

Park Hill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101779
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	335785
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Griffin
Headteacher	Anna Murray
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons or parts of lessons and observed nine teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, safeguarding records, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and the minutes of governors' meetings. Questionnaires completed by staff and 86 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the current picture of attainment and progress across the school
- the impact of strategies to improve spoken and written language
- teachers' success in meeting the different needs of pupils in their classes
- the effectiveness of leaders in supporting teaching across the school.

Information about the school

Park Hill is a two-form entry infant school serving a residential area close to the centre of Croydon. About three-quarters of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and many have an Indian heritage. More than a third are learning English as an additional language, which is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also just below average. These needs relate mainly to speech and language difficulties. The proportion with statements of special educational needs is below average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is offered in the Reception classes. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award. There are currently two additional classes in Year 1 and one additional class in Reception to meet the demand in the borough for school places. The school is waiting to hear whether it will be re-designated as a three-form entry school by the local authority. The headteacher is retiring at the end of the summer term and the acting chair of governors is standing down.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Park Hill Infants is an outstanding school where pupils get an excellent start to their education. Pupils are very happy at the school and parents and carers appreciate what it offers them and their children. One pupil, on being asked why she liked the school, replied, 'Because you learn so much.' A parent commented, 'The school is excellent in every way and it has done wonders for my child', while another said, 'This is a truly inclusive, multicultural school. The leadership and teachers are excellent, providing enough challenges for all the pupils to learn, enjoy and achieve.'

The school has an ethos which believes that all pupils can succeed, no matter what their background and capabilities, and a commitment to providing an outstanding all-round education for infant-aged pupils. As a result, pupils love learning and are always eager to do their best at their activities. They make progress at a rate which is always good and frequently exceptional. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with levels of skills and understanding which are just above those found nationally. By the time they leave the school they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are consistently high compared with national levels. This happens because of teaching which is consistently good and often outstanding, and an excellent curriculum which is exciting and stimulating, particularly in the arts and in information and communication technology. Through its monitoring, the school has recognised that many pupils, especially those who are new to learning English, need extra help with their speaking skills to help them develop the vocabulary and structures for their writing. There has been an increased focus on role play in class to increase pupils' confidence in using English, and on visits to give pupils new experiences to write about. These are proving exceptionally successful.

Pupils are extremely well prepared for junior school. Their behaviour is outstanding because they show excellent self-discipline and willingness to listen to adults at all times. However, the attendance of some pupils is not good enough, often because of extended holidays during term time. Pupils have a great deal of consideration for others, and mix and play readily with others from different backgrounds. They are secure and confident at school, and happy to do things for themselves. This is thanks to the example set by adults, and to the high quality of the individual care and support all pupils enjoy. The success of the school has been brought about by the hard work of the headteacher, senior staff and governors, who are steering the school successfully through a period of great change and uncertainty, and who have never lost sight of their constant aim to provide a first-class education for their pupils. They keep a close eye on the changing needs of the school, and have identified, for example, that the outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage is no longer big enough to meet the needs of

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the numbers of children who use it. Excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress, close monitoring of the work going on in classrooms, and focused support for new and temporary staff have meant that the school has been able to build on and improve on pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Senior staff have a very clear insight into the school's strengths and the challenges it currently faces, and school self-evaluation is accurate. In the light of the major changes ahead, the school has a good capacity for further continuous improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen existing work with parents and carers and the local authority to improve levels of attendance.
- Proceed with plans to extend and redevelop the outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The work seen in lessons and pupils' books confirms that standards are high and that progress for all groups of pupils is good and frequently outstanding across the school. Pupils love learning and are developing excellent work habits that lead directly to their very good achievement. They settle very quickly, listen attentively and are always keen to answer questions or discuss ideas with their classmates. When they are asked to work independently, they are eager to get going and are frequently able to work without supervision. In a literacy lesson in Year 1, for example, a group of pupils made animal masks for role play without any need for adult help, and began to act out their roles with their partners without needing to be reminded. Pupils have very good concentration and many are able to write at length when required to do so. They understand their targets and know what they have to do to reach them.

Pupils show great enthusiasm for their tasks, because these are so well matched to their needs. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, a group of lower-attaining boys were asked to use the computer to do their writing. They were very pleased at the chance to do this because they were able to get their ideas down without needing to worry about their handwriting skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve better than their counterparts nationally, because work is very well tailored to their needs, and because they are very well supported in class. Indian pupils achieve particularly well. Pupils of all abilities love opportunities to be creative, and this is evident from the excellent quality of the artwork displayed all around the school.

Pupils say that they love coming to school, but unfortunately not all parents and carers support the school by ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time. A considerable number take their children out of school during term time for extended holidays abroad, and this has an adverse impact on the school's attendance figures.

Pupils say they feel safe and secure at school, and the playground is a happy and welcoming environment. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be healthy through eating sensibly and taking exercise. They make a good contribution to the

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school community by taking responsibilities they are given seriously, and by offering their ideas and suggestions for improving the school in circle time. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They recognise and respect the needs of others, know the difference between right and wrong and are developing very good social skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school provides pupils with a wealth of new experience and the foundations of a solid set of skills for life. The curriculum rightly centres on reading, writing and numeracy skills, but offers much more than this to develop an all-round love of learning. In Year 1, for example, a recent trip to London Zoo brought their topic of the rainforest to life. Pupils have written with delight about the exotic animals they have seen for the first time, and have drawn and painted clearly identifiable pictures of many of them. Thanks to exciting developments in information and communication technology and investment in hardware, pupils often have computer skills which are far ahead of expectations for their age. Year 2 pupils, for example, have produced simple

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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presentations using computer software.

Thanks to the school's clear expectations for teaching, and the support given to new and temporary staff, teachers meet the differing needs of their individual pupils very successfully. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils and their lessons are full of pace and challenge. Links across the curriculum are very strong and add much interest to lessons. In Year 2, for example, pupils learnt about the topical subject of volcanoes erupting, and used this as a basis for their research and writing tasks.

Learning support assistants work very well alongside class teachers to enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Teachers consistently use methods which are helpful to pupils who are learning English as an additional language. They make very good use of visual aids, such as the interactive whiteboard, repeat and reinforce new vocabulary and ideas, and use questioning skilfully to check pupils have understood. The quality of shared planning across the yeargroups supports temporary teachers and ensures that pupils benefit from a consistent approach.

All pupils are very well known to staff, and their progress is tracked closely so that they can quickly be given extra support if they show signs of falling behind. There is a very carefully constructed network of support available for pupils who have personal difficulties or who may be vulnerable. The school works diligently to reward and promote the benefits of good attendance and is committed to enforcing tougher sanctions on the small number of families who persistently take their children out of school in term time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and senior staff has enabled the school to improve its provision and outcomes since the last inspection, despite all the changes which have taken place. One parent commented, 'The school is very well run with a strong teaching staff and a headteacher with a clear vision about the type of learning environment she wants to create.' Some staff said that leadership was inspirational and motivated them to do their best. Those staff with leadership responsibilities are full of enthusiasm for their roles and determination to bring about further improvement. The governing body fulfils its role well. It has supported the school efficiently and effectively through recent changes, and is well prepared for the new challenges of recruiting a new headteacher and paving the way for the future development of the school. Procedures

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for safeguarding fully meet requirements. All necessary checks on adults are carried out, and risk assessments are thorough. Child protection procedures are rigorous and staff training is up to date.

The school works exceptionally well to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. The achievement of all groups of pupils is carefully tracked and all have the chance to do as well as they possibly can. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, helping children to make sense of the local and wider community and understand the different lives that other people live. It has fostered good relations with parents and carers. There are good links, too, with other organisations, enabling the school, its pupils and parents and carers to benefit from, for example, the work of a drama therapist and of a parent support adviser.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of skills which is similar to that expected nationally, although many are at the early stages of learning English. As a result of a good range of activities covering all the areas of learning, they make good progress in the Reception classes. There is a good focus on developing language skills through role play, and classrooms are word-rich environments. The layout of the premises means that one class benefits from a sizeable outdoor area which is used very well, but that the other two classes have to share a small area which does not give staff enough scope to offer a full range of activities outdoors. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, and staff work well as a team to support children

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in their learning. Children are settled and happy in the Reception classes, and willingly follow routines to keep themselves safe and healthy. They get on well with one another and with adults.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led, and good-quality planning ensures that there is consistency in the teaching of skills and the provision of indoor opportunities across the classes. Assessment is carried out regularly and systematically, and excellent tracking systems mean that gaps in children's knowledge can be quickly identified and remedied. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive, and they are given every support and encouragement to help their children with their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very happy with the school and what it offers their children. They felt very sure that their children enjoyed school and were safe at school, and that the school was well led and managed. A few felt that the school did not help them support their children's learning, take account of their suggestions and concerns, or help prepare their children for the future. Inspectors investigated these views but did not uphold them. Parents and carers receive good information on how to help their children at home, and are able to drop in to talk to their children's teachers about their learning and progress on a weekly basis. Children are very well prepared for the future and the next steps in their education, developing excellent literacy, numeracy and social skills. However, the uncertainty over junior school places for the large cohorts in Year 1 and Reception is causing parents and carers considerable anxiety.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Hill Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 259 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	67	24	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	62	29	34	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	42	46	53	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	41	43	50	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	51	33	38	6	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	45	36	42	8	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	51	37	43	4	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	29	43	50	8	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	34	46	53	6	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	49	39	45	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	33	44	51	8	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	57	35	41	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	53	36	42	3	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Hill Infant School, Croydon CR0 5NS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

We found that your school is excellent. These are just some of the things we liked about it.

- You love being at school and you are doing very well in your lessons.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on very happily together.
- You are always keen to learn and work hard on your own or with other people.
- You feel safe and secure at school.
- You are very well looked after and you get extra help if you need it.
- You enjoy lots of exciting things to do in and out of lessons.
- The teachers and the headteacher are doing an excellent job and know how to make the school even better.

To help the school improve even more, this is what we have asked the school to do:

- make sure that you all come to school every day and on time
- give the children in the Reception classes more space to work outside.

You can help by making sure that you always come to school unless you are ill. You are very lucky to go to such a lovely school, and I hope that you carry on enjoying yourselves at school. I'm sure you will!

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector

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