

Parkside Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112678
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	342138
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Coackley
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Mansell
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with a representative from the local authority, the Chair of Governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation related to safeguarding pupils, health and safety, assessment of pupils' progress, teaching and the curriculum. There were no Ofsted questionnaires for parents as this was scheduled as a monitoring visit. However, the school's own surveys provided some information on parental views of the school.

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

- the knowledge that teachers have about the levels at which pupils are working and whether it is used carefully to plan challenging tasks and promote at least good progress
- the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' progress and on raising standards in English, mathematics and science
- the relationships between home and school and the channels of communication with parents about their children's education
- checking that leaders at all levels establish and rigorously apply effective systems for monitoring the school's work and evaluating improvements, in order to strengthen the performance of the school
- the school's readiness to be removed from special measures

Information about the school

The school went into special measures in May 2008 because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. There was a new Chair of Governors immediately following the first monitoring visit and there has been a complete overhaul of the governing body. A new permanent head teacher took up post from spring term 2009. The school serves the Derbyshire town of Ashbourne. There are currently around 283 pupils on roll, with a fairly even spread across each year group, and numbers are rising. There is a lower than average number of pupils with special educational needs but, of these, a higher proportion than is typical with a statement for their special educational needs. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and most speak English as their first language. A lower percentage than is usual is eligible for free school meals.

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

2

Main findings

Parkside Junior School now provides a satisfactory standard of education because pupils' achievement and progress is rising, outcomes for pupils have improved and the leadership team demonstrate a good capacity to improve still further. In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The senior leadership team, with effective support from the governing body, is committed to turning the school around. The staffing turbulence experienced in 2008 has been eradicated and there is now a dedicated, professional team, who are keen to share best practice and address any issues with rigour. As a result of high quality input from the local authority and utilising the advanced skills of some of the staff, the quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved, with the percentage of good or better lessons continually rising. Lessons in literacy and numeracy, in particular, are of mainly good quality across the school. This is resulting in pupils' improved attitudes to learning and has a positive impact on their enjoyment and success. In the weaker lessons, of which there are few, staff are still talking for too long and there is not always consistent clarity of explanations. Behaviour across the school is good and pupils are settled in classes, so there is a positive and purposeful climate for learning. Pupils respond well to staff's high expectations. The needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are identified quickly and well accounted for, so that their progress is in line with other pupils and they are not academically disadvantaged.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are fairly typical for their age. The last Year 6 cohort left the school achieving standards which were well above the national average in English and mathematics, and above the national average in science. This represents good progress for the majority of pupils in English and mathematics but satisfactory progress overall, and the best performance data for the school in the last five years. This can be attributed to the improvements in teaching, aided by the establishment of more robust assessment procedures and the more effective use of this information to set challenging targets for each pupil. The school recognises it has more to do to ensure that expectations are always made clear and are consistently well matched to the range of pupils' needs. Progress towards targets is monitored closely in English and mathematics, but monitoring of other subject areas is, as yet, not as far advanced.

The school has done much to develop the wider curriculum, although this new approach to planning the foundation subjects is in its infancy and there is further fine tuning to do. Staff decided that the starting point was to deliver a curriculum they have knowledge of, and confidence in, rather than using the pupils' own interests at its heart. However, pupils recognise that their lessons are more interesting, that they are more

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actively engaged and that their homework relates more directly to the topic being studied, allowing them to work at a level and in a direction of their choosing. It also allows more opportunities for parental involvement and, as a result, more parents are better engaged in their child's learning. Teachers have not always fully exploited how they might adapt tasks for the full range of pupils' needs in every subject area, but this is developing. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils includes more effective use of classroom support, leading to better pupil progress.

The strengthening of the senior leadership team has been instrumental in the overall improvement in the school. The new head teacher and restructured governing body have been very effective in making some tough decisions and in tackling weaknesses, which the school has evaluated accurately. The whole of the leadership team have worked tirelessly to address the points for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have improved with everyone being clear of their role. The governors are now holding the school to account in key aspects of its work and better understand the data. The school's improved capacity is demonstrated through securing improved outcomes, including improving rates of pupil progress and attainment, through strengthening the quality of teaching and robust and rigorous tracking systems. Assessment procedures are accurate in English and mathematics and still improving in the other areas. The school is increasingly working effectively with professional partners to support the welfare and achievement of some pupils and work with some families. This has been further enhanced by the appointment of an Every Child Matters Co-ordinator this term. Safeguarding procedures meet with statutory requirements and are now good. The school ensures that no child is discriminated against and works hard to ensure it minimises any inequalities between groups of learners. The school has worked particularly hard to improve its relationship with parents and carers and to outstanding effect. This is now a key strength of the school and the partnership makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and learning is consistently good by:
 - further sharing the good and outstanding practice that already exists in the school
 - developing the quality of teachers' explanations in some lessons
 - aligning work more closely to the range of pupils' abilities.
- Ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils by:
 - further embedding the creative curriculum, and matching it more closely to the pupils' interests
 - using assessment data to tailor the entire curriculum to pupils' needs
 - embedding systems for monitoring the provision in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory

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may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment in English, mathematics and science all show a significant improvement over the past three years. The last set of national curriculum test results show that standards were above average overall. The school is ambitious to drive standards even higher. The focus on boys' writing, improving the attainment of higher attaining girls in mathematics and on giving a higher profile to investigative activities in science is starting to show benefits, but the school acknowledges that more work needs to be done in these areas. Pupils' overall progress has also improved significantly. They make at least satisfactory progress regardless of their gender, ethnicity, starting points or additional learning needs. The new transition arrangements, with closer links between feeder infant schools, consistent good quality teaching in Year 3 and carefully tailored learning is ensuring that these pupils now make good progress. Progress is also consistently good at the top of the school. Fewer pupils are falling behind in their learning than was previously the case. Effective systems are in place to identify any pupil who underachieves and target them with the right support to get them back on track. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. The school council has discussed safety issues and prompted action to make the school a safe environment. Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playgrounds and there are few incidents of undesirable behaviour. They believe that the steps the school has taken to reduce bullying have been effective. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They have a number of responsibilities around the school, including being playground leaders helping those who are lonely. Pupils are beginning to apply their basic skills in topic work and they work collaboratively with partners or in teams particularly well. These attributes prepare them well for their next stage of education.

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	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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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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has shown a term by term improvement, particularly in English and mathematics. There is good teaching in all year groups, but it is consistently good at the top and bottom of the school. This is a result of better planning, a greater focus on assessing pupils' work and progress, and well-tailored support for staff. Typically, in the best lessons, the pupils are well motivated, interested in what they are learning and actively involved in tasks which keep them thinking and sufficiently challenged. Because pupils are well behaved and teachers now set a brisk pace, very little time is wasted in most lessons. Although the majority of lessons are good or better, inconsistencies in a few lessons mean that teaching remains satisfactory overall. In these lessons, work is not always well tailored to the learning needs of the different groups of pupils and some explanations are not clear enough. Assessment information is mostly used well in English and mathematics to plan work which is sufficiently challenging to all groups of pupils. However, the school recognises that this is less well developed in science and the foundation subjects, and therefore learning in these subjects is sometimes not as challenging as it might be. Pupils mostly know their learning targets in English and mathematics, although they are not always sure what they need to do to really improve their learning. Staff continue to work at making regular reference to pupils' targets and providing helpful suggestions through marking to address this.

The school has rightly focused on improving provision in English and mathematics and the curriculum which is now in place has made a positive contribution to raising attainment. The foundation subjects are starting to be linked to provide a more creative and enjoyable curriculum and there are some emerging examples of good practice and the use of technology. This also enables parents to view their child's work over the internet via the school's web site. Many pupils enjoy and benefit from the wide ranging and popular clubs and residential visits.

There is effective care, guidance and support in the school. The health and safety policies and procedures are robust and there are rigorous systems for safeguarding pupils, including the vetting of all staff, governors, helpers and visitors. The school is beginning to work more effectively with vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities have well constructed individual education plans that help them to learn at an appropriate level, with any necessary support

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identified. Behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place and used consistently by all staff. This is reducing the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour and improving pupils' attitude to learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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 leadership and management of the school are now strong. The team is ambitious for the school and has driven improvement briskly, as is demonstrated by proving that they were ready to be removed from special measures in a relatively short space of time. The expertise brought into the school to share, together with staff being given clear roles and responsibilities to fulfil, has motivated them to work smarter, become more efficient and well organised, and use the information available to them intelligently. Through effective monitoring and reflective practice, they have begun to know their school well and where their priorities should be. Consequently, the leadership and management of teaching and learning, which also now involves governors, has strengthened. With new knowledge and skills, the governing body are now challenging the school and helping the team to address the weaknesses, which are reducing significantly. Governors are also more aware of their statutory responsibilities and ensure these are met.

The school has made great strides in involving parents in pupils' learning, with home-school logs and parents being given many more opportunities to communicate with the school. A Parents' Council has recently been established in recognition of the importance the school places on consulting with parents and hearing their views. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance and this is now above the national average. The relationships with feeder infant schools are much improved, with more contact between schools and better transition arrangements. The transfer of vulnerable pupils into or out of the school is appropriately planned to ensure that pupils are comfortable with the transfer. As a result of carefully thought out intervention and more effective use of resources, including staffing and utilising the knowledge of parents and carers, there is virtually no division in the progress of all learners. The school continues to develop opportunities for community cohesion, and projects undertaken so far are richly increasing pupils' knowledge of communities locally and further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents were invited to provide comments to the Ofsted inspection team prior to the last monitoring visit in July 2009. The school noted their comments and took their views seriously. Most parents view the school positively and recognise the recent improvements and the impact of the new leadership team. A parent of a child with special educational needs commented that he had "nothing but praise for the staff here, who have turned the school around and made it such a happy and vibrant place which is now a credit to the wider community." Parents also value the improved channels of communication between school and home which have been introduced and recognise that they are now better consulted than before. They correctly point out that there are some inconsistencies in teaching and learning across the school although there have been many good improvements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkside Junior School, Ashbourne DE6 1EJ

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues during our last visit. We agree with you and your parents that your school is much improved and the excellent news is that it no longer needs special measures. What a pleasure it is to be able to tell you this!

As you know, I have been visiting Parkside over the last four terms to assess the progress the school has been making. The whole of the team leading your school, including Mr Mansell and the governors, have all worked exceptionally hard to turn your school around. It is so heartening to see what has been accomplished in such a short period of time.

Teachers have been committed to delivering better quality lessons and to helping you achieve well. Most of your lessons are now good and you are interested in what you are learning and doing your best. Last year's Year 6 did very well in their English and mathematics and better than many pupils in other schools. This was the best record for Parkside Junior School in five years. Judging by what we saw in the lessons during our recent visit, you are all enjoying your lessons more and are on course to reach your targets as well. The school feels good when you walk around it and there are many exciting things happening.

I want your school to keep improving, so I have asked it to continue to work on:

- making sure all the lessons are as good as the best ones
- teachers always explaining clearly what they mean
- matching the tasks they give you even better to those of you that are learning more quickly or slowly
- giving you topics that reflect what you are interested in and like doing
- using what they know about your learning to set you the same level of challenge in all subjects as they do already in English and mathematics
- keeping a check on how well all the other subjects are being taught and the progress you are making in every subject.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Jane Melbourne

Her Majesty's Inspector

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