

Parkgate Infants' and Nursery School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 117163 |
| Local Authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 338959 |
| Inspection dates | 22–23 October 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Susie Wallis-Maclean |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 170 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr M Curry |
| Headteacher | Miss Ann Lawrence |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 March 2007 |
| School address | Northfield Gardens Watford Hertfordshire |
| Telephone number | 01923 221984 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, governors' minutes, monitoring files, assessment information and numerous policies. In addition, 53 parent questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- how present teaching is influencing pupils' good learning and promoting achievement
- the extent to which pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is supporting the promotion of community cohesion
- how governors and leaders at the school influence improvement.

Information about the school

Parkgate Infants' and Nursery School is smaller than most infant schools, serving an increasingly diverse community with the largest ethnic group being of Pakistani origin. The number of pupils who have English as an additional language is higher than the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is 10.3% which is below the national average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and one Reception class.

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

Parkgate is a good school. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because there is a high regard paid to their welfare and to preparing them to learn. Teachers create a purposeful and vibrant learning environment, teaching different subjects through topics to enthuse the pupils. Parents and pupils appreciate the high quality care and wealth of learning opportunities. One parent summed up the school by saying, 'This school looks after all the children no matter what their ability. There are lots of varied activities and the school is a very happy environment'.

The key strengths of the school are:

- teaching is consistently good throughout the school and pupils have a positive attitude to their learning because of the well planned, broad curriculum
- pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy
- the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good
- leaders and managers have a strong commitment and shared vision to improve standards.

The school is successful because there is a strong commitment to each child's welfare and individual needs. This ensures that pupils who have difficulties in their learning or social and emotional development have their needs met, and so are ready to learn. Despite recent staff changes pupils have continued to make good progress. Monitoring of teaching and the use of a comprehensive tracking system, with an emphasis on how well pupils are learning, inform teachers of what pupils know. Self-evaluation is accurate. The school has been successful in implementing initiatives in areas of weakness, such as increasing the opportunities for role play in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the excellent use of additional support to address the needs of pupils at an early stage of speaking English or who speak English as an additional language. The school is aware of the need to increase the number of pupils attaining the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 2. Given this track record of improvement and the sense of team work, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Key weaknesses which remain are:

- planning and delivering lessons which challenge the more able
- the role of subject leaders in supporting the senior leadership in driving improvement

The promotion of community cohesion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

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- Ensure subject leaders are more rigorous in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of their subjects in order to raise standards and achievement particularly for the more able.
 - Increase the number of pupils attaining the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics by planning and delivering lessons that consistently challenge more able pupils.
 - Extend the promotion of community cohesion by forging stronger links with pupils in schools elsewhere in Britain and in other parts of the world.

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

Achievement is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are often below those expected for their age. When they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage the majority of pupils have reached average standards and have made good progress. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress and reach standards that are in line or slightly above national averages. A strong focus on teaching phonics and improving writing skills by providing topics and resources to enthuse all pupils is having a good impact on pupils' progress. The majority of pupils at all levels of ability meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them. However, the school has correctly identified that too few pupils attain the higher National Curriculum Level 3, particularly girls in mathematics and boys in English.

Pupils say that they feel very safe at school at all times. They are confident that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning foster a positive learning environment and mutual respect between pupils and members of staff. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and many adopt this with enthusiasm. Pupils value their school community. They undertake responsibilities willingly and carry them out successfully. For example, the school council is in the process of deciding how to improve the playground further. Pupils contribute well to the smooth running of the school. They apply their basic skills appropriately to enhance their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their understanding of different cultures is less well developed. They have clear a understanding of the difference between right and wrong and express their views of moral and ethical issues clearly. There is good engagement between groups of pupils from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds and pupils respect each other's values and beliefs. Attendance is satisfactory. Appropriate steps are being taken by the school to improve attendance and to reduce the number of pupils taking holidays during term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| 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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan well to incorporate cross-curricular themes motivating pupils to take an active part in their learning. Relationships are very good and pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Teachers assess pupils' progress systematically and plan appropriately to build on their prior learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils in all subjects, especially to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants. Resources such as, computers are used well to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects as well as develop their ICT skills. Sometimes, pupils spend too long in the carpet area, especially in English lessons before they start the main activities. This results in some losing concentration and becoming passive learners and more able pupils not being challenged sufficiently. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as they could. The broad and balanced curriculum makes a good contribution to the personal development of all pupils. The recently developed thematic curriculum has strengthened pupils' participation in and their enjoyment of learning. Good cross-curricular links between different subjects, especially in literacy, numeracy, ICT and science are developing effectively, enhancing pupils' experience in all areas of learning. Provision for pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities and for pupils with English as an additional language is good. As a result, they make good progress. The school provides a happy and welcoming environment for pupils making them feel safe and secure. There are effective arrangements for transition for pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1 and to the junior school. The emotional, behavioural and learning needs of pupils with special educational needs

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and/or disabilities are regularly assessed and carefully recorded with support being well organised and effectively managed. Good liaison with external agencies is ensured and this contributes well to the effectiveness of the support system.

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 | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Despite recent changes to the leadership and teaching team, there is a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a commitment to improvement with a focus on outcomes, and as a result pupils continue to make good progress. The majority of pupils generally meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them and the senior leadership team is aware of the need to raise the achievement of more able pupils. The headteacher is rigorous in her monitoring of teaching to ensure it is consistently good, and is aware this needs to be extended to include subject leaders. She is well supported but also challenged by an effective, knowledgeable and hardworking governing body. The school promotes equalities well, as reflected in the way pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress. As a result, and because of careful financial management, the school provides good value for money. All safeguarding checks on adults are robust and the school's procedures for child protection are good. The school provides good equality of opportunity for all its pupils. This is supported by the use of detailed information on all groups of pupils which is used effectively to overcome variations in performance. Community cohesion is only satisfactory as the school is still developing an action plan and assessing the impact of its work.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |

| 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 | |
|---|----------|
| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Nursery and the Reception classes settle quickly and thoroughly enjoy coming to school. When children enter the Nursery their attainment is generally below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress, achieving average standards by the time they start Year 1. Children are well behaved and quickly learn how to share and cooperate with each other as they learn and play together. They are confident and very happy because staff put great emphasis on developing their social and personal skills. Children know the routines such as tidy-up time and they bustle around quickly to make the classroom neat. They obviously love school and approach their tasks with a bubbly enthusiasm because they are appropriate to their learning needs, yet fun to do. Teaching is good and the well-planned curriculum has a good balance between activities the child can choose and those led by the teacher. For example in the Nursery the whole class may have a phonics session on the letter 'l', then children will work independently on tasks that reinforce their learning and focused groups will work with adults to try to write the letter. The Reception class extends the use of phonics into their daily writing making good use of their group writing targets. The outside learning environment is used effectively for learning by both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children's progress is carefully tracked and their needs are well catered for. Children with English as an additional language receive excellent support. There are good arrangements to ensure children's welfare and personal development. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is currently on temporary leave but, in her absence, the provision continues to be well managed by the headteacher.

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

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

A very large majority of parents are satisfied with the school. Parents are especially positive about how much their children enjoy school and how it promotes a healthy lifestyle. Strengths identified by parents include how well their children settle, the individual support given to their children, and the approachable and committed staff. Parents also feel the school keeps their children safe. Individual concerns were raised as to how some parents received information about their child's behaviour with 'red letters' being handed out at the end of the day in front of waiting parents. The headteacher was made aware of this and acknowledged the need to change this practice.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkgate Infants' and Nursery 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 170 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|----|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 36 | 68 | 15 | 28 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 42 | 79 | 11 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 27 | 51 | 25 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 23 | 43 | 25 | 47 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 31 | 58 | 20 | 38 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 30 | 57 | 18 | 34 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 27 | 51 | 23 | 43 | 3 | 6 | 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) | 22 | 42 | 22 | 42 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 11 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 24 | 45 | 26 | 49 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 21 | 40 | 28 | 53 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 22 | 42 | 26 | 49 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 27 | 51 | 22 | 43 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 37 | 70 | 14 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 |

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 pupils' 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.



26 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Parkgate Infants' and Nursery School, Watford, WD24 7RL

Thank you for your welcome when we visited your school recently. You showed how well behaved, sensible and responsible you are and you were really helpful. We were able to find out a lot about your school because you were confident in sharing your ideas and opinions.

The report shows how well the school is helping you to learn. I think it is giving you a good education and this is improving because Miss Lawrence knows what is needed to make it even better. There are a lot of good things in your school that help you make good progress and to reach standards similar to most other schools.

You enjoy school a lot.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and you know how to keep safe.

Your teachers and staff look after you carefully.

You are taught well in lessons and your teachers make your learning fun.

I have identified three things for your leaders and teachers to work on so that your school continues to improve.

Make sure that all of your lessons are well planned and taught so they challenge all of you, particularly those of you who should be getting Level 3 when you leave the school.

Make sure that the subject leaders in school know how well you are doing in the subjects they lead and what they need to do to help you learn and enjoy your time at school and that this is checked and recorded all the time.

Make more links with schools in another part of Britain and overseas.

Yours faithfully

Susie Wallis-Maclean

Lead Inspector

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