

Park Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125552
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	328356
Inspection date	19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Heaton
Headteacher	M Booth
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
School address	Parkfield Drive Kenilworth CV8 2JJ
Telephone number	01926 855974
Fax number	01926 855974

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of assessment, guidance and teaching in meeting the needs of all learners
- the extent of any improvement, resulting from leadership at all levels
- the key strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being.

Evidence was gathered from analysis of school data, the school's self-evaluation, the previous inspection report, pupils' work, parent questionnaires, school policies and other documents. Lessons were observed and discussions were held with pupils, senior staff and the chair of governors.

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 Hill is a larger-than-average junior school. The majority of pupils are White British, with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very low. There is an after-school club on site managed by a private contractor. The substantive headteacher, who has been in post for just over a year, is on long-term sick leave. The school is currently run by an acting headteacher, appointed by the local authority in March 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Park Hill is a satisfactory school. It offers an extremely safe, welcoming and happy environment where pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory achievement and progress in their academic work and show good progress in their personal development and well-being. Attainment when pupils join the school, and standards on leaving, are well above national averages and staff are skilled at maintaining such high standards over time, particularly in mathematics and science. There are, however, considerable inconsistencies in the progress made in different year groups, due to the variable quality of teaching and learning.

Teaching overall is satisfactory. In some lessons, progress is very rapid whereas in others, pupils do not make enough progress. The majority of teaching is at least good but for a few pupils, in some years, teaching does not meet their needs and their learning slows. This is, in part, due to a lack of accuracy in the way pupils' achievements are assessed, which in turn means that in some lessons, work is not well matched to pupils' different abilities. The pupils affected are aware of this and a few would like to see more challenge in their work. There are some considerable strengths in lessons; in particular, relationships are extremely positive and full of good humour and pupils behave with respect. They value learning highly and think that many opportunities they are given to work independently or in groups are very helpful.

The senior leadership team and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are using self-evaluation to identify the right priorities for improvement. Recent improvements to the quality of teaching and in pupils' writing show that current developments are increasingly effective. This demonstrates that there is a satisfactory capacity to improve. Leadership is satisfactory, rather than good, because leadership of different subjects is not yet effective enough. This is because curriculum leaders and classroom teachers do not work closely enough together to secure improved progress in different subjects across the school. The impact of this is seen, for example, in the particularly mixed progress in English in the last two years, where progress has declined overall.

School leaders have begun to set individual targets for pupils and track their progress against these, but the system is not securely embedded and practice varies between subjects. In particular, class teachers are not sufficiently clear about the amount of progress pupils are making over time, compared to their starting points. As a result, care, guidance and support are only satisfactory overall. Good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties and those who have disabilities, and these pupils make consistently good progress. The school meets safeguarding requirements.

Most parents are pleased with the school. They appreciate the high standards, the care provided and how much their children enjoy school. A minority of parents expressed their concerns about the impact that recent staff changes may have had on the quality of teaching and learning. This has been recognised by the acting headteacher who, with the full support of senior leadership, governors and staff, has taken effective steps to ensure that teaching and the progress pupils make are beginning to improve. This is recognised by the majority of parents. The good curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils to follow their interests and extend their skills. Arts week, for example, provides a wide range of creative opportunities, from circus skills and poetry to clay modelling. Stunning displays of pupils' work throughout the school are testament to the very wide range of trips, projects and activities pupils enjoy. The curriculum

ensures that pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life through improved exercise and diet, and they particularly enjoy the many sporting opportunities available.

Pupils show a mature and tolerant attitude towards others in the school community, they behave very safely and incidents of any kind are extremely rare. As one reported, 'There are really nice kind people [in the school] who are very respectful.' Another said, 'You don't get treated differently because you are different.' The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory overall, with greater strengths within school than further afield. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility and contribute well to the school and locally. They act as play leaders, carry out their own ideas for fund raising or represent the school on the modern foreign language gifted and talented committee, for example. The school council has acted very effectively in helping to improve the playground equipment which now has a beautiful trim trail, outdoor theatre, musical instruments and seating area. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. With their very good basic skills, good ability to show initiative and work in teams, good attendance, and strong personal skills, pupils are well prepared for their next school and their futures.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make sufficient progress in all classes by developing a more consistent quality of teaching and assessment of pupils' learning.
- Strengthen the curriculum leadership role of all staff by making sure that they work more closely together on improving outcomes in the subject areas.
- Improve the way pupils' individual subject targets are set and monitored so that all staff can be clear about the amount of progress pupils are making over time.

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.

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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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

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?	2
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	3
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**

20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Hill Junior School, Kenilworth, CV8 2JJ Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch, and seeing some of your lessons.

Your school has a friendly and caring atmosphere. It is a satisfactory school, with many good things going on, just as you described. Satisfactory teaching helps you to make at least adequate progress in your lessons and the standards you reach remain high. In many lessons, teaching is good but, for a few of you, it is not leading to enough progress. For this reason I have asked the school to make sure all lessons are suited to your different needs, based upon more accurate assessment of the levels you reach. I would also like your teachers to work more closely together to improve the way you progress in different subjects. I am sure they would appreciate discussing this with you and hearing your ideas about how you might help in the process.

You make good progress in your social and personal skills, especially in the ways you contribute to the school, help each other and behave so maturely and kindly to one another. You have a good curriculum and your teachers see to it that you have lots of exciting activities, trips and projects to keep you interested and to help you develop many different types of skills. Staff do a sound job in running the school. They know how to help you improve and for this reason, you are doing better, in writing for example. I have now asked them to improve the way your individual targets are set and the progress you make against these are monitored, to make sure that all your teachers are clear about how well you are doing over time.

Adults in the school keep you safe and look after you well. I was impressed with your good behaviour, your excellent attitude to keeping safe and the way you work hard. You clearly much enjoy coming to school. I would particularly like to see you carry on with the good work you all do to help in improving the school. All these things, alongside your good skills in working together, give you a suitable preparation for your next school and future lives.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector