

The Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112672
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337984
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Pat Walsh HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Cooper
Headteacher	Jenny Rodgers
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2006
School address	Orchard Close Park Road Mansfield
Telephone number	01623 742487
Fax number	01623 742487
Email address	info@park-infant.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. Most of the available time was spent looking at learning; inspectors visited 10 lessons ensuring that all of the teaching staff, including those with intervention groups, were seen. Meetings were held with staff, governors, a group of children and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and a wide range of documentation including: school policies; curriculum planning; self-evaluation; improvement planning; safeguarding and welfare arrangements; records of pupils' progress; 91 questionnaires completed by parents and questionnaires received from staff and pupils.

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

- pupils' achievement in reading and writing
- the effectiveness of teaching and assessment in literacy
- the impact of the curriculum on pupils' writing skills
- the effectiveness of leadership on improving pupils' outcomes

Information about the school

This smaller than average sized infant and nursery school serves an area of high social and economic disadvantage. The number entitled to claim free school meals is higher than in most schools, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The vast majority of pupils are White British: a very small percentage of pupils are from other backgrounds. Very few are in the early stages of speaking English. The Early Years Foundation Unit has mixed classes of Nursery and Reception children. There are plans in place to federate the school with the adjacent junior school from September 2010. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This school provides an inclusive, caring and supportive environment in which children develop social skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is now well adapted to the needs of the pupils, and the school provides very good care, guidance and support to the pupils and their families. When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, many have skills that are well below those expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2 the gap has closed quite significantly, most notably in mathematics. Although standards are broadly average overall, pupils' attainment in reading and writing lags behind and pockets of underachievement persist, particularly amongst more able pupils.

The school knows that standards need to rise further and has successfully addressed the dip in 2009 by improvement to the curriculum to make it more engaging and interesting. Furthermore, the recent focus on developing communication and language skills has resulted in better teaching and notable gains in pupils' learning. Successful partnerships have been forged with parents and outside agencies that promote pupils' well-being and development very well. The carefully tailored support for pupils in the nurture group is successful in developing their confidence, enabling them to be better involved in their learning.

Teaching and learning are inconsistent and this is the main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than better. Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to set suitably challenging work that matches the abilities of different groups of pupils. This is especially the case for those pupils who are more able. There are differences in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve because assessment in lessons is not always accurate. Marking is inconsistent and most pupils do not know their targets for improvement or the next steps in their learning. Leaders do not systematically monitor and evaluate pupils' learning in lessons robustly enough to iron out these inconsistencies. Recent changes to the organisation in the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in better teaching and this helps the children to make a good start to their learning.

The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and a strong team ethos is evident. Pupils are regularly assessed and their progress is tracked. However, the system is unwieldy and does not always give a clear picture of pupils' progress as they move through the school. Nevertheless, leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness and have in the main correctly prioritised areas for development. Recent improvements demonstrate the school provides satisfactory value for money and capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in reading and writing by:
- ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to set challenging work that matches the abilities of all groups of pupils, especially those who are more able
 - making sure that pupils are clear about their learning targets and what they have to do to reach them
 - ensuring that through the regular assessment of pupils' progress in lessons they are given clear guidance through teachers' marking and feedback, on what they have to do to take the next steps in learning
 - Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by :
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating lessons to ensure that all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - refining the system for the tracking of assessment data to give a clearer picture of the progress pupils make as they move through the school
 - About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may
 - receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5
 - inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are keen to do well and most engage enthusiastically in their learning. When teaching is lively and interesting, the pupils make accelerated progress, but it is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, are able to close the gap in standards. Despite the dip in reading and writing in 2009 the trend of pupils' attainment is broadly average. They achieve satisfactorily from very low starting points. Underachievement by the boys has largely been addressed through recent changes to the curriculum. Evidence from lessons and the school's assessment information shows that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning because high quality support is well focused on their identified needs.

The pupils' good attitudes are shown by their sensible behaviour around school and in the playground. In lessons they follow instructions and their behaviour is satisfactory. Many concentrate well but this is not always the case when they are sitting and listening to the teacher for long periods of time; when this happens teachers have to work hard to ensure that pupils stay focused. Older pupils are aware of their responsibilities and are keen to make a positive contribution; for example through organising playground games as play leaders and supporting charity events. Opportunities to contribute to the wider community are more limited. The school has worked tirelessly to improve

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attendance rates so that they are now broadly average. Pupils generally feel safe and are confident that adults will help them if they are upset or worried. They have a good understanding of healthy eating and take part enthusiastically in physical exercise. One child eating his healthy snack confidently stated that 'all this fruit helps me to run around fast.' Pupils' moral and social development is good, although they have a limited understanding of the diversity and cultures in the wider community. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have developed good social skills and satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills to help them transfer smoothly to the junior school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is well adapted to pupils' different needs and good links are made with enrichment activities. Pupils enthusiastically visited local caves to dig for bones as part of recent topic work. There is a rich learning environment that supports pupils' learning well. Teachers generally use resources effectively but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use technology in lessons to enhance their learning.

Good management results in classrooms being calm and friendly places in which to

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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learn. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive. Not all teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work that matches pupils' individual needs. Consequently some pupils are given work that is too easy and this limits the progress they make. Pupils do not always understand how to take the next steps in their learning because marking and target setting are not consistently effective in guiding them to improve their work. Pupils often make the most rapid progress when working independently or in supported small groups. Teaching assistants are well used in lessons and provided high quality support, particularly for pupils who find learning difficult. The quality of care, guidance and support is a major strength, and there are many striking examples of the way the school helps pupils to overcome significant barriers to their learning. Good attention is given to supporting children whose circumstances make them vulnerable to promote their well-being. Work on improving the rates of attendance has led to recent improvement. Occasional incidents of challenging behaviour are well managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school successfully creates a positive, safe and welcoming atmosphere and a stimulating environment for learning. The school pays satisfactory attention to safeguarding. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. All adults work very hard to care for the pupils and ensure that those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable are properly supported. The school has close working links with key agencies so that support and intervention is well targeted. The good relationships with parents and carers support pupils' learning well.

Systems are in place to record the information from the regular assessments but are insufficiently streamlined to provide a clear overview of pupils' progress as they move through the school. Recent strategies to improve literacy teaching have resulted in pupils' satisfactory progress, but there are too few planned opportunities to check that teachers have consistently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination in a satisfactory way.

Governors are supportive of the school and rightly acknowledge the need to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills to better promote improvement. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory with strong links within the local

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community. Planning for links with the wider global community is in the early stages and opportunities are limited.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of recent improvement in the curriculum and teaching, most children make good progress and achieve well from their very low starting points. The sharp focus on developing children's communication skills has resulted in good gains in their learning. Despite this better progress children's attainment at the end of the Reception Year is below expectations. Good arrangements exist to ensure the children's safety, health and well-being. Positive links are established with parents from the outset. The joint leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader are good. Although children's progress is assessed and recorded regularly there is some inconsistency in how adults monitor learning during independent tasks. Adults plan activities that children find interesting and that are generally matched well to their abilities and needs. However, at times there is too little challenge for the most able. The children enjoy their learning and benefit from the well planned indoor and outdoor curriculum. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is firmly rooted in practical activities that appeal to children. Progress in personal development is good. Children grow in confidence and independence. They play happily together and learn to share and to make choices.

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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 majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. One parent commented 'I feel happy to leave my children each day - it is a very caring school and staff'. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about access to the school site. Inspectors raised these concerns with senior staff and governors who will address them. A few parents felt that behaviour was not always dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour was satisfactory and rare instances of challenging behaviour were dealt with effectively. A couple of parents felt that their children were not always given work that was hard enough. Inspectors agree that this is the case for some of the more able pupils and have included a recommendation in the areas for further improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Park 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 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	75	23	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	64	33	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	45	46	50	4	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	54	40	43	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	64	29	32	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	50	41	45	3	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	47	44	48	4	4	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)	36	39	43	47	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	48	46	50	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	46	38	41	6	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	35	48	52	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	40	43	46	50	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	55	38	41	2	2	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.



28 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of The Park Infant School, Mansfield, NG20 8JX

Thank you for looking after us so well when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work. We were particularly impressed by the way you behave around the school and your hard work in lessons.

We read the interesting comments you and your parents wrote to us in the questionnaires. We could see how much you enjoy school, particularly when you go on exciting trips such as to Creswell Craggs. There are lots of good things about your school. Here are some of the things we liked best:

- the way that all the adults care for you and make sure you are safe
- how much you know about healthy eating and tuck into your fruit and healthy snacks
- the way you look after one another around school
- the fun and exercise you have at playtimes by taking part in the games organised by the play leaders
- the topics and visits that interest and excite you.

It is important that you get better at reading and writing before you go to junior school. You sometimes make good progress in lessons but we know you can do better. We have asked the school to:

- make sure that you achieve good standards, especially in reading and writing
- plan harder work for those who find it too easy
- help you improve by setting targets that you understand and carefully marking your work
- check how well you are learning in lessons.

You can help by continuing to work hard and always doing your best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Walsh

Her Majesty's Inspector

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