

Parklands Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 121925 |
| Local Authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 292265 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Timothy Bristow HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 412 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andrew Lowe |
| Headteacher | Sally Gedney |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 February 2002 |
| School address | Spinney Hill Road Northampton NN3 6DW |
| Telephone number | 01604 491769 |
| Fax number | 01604 645410 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Parklands Primary School is larger than most primary schools. When pupils enter the school aged four standards are below those expected for their age. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. At the time of inspection the school was being refurbished.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parklands is a good school. Pupils make good progress and standards have risen steadily so that they are now significantly above average when pupils reach the end of Year 6. This is due to the strong leadership to be found at all levels and the good quality of the teaching. Such improvement is to the credit of the school, which has had to deal with many disruptions over the last year created by the major rebuilding and refurbishment that is taking place. The progress made by children in Reception classes is good. The school demonstrates good capacity for future improvement.

The school is a happy one in which pupils feel well cared for. It gives good support for pastoral care which means that pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after. The behaviour and attitude of pupils is good. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding and is fostered very well in assemblies. Pupils are considerate and caring towards each other. They are well aware of what constitutes a nutritious diet and make healthy choices at break and lunchtimes. The school's pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. A number organise clubs for other pupils to enjoy. The school council takes an active lead, for example by preparing and delivering an assembly about anti-bullying, and pupils of all ages are involved in charity events. Pupils leave Parklands well prepared for education in a secondary school. Contributing factors to this are their good basic skills and the opportunity older pupils have to learn French.

The school's good teaching is characterised by well structured lessons which successfully employ a variety of techniques to maintain the interest and attention of pupils. Teaching assistants are well trained and give pupils good support. Good relationships exist between adults and pupils. The school has an effective method for checking pupils' progress. However this is not being used consistently to pitch lessons at the right level for some pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Marking is done regularly, but not enough guidance is given to pupils about the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Improvements have been made in mathematics teaching since the previous inspection and standards are now above average.

The school provides an enriching curriculum with many stimulating activities. Themed events, for example Victorian Day, all contribute to the pleasure pupils get from learning. Teachers have successfully established a broad curriculum. The school has created good links between subjects, for example linking drama lessons with science work enabled pupils to understand and write about the life cycle of a frog. Many pupils are learning to play a musical instrument because of the good links the school has with the local authority's instrumental teachers.

The quality of provision in the Reception Year is good. Teachers have a good method for measuring children's progress and using this information to pitch lessons at the correct level for them. Children in Reception classes thoroughly enjoy the many stimulating activities prepared for them and consequently they make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information when planning lessons so that they are pitched at the correct level for all pupils.
- Ensure that all teachers give pupils regular guidance when marking so that they know the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. When children start school their standards are below those expected for their age. They are particularly low in communication, language and literacy and their knowledge and use of mathematical calculation. However, the children in Reception classes make good progress in all areas of learning and most reach or exceed national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. They continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. This is reflected in the Year 2 tests in 2006, in which standards were above average overall. School information shows that in 2007 most pupils in Year 2 have met or exceeded the challenging targets set by the school. Pupils' good progress is maintained through Key Stage 2 and standards overall are significantly above average by the end of Year 6. In 2006 all pupils reached the expected standard for their age in English. In classes where pupils understand how to improve their work their progress accelerates. However, in some classes progress is slower because pupils are not aware of their targets or what it is they need to do to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to all pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are underpinned by outstanding spiritual development. This was evident in assemblies where there was an atmosphere of respectful contemplation. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils work well together when planning and discussing their work. They show respect for the qualities of other people. In lessons, Year 6 pupils demonstrated an awareness of the influence that different circumstances have on people's attitudes and behaviour. Pupils feel safe in school, acting and behaving responsibly at a time of great disruption caused by the school refurbishment. Incidences of bullying are very low. This is in part due to the anti-bullying week which was planned and led by pupils. Pupils take part in a good range of sporting and dance activities and are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school, taking particular pride in their achievements in the performing arts. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. The school council represents the views of pupils well, consulting classes and influencing decisions about the development of the school. Pupils act very responsibly when organising charitable fund raising and looking after younger children when they first start school. A recent community project involving many pupils has created strong links with the local hospice. The contribution pupils make to the community prepares them well for their future economic well-being, as does their good progress in basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well structured with clear learning objectives and success criteria which are understood by pupils. Good questioning is directed at all pupils, enabling them to give thoughtful answers. Pupils are well focused in whole class sessions where the pace of learning is rapid and lively. Pupils are able to adapt quickly to other methods such

as working with 'talking partners' or independently. Teaching assistants are effective at enabling pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to make good progress in lessons. In many lessons assessment information is used by teachers to plan work that is pitched at the correct level for all pupils. However, this is not yet happening consistently in all lessons and some pupils make slower progress than they could because the work is either too easy or too hard for them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum provision is good. The school has good curriculum plans which enable all pupils to access the rich diversity of experiences on offer. The school gives pupils good opportunities to practise and apply skills learnt in English and mathematics in other subjects. For example the library skills involved in information retrieval are taught in many subjects. Many lessons are enriched by school visits and visitors which pupils thoroughly enjoy. There is a wide range of school clubs, music provision and sport which a majority of pupils take part in. There are good partnerships with other local schools and older pupils speak positively about moving to secondary school. Personal, social and health education lessons teach pupils to have a good understanding about how to stay safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory with some good elements. Pupils are well cared for, so that they are confident and feel secure in school. Teachers communicate well with parents to promote pupils' well-being. Satisfactory systems are in place to keep pupils safe and healthy which are being currently updated to match the changing circumstances of the school. The school has satisfactory methods for checking attendance. The education welfare officer works closely with the school to encourage better attendance. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Although pupils know and understand the purpose of each lesson, they are not fully aware of the next steps they need to take to improve their learning. This is because some teachers do not give pupils enough guidance about how to achieve their personal targets when marking their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives a strong lead and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other school leaders. There is a good team spirit amongst the staff that is focused on raising standards and improving pupils' well-being. This is to the credit of school leaders as many teachers have only been in post for a relatively short period of time.

The school improvement plan contains clear priorities that are shared by all staff and governors. The quality of self-evaluation is good. Teaching and many aspects of school provision are checked regularly, providing a good focus for staff training. Reliable methods for measuring pupil progress are in place and are being successfully used to give additional support where it is needed. However, the system is not yet being used by some staff to ensure that all pupils are making as much progress as they could. Good leadership in the Reception Year ensures

that children make rapid progress. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the work of the school. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and a good overview of the school which enables them to act as critical friends. The school strives hard to manage its budget, does so successfully and gives good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Parklands Primary School, Spinney Hill Road, Northampton, NN3 6DW

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We felt very welcome at Parklands Primary School. If you remember, we came to look at the work that you were doing and to talk with you and your teachers. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were very friendly and well behaved. You are acting very sensibly whilst your school is being rebuilt. You work hard and take part in many exciting activities which you told us that you thoroughly enjoy. You told us that you feel safe in school and know how to get help if you need it. You are outstanding at helping others and making improvements in school.

Your headteacher and all of the staff are doing a good job at Parklands. Your teachers carefully plan interesting lessons. This is helping you to do well by the time you reach Year 6. Taking everything into account, we decided that yours is a good school.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked the school to do.

- When marking your work, give you advice about how you can do even better.
- Make sure your work is not too hard or too easy for you.

You can help your teachers by listening carefully to the advice they give you and by making sure that you come to school every day. Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow Her Majesty's Inspector