

Sparkenhoe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120094
Local Authority	Leicester
Inspection number	339596
Inspection dates	27–28 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miran Uddin
Headteacher	Kath Falconer
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Nineteen lessons were seen and fifteen teachers were observed. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, both teaching and non-teaching and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, which included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's improvement plan and also pupils' work. In addition, 319 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- the strength of pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2
- the developments in teaching since the previous inspection
- how well the curriculum has been tailored to meet the needs of Sparkenhoe pupils
- the extent of the role that teachers with responsibilities play in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

This very large inner-urban primary school serves an exceptionally diverse community in the centre of Leicester. A large majority of the pupils live close to the school though many families that have moved out of the immediate vicinity keep their children at the school. The vast majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and over three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are currently 52 different home languages spoken by the pupils and 120 are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very high and the number with special educational needs is well above the national average. Most of these pupils either find learning hard or have speech, language and communication needs. An exceptionally high number of pupils enter or leave the school during the school year than is typically found. For example, 71 pupils have entered the school during the current school year and 39 have left the school.

The school is based on three separate sites. The main site has recently been re-modelled extensively. The second building is about 150 metres away and houses five Key Stage 2 classes. In addition, the school has a theatre, 'The Ark' which also has extensive community use as an arts centre and is just across the road from the main school building.

The Early Years Foundation stage consists of a Nursery, which children attend on a part time basis, and two Reception classes. There is a breakfast and after-school club that is managed by the governing body and was included in this inspection. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and has been awarded the sports Activemark.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher the school has shown exceptional improvement since the previous inspection. Hence, the school's overall effectiveness has moved from satisfactory to outstanding. Pupils thrive in both their academic and personal development. Parents are almost unanimous in their positive views of the school. They recognise the exceptionally strong ethos of care and support that enables their children to become confident and successful learners who are well prepared for secondary school.

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are very low in comparison to those typically found. Due to good provision, children in both the Nursery and Reception years achieve well in all areas of learning. Teaching in these year groups is frequently outstanding, but provision is hampered by the lack of opportunity for children to learn outdoors. The space available outside the Nursery lacks cover to enable children to learn when it is very sunny or wet. Pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and this accelerates as they become more confident in their English language skills. By the time pupils leave the school, attainment is at the national average. This marks outstanding progress, not least because the very many pupils that enter the school during the school year do so with attainment that is low. Pupils make particularly strong progress in their speaking and listening skills which are at least at the national expectation when they leave the school. In pursuing their ambition to raise standards further, senior leaders have focused well on improving pupils' writing skills. This has been successful in both lifting attainment at the end of Year 2 and also in the quality of pupils' written work in other subjects. Due to the highly effective provision for pupils who enter the school at an early stage of learning English and also those that find learning hard, these pupils also make outstanding progress.

Pupils learn exceptionally well because they benefit from consistently good and frequently outstanding teaching. Teachers manage pupils with aplomb and ensure that all classrooms present as quiet and industrious learning environments. There are excellent arrangements to check and track pupils' progress and this enables pupils to be grouped according to their needs rather than their age. This means that classes for literacy and numeracy cover pupils from as many as four different age groups. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' learning and their excellent personal development. There is a suitably strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social, emotional and moral development which results in Year 6 pupils being thoughtful, mature and responsible young people whose spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. The curriculum has recently been revamped to focus more on developing learning skills and to enable pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and

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information and communication skills well. This successful re-organisation is broadening opportunities and whilst it has the characteristics of an excellent curriculum it needs to bed down across the school.

Outstanding care guidance and support results in pupils feeling safe and free from discrimination and being welcomed and treated as individuals. There are excellent systems to ensure that pupils are protected and their health and safety assured.

All these things do not happen by chance! The headteacher is expertly supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leaders. Her deep and passionate vision to realise the best for each pupil is shared by all the staff and governors. Staff morale is high with all pulling in the same direction. Self evaluation is very sophisticated. It is based on rigorous reviews of all aspects of provision to find ways of improving further. Governors too play an important role in the school's success and they are outstandingly well led by a committed and knowledgeable chair. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been tackled exceptionally well and many of these areas, such as the quality of teaching and learning, are now strengths. The school has outstanding capacity to improve even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing cover for the learning space outside the Nursery
 - finding ways to provide a suitable and easily accessible outdoor space for children in the Reception classes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils achieve well and make outstanding progress in their learning. Progress is very good in Years 1 and 2 particularly in reading and speaking and listening. Due to the high quality of the teaching, current Year 2 pupils' attainment is now much stronger than it has been in the past though it remains below average, particularly in writing and mathematics. However, by the end of Year 6 attainment is in line with the national average. National data shows that pupils' progress in learning in English, mathematics and science is exceptionally strong and, for the past two years, has been amongst the best in the country. This strong progress is confirmed by inspection findings. Pupils' delight in learning is demonstrated by the excellent progress seen in many lessons in literacy, numeracy and science. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain similar standards and make equally good progress even though this group has more than a quarter of pupils that entered the school in the last two years and almost all of these with very little English.

Pupils are highly appreciative of what the school provides for them. They thoroughly relish the myriad of opportunities that are available for them to take responsibility. These include the influential school council, the many events that pupils organise to raise money for others across the world and by helping younger children. They have a

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good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, though this is not always reflected in their packed lunches. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils have highly positive attitudes to school and learning and they are very proud of their school. Parents are fulsome in their support. As one parent remarked, 'This school was my first and only choice for my daughter. She has thrived in a warm and friendly atmosphere and she loves school. Everyone in the school knows her and it feels like a family'. However, this is not fully reflected in pupils' attendance which is satisfactory and not higher despite the school's best efforts because of the number of parents who take extended holidays.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

The consistently good and frequently outstanding teaching is a major factor in the pupils' rapid progress in learning. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and these are communicated well to the pupils who invariably know exactly what they are learning and what they need to do to meet the success criteria. Teachers use a wide range of learning strategies and consistently encourage pupils to work

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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collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Teaching assistants provide excellent support for those that are slower learners and their skill is particularly evident in the help they provide for the many pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Teachers' assessments are of high quality. These are used well not only to target future activities but also to inform pupils of their own next steps and this is complemented by high quality marking which informs and guides pupils very well.

The curriculum is being adapted well to meet the needs of Sparkenhoe pupils and this is consistently seen in the good quality topics which build well on the pupils' first hand experiences. Pupils benefit from the use of the school theatre, and during the inspection Year 6 pupils were enjoying their rehearsals for the end of term production of 'Macbeth'. There is an outstanding range of additional activities including many opportunities for lunchtime and after school clubs which are very well attended by pupils. These include many arts and sports activities and reflect the sports Activemark. The breakfast and after-school care are both of good quality, valued by parents and add significantly to the school's provision. One of the greatest strengths of the school is the care and support that is provided for vulnerable pupils. Staff, including the home/school worker, support these pupils and their families exceptionally well. Pupils new to the school say that they are made very welcome and they appreciate their buddies' support as they begin to learn English and are inducted into the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The quality of the leadership and management of the headteacher has been pivotal to the school's increasing effectiveness. She has instigated a wide range of improvements, based on an excellent and close analysis of the school's provision, to boost achievement. Teachers with responsibilities play an important role in the highly effective management of teaching and learning and have contributed to the school's rapid improvement. Subject leaders evaluate their areas of work exceptionally well and provide high quality input into the school's planning for future development. Governance is good with governors ensuring that all statutory responsibilities are met. Even though there are many new governors to the school, those that are more experienced ensure that the school is supported and challenged effectively. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are exemplary. For example, the exemplary policies are met in full, the governors have excellent procedures for checking both child protection and health and safety issues and

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close attention is paid to ensuring that all are fully trained. There is a close partnership with parents that benefits the pupils and the school is at the heart of the local community. It is a strongly cohesive community in which pupils are exceptionally respectful of each other's cultures. This is because the school has a high quality plan, which has been fully implemented, to ensure that pupils gain a close understanding of cultural, ethnic and social diversity locally, nationally and globally. There are strong links with schools in France and Alberta in Canada and 'Skype' links with a small rural school. Equal opportunity and the removal of any discrimination are central to the school's ethos and, as a result, all feel included and involved and achieve.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

From low starting points, particularly in speaking and listening skills, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Though only a minority of those who enter Year 1 attain the expected goals in all areas of learning, children's attainment is closer to national averages than when they start. Children are exceptionally well cared for and parents spoke about their appreciation for the excellent way that the staff help their children to settle into school quickly and how they thoroughly enjoy learning. The many children that enter Nursery at an early stage of learning English are included exceptionally well and given close support to help them feel secure. All groups of children develop their confidence and independence well because of the caring and supportive ethos. They quickly become engrossed in their play and persevere well with their tasks. The staff are particularly adept at building their lesson objectives and target

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vocabulary into whatever activities the children choose. Hence, during the inspection, when children were learning positional language such as above, below, side, in front, behind, it did not matter whether they were climbing, playing in the sand or water, cutting and sticking or in the role play area. Wherever they were, the staff encouraged the development of this vocabulary. The staff are very good at questioning or prompting children to move them on in their learning. However, outdoor access for children in the Reception classes is very difficult, and that for the Nursery, hampered by the lack of cover which limits its use during hot and inclement weather.

Assessment is very regular and thorough and the information is used especially well to plan for the next steps in learning. Leadership and management are good with the staff working closely together for the children's benefit.

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

An exceptionally high proportion of parents and carers responded by completing questionnaires. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and many parents commented on how their children thoroughly enjoy school. Parents also made fulsome comments about the quality of leadership and management of the headteacher and how she had made the school a better place for their children to learn. Inspection findings confirm all the parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sparkenhoe Community 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 319 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 459 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	231	72	85	27	1	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	209	66	108	34	1	0	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	193	61	125	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	175	55	135	42	5	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	197	62	116	36	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	175	55	138	43	2	1	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	157	49	151	47	7	2	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)	132	41	158	50	7	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	150	47	152	48	6	2	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	153	48	144	45	9	3	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	144	45	157	49	5	2	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	160	50	143	45	2	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	206	65	104	33	2	1	1	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



1 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sparkenhoe Community Primary School, Leicester, LE2 0TD

I write to thank you very much for helping us to find out about your school when we came to visit you. We thought that the school councillors and ambassadors who showed us round were brilliant! It is clear that you are very proud of your school. We understand why because your school is outstanding. Here are some of the best things about your school:

Your behaviour is brilliant, both you and your parents told us that you really enjoy going to school and you have very positive attitudes to learning.

It doesn't matter whether English is a new language for you when you start school, whether you find learning hard or easy, whether you are a boy or a girl, all of you make excellent progress in your learning. This is brilliant: well done!

Your teachers do an excellent job because they make sure that you are safe and very well cared for and they give you exciting and interesting tasks to do. This makes learning fun and helps you to learn really well.

Your headteacher is also doing a fantastic job! You all know that she really cares for each of you individually and she has made sure that all the staff work really hard to make your school as successful as it is.

Even in such an outstanding school as yours, there is always something that can be done to make it better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that the children in the Nursery have a cover for their outdoor area. We have also asked that the children in the Reception classes have much easier access to an outdoor space.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your education as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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