

Park Wood Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118472
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	339225
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Emson
Headteacher	Lindsay Mackenzie
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The large majority of time during the inspection was spent looking at pupils' learning. The inspectors saw 10 teachers at work in 15 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and information on pupils' progress and safeguarding and other documents. Questionnaires from 78 parents and carers and 26 members of staff were scrutinised.

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

- how well boys' reading and writing are being developed, including those with special educational needs
- the involvement of pupils in assessing their learning
- the impact of subject leaders on school improvement
- how well members of staff enable pupils to gain confidence and to feel safe
- the way handwriting and creativity are being developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Park Wood is a larger-than-average infant school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a broadly average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The Park Wood pre-school and Sunshine Park Wood breakfast and after-school clubs are run by outside providers and were not part of this inspection. The school has received several awards including an Activemark and Healthy School 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pupils are proud to be part of this happy and friendly school. They told inspectors that 'this is a wonderful school' and 'I like my teachers'. Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, teachers build successfully on what pupils already know. They manage behaviour well and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress, especially when they are being supported as they work in small groups. Occasionally, during class discussions, teachers do not ensure that they have the attention of all boys. When this happens, some boys are unclear about what they should be doing and do not learn as quickly as they should.

Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 2, and is slightly higher in mathematics and science than in reading and writing, where boys have been lagging behind the girls. In order to address this, the school has increased support for boys, with the provision of books and topics designed to engage them more. This has led to improved rates of progress for boys in these subjects. Pupils are exceptionally good at knowing how to stay healthy and deserve their Healthy School and Activemark awards. They are keen to take part in frequent exercise and brain gym, eat healthy snacks and strengthen their emotional well-being by talking to the 'listening bear' and his helpers. Consequently, pupils are calm and behave well.

The school was judged to be good at the time of the last inspection. Good procedures for self-evaluation enable leaders to know what needs to be done next to drive the school forward. Data about pupils' progress are used well to identify those at risk of falling behind in their learning. The school is tackling the difference between girls' and boys' writing well and attainment is rising, demonstrating a good capacity to improve even further. The governing body has several new members and is in the process of increasing its role in school development. Over the past year, most observations of teaching have been carried out by senior leaders and as a result subject leaders have not been able to contribute fully to identifying and tackling the weaker elements in their areas. The school provides well for community cohesion on a local front, but provision is satisfactory overall because the audit has not been evaluated fully to identify all ways that provision should be developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the listening and involvement of boys in discussions so that they understand what they have been asked to do and consequently learn more quickly.
- Increase the impact of subject leaders by enabling them to gather and evaluate

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first-hand evidence about teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils enjoyed revealing pictures on the interactive whiteboard that supported them in remembering facts about the Fire of London. Teachers are skilled in helping pupils to support each other's learning by working in pairs to share their ideas. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils worked together to devise informed questions for each other about the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. In another Year 2 literacy lesson, pairs of pupils listed reasons why, how and where the Fire of London started, indicating their good understanding of the topic.

Close relationships between members of staff and the pupils have resulted in pupils saying that they feel safe and being confident that teachers will help them when necessary. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe by taking care on the roads. Pupils enjoy helping others by being buddies at play time or as table monitors. As one school councillor put it, 'We have been able to help others.'

Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress during their time at the school. However, sometimes boys do not make enough progress during discussions because they are quietly inattentive and do not become fully involved in question-and-answer sessions. Attendance is above average, which together with good progress in literacy, numeracy and personal skills prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and later life.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is evident in the way they reflect on how to make the right choices. They understand the school's 'three rights' and strive to keep each other safe, show each other respect and help each other to learn. Pupils enjoy taking part in cultural experiences and respect and value those with differing beliefs and backgrounds. Their awareness of cultures other than their own is growing and all pupils learn sign language.

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

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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The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage behaviour well because of the good relationships they enjoy with the pupils. They plan effectively with other teachers across year groups and, as a result, are successful in providing a wide range of interesting and relevant activities. They meet the pupils' differing needs well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially during group activities. During discussions, teachers do not always adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils or ensure that all pupils are listening carefully, and as a result there are occasions when some boys in particular are unsure about what they have been asked to do. Activities include good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and include helpful guidance, particularly in literacy books. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their learning and are starting, for example, to add post-it notes with their own comments on their work.

Information and communication technology is used well to support learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 2, a pupil used the interactive whiteboard to show the rest of the class a reflective pattern. A wide range of additional activities makes a good contribution to the pupils' enjoyment of school. For example, enterprise week and sponsor days are beneficial in extending the pupils' skills and are helping to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Good care and support ensure that pupils are happy at school and learn quickly. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. These pupils are supported well, especially during group tasks. Members of staff work well with parents, carers and external agencies to support pupils who are finding life difficult. Pupils appreciate that they can share concerns in 'time to talk' groups.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2

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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?

The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that attainment has risen since the last inspection and the gap between girls and boys is closing. Self-evaluation is good because leaders use information collected from monitoring pupils' progress to identify areas for development and to provide the support necessary to drive improvement. Senior leaders carry out focused observations of teaching and learning and provide good guidance to ensure improvement. The role of subject leaders in developing teaching is underdeveloped.

The school works closely with parents, carers and external agencies. Consequently, the school has a successful commitment to providing equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination, and minor differences in progress are dealt with swiftly.

Governance is satisfactory. New governors are supportive and understand the school's strengths and areas for development well. They have suitable plans to become more proactive in challenging the school to improve even further. At the time of the inspection, the school's safeguarding arrangements were satisfactory. While members of staff take good care of the pupils, information kept on safeguarding is not always up to date and there are some minor omissions in the school's paperwork. This does not have a negative impact on the pupils' safety. The school promotes community cohesion well at a local and global level, but links with other British schools in contrasting communities are not so well established.

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	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children join the school working within the levels expected for this age group, although few are working within them in writing. They make good progress so that attainment is rising and it is now above average by the time they enter Year 1. Personal development and knowledge of letter sounds are promoted especially well by all members of staff and, as a result, children are polite and friendly and keen to point out letters around the classroom. Children enjoy choosing whether to work outside or indoors when working independently. They do not do quite as well in creative development and handwriting as in other areas of learning. Leaders have recognised this and are finding ways of increasing the availability of resources to support these activities. Good arrangements to help children when they first start school enable them to enjoy school and settle quickly into routines. Children especially enjoy the way they learn through games. For example, in one lesson children were playing a shape recognition game, where one child described the shape and the others had to find one to match the description. Children's learning is assessed thoroughly and leaders are starting to evaluate information collected more rigorously to compare progress between different groups of children.

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

Almost all parents and carers are pleased with all aspects of the school's work. They especially commented on the way children grow in confidence and are made to feel happy at school because members of staff are welcoming. A very few expressed concerns over how well handwriting is being taught and the amount of homework their children receive. The inspection team agrees with parents' and carers' positive views. School leaders have plans to improve the pupils' handwriting and have started using a new scheme to help with this. The amount of homework provided for this age group is similar to that given in most schools.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Wood 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	76	19	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	78	16	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	63	27	35	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	72	19	24	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	77	17	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	74	18	23	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	76	17	22	1	1	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)	49	63	23	29	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	73	19	24	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	63	25	32	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	64	24	31	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	74	18	23	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	82	13	17	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



27 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Park Wood Infant School, Gillingham ME8 9LP

Thank you for being so helpful during our visit. We are pleased that you enjoy coming to this good school.

These are the best things about your school.

- You learn quickly because you behave well and enjoy the fun activities.
- You are exceptionally good at knowing how to stay healthy.
- You are very polite and helpful.
- We agree with you that your teachers are kind and caring.
- Your headteacher and other leaders are doing a good job and know what needs to be done to make the school even better.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next.

- Make sure that boys always listen and take part in discussions with your teachers at the start of lessons.
- Give subject leaders more chance to watch other teachers in lessons.

Thank you once again for talking to us about your school and showing us your work.

You could help your teachers by making sure you all try to take part in class discussions.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge

Lead inspector

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