

Parklands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121925
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340049
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Richard Marsden

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Baylis
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Gedney
Date of previous school inspection	0 June 2007
School address	Spinney Hill Road Northampton NN3 6DW
Telephone number	01604 491769
Fax number	01604 645410
Email address	head@parklands.northants-ecl.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents, policies and planning for future development. They analysed data showing pupils' progress and attainment, as well as questionnaires returned by parents, pupils and staff.

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

- the achievement of pupils, to determine whether they are being adequately stretched and challenged in all classes, and why progress has been slower in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 in recent years
- the quality of the care, guidance and support which the pupils receive, to determine whether the school's evaluation of this area of its work is accurate.

Information about the school

Parklands Primary is a large school. The proportion of pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities is higher than that usually found. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Since the last inspection the school has been refurbished and re-equipped.

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

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Children join the Reception classes with skills and understanding that are below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, but the large majority make good progress through to the end of Key Stage 1. Progress then slows in Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching is less consistent, so that by the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. It is consistently higher in reading than in writing and mathematics, where there has been more variation in attainment.

Children say they enjoy school and are keen to learn. Relationships are good and pupils behave maturely and sensibly around the school. The curriculum is good. In addition to promoting pupils' skills well in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) the school offers an impressive range of enrichment opportunities which make an invaluable contribution to their all-round development.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but too variable. There are too few opportunities for pupils to participate actively in lessons. Teachers mostly show good subject knowledge and they mark pupils' work conscientiously, although not all written comments are helpful enough to ensure improvement, particularly in their writing. Also, teachers' planning does not always take sufficient account of what pupils can already do, especially in mathematics. Learning support assistants, some of them highly skilled and knowledgeable, help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with that of other pupils.

Throughout the school, pastoral care is outstanding and pupils' personal development is given a high priority. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional and they avail themselves willingly of the many opportunities the school provides for them to take on responsibilities and contribute to the community. The school gives good support to vulnerable pupils.

Leadership is satisfactory. The effectiveness of the school is closely monitored and evaluated by senior leaders and governors. They know its strengths and weaknesses well and have developed an increasingly clear view of what the school needs to do to improve. The use of assessment information to identify and respond to the individual needs of pupils, which was an area for improvement at the last inspection, has improved markedly, although the full impact of this has yet to be felt consistently across the school. The school has satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvement.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - all pupils have opportunities to be actively involved in their learning
 - feedback to pupils always shows them clearly how to improve their work
 - the inconsistencies in teaching quality are removed so that the quality of teaching in all lessons matches that seen in the best.
- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of mathematics is based on consistently good use of teachers' day-to-day records of what pupils have learnt
 - the teaching of English places more emphasis on helping pupils to understand how they can improve the quality of their writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils showed interest in their work and generally made better progress in Reception and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2, in keeping with recent test results. Attainment in reading was seen to be good in both key stages, but it was weaker in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Teachers' planning takes account of the needs of different individuals, although the success with which these needs are met varies, and in some classes there is insufficient challenge for the highest attainers.

Children show a good understanding of how to stay safe, and were keen to tell inspectors how safe they feel in school. They gave convincing examples of steps the school takes to ensure their safety. Their behaviour is good, whether or not they are directly supervised. They interact very well with each other and with adults. They say that they do not fear bullying because it is infrequent and because teachers deal with any incidences effectively. Pupils know what they need to do to lead healthy lifestyles and provide many examples of how they put this knowledge into practice, for example by taking regular exercise and by eating healthily.

Pupils' contribution to the community is an outstanding feature of the school. They take up the many and varied opportunities to contribute to community life, whether within the school - as 'road safety officers', 'playground pals', 'buddies' and leaders of clubs, for example - or in the wider community through participation in music festivals or fundraising for charity.

Pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but other skills which contribute to their future economic well-being are well developed. These include ICT and interpersonal skills. A determined approach to raising attendance rates and improving punctuality has been effective. As a result, attendance is satisfactory and improving.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show an excellent understanding of right and wrong and empathise very well with other people,

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

including those from different cultures, both in lessons and in other areas of school life. In a thought-provoking assembly they contemplated very reverently and respectfully the experiences of someone who had experienced bullying. The pupils are very proud of their school and were keen to tell inspectors how much they enjoy being here.

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
Pupils' behaviour	2
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 quality of teaching varies from outstanding to inadequate. In an outstanding ICT lesson, pupils were given a highly challenging task involving the mixing and matching of sounds and pictures. This captivated their interest and imagination and, as a result, their achievement was most impressive. In less successful lessons, teachers dominated the talking, giving lengthy explanations and instructions while pupils were eager to be 'up and doing', and to engage personally in learning. Often teachers' questions directed the pupils' thinking, rather than challenging them to think things out for themselves. Relationships between adults and children and among children themselves are good. Learning support assistants are well deployed to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that these pupils achieve as well as others. Pupils' work is

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

conscientiously marked although the extent to which teachers' comments help children to improve is variable.

The curriculum is well organised and places good emphasis on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy. It offers a broad range of experiences with many and varied opportunities for enrichment, particularly in music and sport. Some clubs are even run by the children themselves for their peers, giving them valuable opportunities to develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility. Participation in extra-curricular activities is high, and activities are greatly enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils are very well known as individuals and arrangements for their care contribute very well to their personal development. Vulnerable pupils receive very clearly targeted support, and the school has been successful in improving their attitudes and confidence. There are clear, well-established arrangements to ensure a smooth transition between the key stages.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels are motivated to seek further improvement and have accurately identified areas for improvement. The expectations of senior leaders are high and plans to bring about improvement are in place, although the impact of these in terms of raising the attainment of pupils and accelerating their progress is not yet consistently evident. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching although strategies have not yet eradicated unevenness in quality.

Governors have detailed first-hand knowledge of the school and local community. They take a close interest in the progress and well-being of pupils. They have constructive relationships with the staff and are effective in holding the school to account and determining its strategic direction. They have been influential in supporting the school in identifying weaknesses and making plans to bring about improvements.

The school engages well with parents. It has positive relationships with most groups of parents and carers. It keeps them well informed and takes account of their views when planning. Other partnerships also benefit the pupils. These include, for example, the range of agencies which support the school's work with vulnerable pupils, as well as the neighbouring specialist music college which has provided instruments so that large numbers of pupils can enjoy practical music making.

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

Equal opportunities are satisfactorily promoted. The school has pertinent information about groups of pupils and evaluates their participation and performance. This has led to some improvement in the areas where the school has targeted its actions, such as in narrowing the gap in attainment in mathematics between different groups of pupils.

Safeguarding procedures are very secure. Staff are well versed in all procedures and the school integrates issues about safety and safeguarding into the curriculum very effectively so that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

The school is a very cohesive and harmonious community where individuals get on very well with each other. Staff have a good appreciation of the local community and they promote pupils' engagement with a range of community groups beyond the school very well, most notably through music and charity work. The school has begun to plan and evaluate its work further afield more systematically.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Reception classes children enjoy their learning as they keenly apply themselves to the wide variety of activities on offer. The staff are successful in promoting most children's progress, including the progress of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are well qualified and are skilled in developing children's curiosity about the world around them. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's skills in communicating clearly. Adults provide a stimulating environment in which children can develop their literacy, numeracy and social skills. Children have many opportunities to use computers, although the extent to which they actually learn and

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

make progress by using them is inconsistent.

Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. All requirements of the childcare register are fully met. Welfare requirements, such as paediatric first-aid training of staff, are securely in place. Staff are well aware of the different ways in which children learn, and ensure that the activities provided meet the needs of all the children. Planning of work is thorough and is based on the evidence gathered through careful observations and skilled assessments of how well children are achieving, and what their next steps in learning should be. Good use is made of the opportunities for outdoor learning.

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

The questionnaires and other evidence provided by the school indicate good levels of satisfaction among parents. A very few took the opportunity to express individual grievances, but many appended equally positive comments to the questionnaires and impressed inspectors greatly by the strength of their support for the school and its work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parklands 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 131 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 411 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	56	53	40	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	80	61	49	37	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	35	74	56	8	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	66	50	55	42	7	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	64	49	63	48	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	40	70	53	5	4	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	37	79	60	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)	38	29	69	53	10	8	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	37	69	53	7	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	36	72	55	3	2	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	31	79	60	5	4	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	61	47	60	46	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	48	74	48	5	3	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

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.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parklands Primary School, Northampton, NN3 6DW

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you all for being so welcoming and helpful to us when we visited your school. Your parents value the work your school does for you and many of you were very proud to tell us how much you like coming to school.

We have judged the school to be satisfactory, which means that it does some things well but also has some areas that need to be improved. Here are some of the things that we particularly liked about your school:

We were very impressed by your good behaviour and the way you get on with one another.

You have lots of opportunities to do extra things outside your lessons.

You are very good at taking responsibility.

You feel safe because the staff take excellent care of you.

You learn to appreciate how other people see things differently from you.

Every school has something that could be improved, and this is what we think your school should do to make it better:

We would like teachers to make lessons more interesting by giving you more opportunities to do things for yourselves, rather than just sitting and listening.

We think that many of you could achieve higher standards in your work, especially in writing and mathematics, and particularly in the older classes.

I am sure that you will all want to work hard with your teachers to bring about these improvements.

Yours sincerely

Richard Marsden

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.