

Park House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112606
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337972
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Coates
Headteacher	Gerard Philbin
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The vast majority of time was spent looking at learning. The inspectors observed seven teachers and 14 lessons or parts lessons. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and staff. School documents including governors' minutes, assessment information, development plans, safeguarding documentation, pupils' work and the reports from the school improvement partner were evaluated. The returns from 66 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed along with 21 responses from staff. The views of pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 were also taken into account.

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

- the effectiveness of strategies to improve boys' writing in Years 1 and 2
- how well more-able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are challenged in mathematics
- the impact of the cross-curricular curriculum on pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of the school's work in developing pupils' understanding of the different communities within the United Kingdom
- whether boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage attain as highly as girls in writing.

Information about the school

In this average sized primary school almost all pupils are White British and there are no pupils at the early stage of learning English. A well-below-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is also well below average. In recognition of its work the school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Active Mark and Music Quality Mark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This school is a stimulating and friendly setting in which to learn. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported exceptionally well in a nurturing environment that enables them to thrive. Behaviour is outstanding, and happy faces are seen everywhere, as pupils eagerly speak about their work, saying teachers are kind and will always help them. Parents and carers agree. 'The open door policy is great - we feel welcome in school and can discuss anything with the teachers. The headteacher is always around welcoming parents and chatting with them. Park House is a great place to be.' This comment, typical of many received during the inspection, reflect how very positively parents and carers view the school's work. Pupils' understanding of keeping safe is outstanding and they are able to speak knowledgeably about unsafe situations, for example speaking to strangers and road, fire and water safety.

Central to the school's success is the purposeful leadership of the headteacher who is clearly focused on school improvement. A strong determination is shown by all to raise attainment in mathematics, as in the past by the end of Year 6 fewer pupils have attained Level 5 in this subject than in English. Effective strategies have been implemented and assessment information indicates more pupils are on track to attain this higher level than in previous years. In English, mathematics and science, attainment is above average. As most children join the Reception Year with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding expected for their age, this shows good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, which is often outstanding when receiving tailored support.

In Years 1 and 2, although reading and mathematics are above average, writing is the weaker subject. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently, and at times too many worksheets are used to record ideas. Marking does not always provide advice about the good features of work, and how pupils could improve. Boys in these year groups, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have not consistently attained as well as girls in this subject. The school's accurate evaluation has identified this, resulting in actions taken to improve boys' progress. For example, teachers identify topics that will particularly interest boys, and there are more opportunities for speaking and listening through the use of 'talk partners'. However, there is still work to do to ensure boys consistently make the same good progress as girls in developing their writing skills. As yet, the leadership does not carry out regular enough checks on the quality of pupils' written work to ensure that pupils' are progressing as well as they should. Even so, the improvements in mathematics, the successful rectifying of the key issues of the previous inspection alongside improvements in provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the curriculum, show good capacity to

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improve further. Self-evaluation is rigorous and the leadership including governors has an accurate picture of the school's work. For example, the leadership knows that although the outcomes for children in Reception are good, the curriculum needs further development, especially the independent learning opportunities in the outdoor environment, and the way staff interact with children during these times.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 by:
 - making certain that boys in the Reception are provided with many experiences that encourage them to choose writing activities
 - developing the use of speaking and listening in all three year groups as a means of rehearsing ideas for writing
 - providing lots of opportunities for pupils to independently record their ideas through limiting the amount of worksheets used
 - ensuring marking clearly shows pupils the good features of their work and how to improve
 - the leadership regularly checking pupils' written work.
- Improve the curriculum for Reception children by:
 - developing more opportunities for children to learn in the outdoor environment
 - ensuring that when children are working independently, adults regularly interact with them so opportunities for new learning are not missed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils love coming to school and as four Year 3 pupils unanimously agreed, 'There is absolutely nothing we would change!' Above-average attendance supports this evaluation. Listening skills are good and pupils approach tasks with enthusiasm and interest. This was seen in a good Year 6 lesson as pupils learnt how to find fractions and percentages of different totals. Although this was challenging all persevered, tried hard and made good gains in their understanding. This willingness to learn was seen in all lessons. As a result of good teaching, progress is good. Although progress overall is good, boys do not progress as quickly as girls in the Reception and in Years 1 and 2 notably in writing. However, more able pupils are challenged well and by Year 6, an above average proportion of pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

As a result of the school's involvement in achieving the Healthy Schools Award and Active Mark, pupils have an outstanding understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. All pupils spoken to, say they feel very safe in school, commenting how the new gates to the playground have made a difference. They are confident in going to any teacher if they are troubled. Although a few expressed very minor concerns about

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bullying pupils were adamant that any incidents are dealt with very effectively. Pupils contribute to the school and wider community by taking on the roles of school councillors and buddies to support pupils at playtime. They have undertaken numerous fundraising activities and are proud to sponsor a child in Rumania. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed successfully through the school's personal, social and emotional lessons. Cultural development is particularly good in terms of music, dance and the arts.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A marked strength of teaching is how teachers regularly allocate specific time to support pupils in achieving their targets. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson, as the teacher skilfully enabled pupils to write more complex sentences using commas correctly. Pupils' outstanding behaviour also contributes well to the successful learning that takes place. Relationships amongst pupils and with adults are very positive which means pupils willing answer questions knowing their contributions will be respected. Pupils enjoy sharing ideas and 'talk partners' are used effectively by most teachers to enable all

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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pupils to contribute their ideas. Occasionally this talking time is not sufficiently structured, and pupils run out of ideas and learning time is wasted. Resources are used well, for example, a video clip greatly enthused Year 3 pupils to think about how to write instructions. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and the learning mentor is particularly effective in ensuring all pupils are included in lessons. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning especially when working with small groups such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more-able pupils.

Staff genuinely care about the pupils and so they have worked hard to develop a curriculum which engages their interest. In this they have been successful as pupils eagerly speak about the visits they make and the visitors who come into school. They enjoy topics which link subjects together and this love of learning supports their good progress. Effective partnerships with sporting agencies including local football clubs means pupils' have extensive opportunities to take part in range of sporting activities. A notable strength is pupils' music skills, which has been recognised by the acquisition of the Music Quality Mark. The very positive outcomes in terms of pupil attitudes, attendance and behaviour, all reflect the outstanding care and guidance provided by the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been effective in communicating a vision for school improvement. Staff and governors share this vision and a strong team ethos is evident throughout. Responses to questionnaires prove staff are proud to be members of this school, all having a strong commitment to ensuring pupils' well-being. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are rigorous and the school improvement plan is a useful document for supporting change. Subject leaders are becoming more skilled in leading in their areas of responsibility. They check planning, and have carried out lesson observations. However as yet, they do not scrutinise pupils' work regularly enough to check pupils are making good progress in their learning. Partnerships are effective, as for example provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented has improved through work with local primary schools. Another effective partnership is that with a network of schools in a Global Education programme aimed at developing community cohesion. In this, the school has been successful. Pupils have a good understanding of local and global communities and are very tolerant towards others from backgrounds different to their

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own. However the school knows that pupils' understanding of the different communities within the United Kingdom is less well developed.

Governors are knowledgeable. They both challenge and support the school ensuring all statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous, resulting in pupils feeling safe, and parents unanimously agreeing, their child is kept safe in school. The leadership is successful in ensuring equality of opportunity is promoted well, with all pupils fully engaged in all aspects of the school's day-to-day life. There is no evidence of any discrimination, although the impact of strategies to ensure the younger boys attain as highly as girls in writing still has to be realised.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children quickly become happy, confident learners in the Reception class and parents and carers speak highly of the good start their children get to school life. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress and by the end of Reception most children have attained the levels expected for their age, although boys do not always attain as highly as girls, especially in writing. However this is starting to improve as staff are working hard to encourage boys to write. For example, writing speeding tickets during role-play activities captured boys' interest. Children care about each other, healthy lifestyles are promoted well and behaviour is good. Staff work effectively as a team, and indoor learning opportunities are good. Staff interact well with children during focused teaching activities, but interventions during independent activities are not as effective, especially in the outdoor environment. This means there are missed opportunities to

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move on children's learning. Procedures to evaluate children's progress are good and analysis of information is rigorous. For example, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader knows that boys are not progressing as quickly as girls in some of the areas of learning and is taking action to address this. Since the previous inspection the leader has been instrumental in improving outdoor provision, but is not complacent, knowing that more could be done. There are good plans in place to improve it further.

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

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school as shown by their responses in the returned Ofsted questionnaires. All of those who responded unanimously agree their child enjoys school, is kept safe and are happy with their child's experience at Park House Primary. Inspectors agree with these views regarding enjoyment and keeping safe. A few parents identified a range of different concerns, but the inspection found no evidence to support these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park House Primary 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 218 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	68	22	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	76	16	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	56	27	41	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	55	28	42	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	64	23	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	48	33	50	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	50	33	50	0	0	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)	30	45	29	44	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	48	32	48	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	61	21	32	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	44	32	48	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	64	22	33	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	68	21	32	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



11 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park House Primary School, Chesterfield, S45 8DB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and a special thank you to those of you who took time to tell us about all the interesting things you do. We really enjoyed listening to you sing and play different musical instruments, and we can see why your school has a good reputation for music. I was particularly impressed with the four Year 3 pupils who sang a variety of different songs to me whilst we were talking about the school's work. Here are some of the many things we found out about your good school.

By the time you leave school in Year 6 many of you are attaining standards in your work that are higher than those found in most schools.

You enjoy your work and we saw many interested pupils who clearly want to do their best. Well done; it is good you have such good attitudes towards learning.

Your parents and carers should be very proud of your outstanding behaviour.

You make good progress in your work because your teachers plan work that is just right for you, including those of you who sometimes find learning hard.

You say you feel very safe in school and could tell us what to eat to have a sensible diet and why we should take regular exercise.

Those of you on the school council and those who are buddies do a really good job in helping others.

We think your headteacher, staff and governors are doing a good job in helping your school to become even better. We have made some recommendations that we think will help.

Make sure that boys in Reception and Years 1 and 2 progress as well as girls in learning how to write.

Give those of you who are in the Reception class more opportunities to work outside the classroom and whilst you are working your teachers talking to you about what you are doing.

Thank you again for your help. You can help your teachers by keeping up your outstanding behaviour and carrying on working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness

Lead inspector

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