awards including Artsmark Gold, Activemark, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, and a Silver Eco-schools Award.

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 with some exemplary features. The value it places on each pupil, the outstanding levels of care and support, and the excellent relationships which the staff and pupils share, lie at the heart of this successful school. Pupils feel safe and happy. They become mature and confident young people who have very positive attitudes to learning and develop the qualities needed to become good citizens. Parents and carers have very positive views about Park Grove. They particularly appreciate the warm welcome they receive, the opportunities provided to attend the weekly 'good work' assemblies and to work alongside their children in the Reception class and throughout Key Stage 1 at the start of each school day. Nevertheless, some parents would welcome more information about what their children are working on and how well they are doing. The school is aware of this and has plans in place to improve communications with parents about children's activities and individual progress.

By the time pupils enter Key Stage 1 the majority are working securely at the expected level for their age, with some working above the expected level. Most pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 1. Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average although they have fallen since the last inspection in 2005. This is because, even taking account of variations between year groups, not enough pupils are attaining at the higher levels particularly in mathematics. Pupils' progress accelerates rapidly throughout Key Stage 2 so that standards reached by pupils when they leave the school in Year 6 are significantly above average and their achievement is good. The school has maintained this level of success at Key Stage 2 for the past five years. In the 2007 national tests for Year 6, all pupils gained the expected level in science and almost all gained the higher Level 5. Most pupils gained the expected level in English and mathematics with well above average numbers of pupils reaching Level 5. Provisional test results for 2008 indicate that attainment at the end of Year 6 continues to be above national expectations in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils receive excellent pastoral care and support and consequently demonstrate outstanding attributes in their personal development and well-being. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour, good levels of attendance and their very positive attitudes to learning and each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very strong. Their understanding of other cultures is good because of the emphasis the school places on ensuring pupils have an appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of the United Kingdom and knowledge of the wider world. Pupils know how to lead healthy lives, participating in a good range of sporting activities. Parents recognise this is a particular strength of the school. Pupils make a very good contribution to the local community through fundraising activities and they appreciate the opportunities they are given to take responsibility and make decisions. They know that their views are listened to and acted on by the school. For example, when the pupils heard that the headteacher was thinking of removing the 'willow maze' the school council presented a petition signed by most of the pupils and made a successful case for keeping it based on ecological issues and how they could help make better use of it. The maze remains a feature of the outside play areas as a result of the pupils' intervention.

Teaching and learning are good overall, and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are interesting and engage pupils well. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson. As a result most pupils make good progress in lessons. Pupils who need more support with their learning are well served by teaching assistants who work very effectively with individuals and groups of pupils. In turn these pupils make similar progress to their peers. Older pupils

understand what their targets are and are clear about the intended learning. Planning is clearly aimed at meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. However, in Key Stage 1 tracking and assessment information is not used rigorously enough to raise standards, accelerate progress and ensure that higher attaining pupils are challenged.

There is a good climate for learning throughout the school. Classrooms are lively and stimulating, providing prompts, reminders and examples of work in progress. Displays of pupils' work are colourful, vibrant and of very high quality. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the creativity this exemplifies throughout the school. The excellent curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. Effective planning of the curriculum enables pupils to cover content and develop skills relevant to their age group. There is an emphasis on the basic skills of English, and mathematics but not at the expense of other subjects and the development of other abilities. Integrating subjects to develop knowledge, skills and understanding is a strength of the school. For instance, activities observed in Key Stage 2 as part of the Greek project included an afternoon of Grecian Olympics, making Greek patterns and pots using a variety of materials from written instructions, creating and recording a musical theme for the Olympics, and writing scripts and recording their own plays about Jason and the Argonauts or Jason and the Golden Fleece. Individual letters and memos written to Zeus about the trouble caused by opening Pandora's box demonstrated good use of English, high standards of written work, strong use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, understanding of right and wrong and in some cases a keen sense of humour. The abundance of high quality art work around the school is testimony to the award of Artsmark Gold which the school has held since 2002. Pupils appreciate the wide range of activities after school and enrichment activities include visits, visitors and a residential visit in Year 6.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is highly visible around the school, knows each pupil individually and has developed a culture in which all contributions are valued. All of the required safeguarding, health and safety and child protection procedures are in place. Staff know the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement well. As a result self-evaluation is accurate, the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed and the quality of provision continues to improve. Governors make a strong contribution, fulfil their responsibilities well and challenge effectively when the need arises. Individual governors effectively contribute valuable expertise, such as ensuring sound financial management by securing more advantageous contractual arrangements for the purchase of ICT equipment. The capacity to improve further is good and the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Reception class is good. The setting is well led and managed. The relationship between staff and parents is very strong. Staff strive hard to promote children's personal development and secure their well-being. Children are safe and very well cared for by the staff who provide a wealth of learning opportunities to engage the children in all of the areas of learning. For example, during the inspection staff were working with small groups of children using fresh fruit as part of 'healthy schools week' to develop literacy and numeracy skills and hand-eye coordination as well as reinforce healthy eating.

Although cohorts vary, children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge generally comparable to most children of that age group. They make good progress. In 2007 more children entered Key Stage 1 having fully achieved the skills and knowledge for their age in all areas of

learning than found nationally, with some working above the expected level. The staff keep detailed records of their assessment observations and use these well to plan a range of adult led and independent activities. However, assessment and tracking information is not used effectively enough to tackle individual children's weaker areas of learning or to provide challenging activities for the more able children. This limits the progress some children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of tracking and assessment information in the Reception class and throughout Key Stage 1 in order to raise standards further by targeting areas of underachievement, accelerating progress and ensuring that higher attaining pupils are challenged.

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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?	2
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	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	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?	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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	3
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?	1
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**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed speaking with you about the school and watching you at work and play. You were excellent ambassadors for the school. Well done. The 'tree of life' and the story corner are brilliant. The 'Alice in Wonderland' library will be fantastic when it is finished. Park Grove is a good school with some outstanding features.

These are some of the things that are good:

- the standards you reach and the progress you make in your learning by the time you leave the school
- your attendance
- the quality of teaching
- the way leaders and governors run the school.

These are outstanding features of which the school and you can be particularly proud:

- your behaviour and attitudes to learning
- you develop into mature and caring young people who are kind to each other and help people less fortunate than yourselves
- the care, guidance and support that all of the adults give you
- the excellent curriculum and out-of-school activities
- the very good relationships you have with the staff and with each other
- the way your parents are made to feel welcome in the school
- how you are involved in the school and really listened to, for instance about keeping the willow maze and choosing not to have a school uniform.

I have asked the staff to check how well you are doing in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 more carefully so they will know when some of you need more challenging work to do. This will help you make even more progress in your learning and attain even higher standards in your work. I am confident that you will continue to work with the staff in order to achieve the very best you can.