

Parkgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111126
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	354381
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Mr Graham Martin

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Baker
Headteacher	Mrs M Downey
Date of previous school inspection	June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed eight lessons taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work; they looked at a range of evidence, including policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work, the school's assessments and records of pupils' progress and attainment. They also analysed 87 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- if pupils all attain as well as they are able to in English and mathematics
- if the school's evaluations of its effectiveness are sufficiently robust and accurate
- if teaching in mathematics is of sufficient quality to improve achievement in mathematics.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. It draws pupils from the village of Parkgate on the Wirral peninsular. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than is normally found. The school has gained the Basic Skills and Inclusion Quality Marks, the national Healthy Schools award and the Activemark. It also holds the Investor in People award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils' good behaviour and attendance helps them to learn and achieve well. They reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, although standards in mathematics are not yet quite as high as in English. Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is good, as is their contribution to their school and the wider community. The school is popular with parents and carers on account of the good teaching, care and support the school gives their children, seen in comments such as, 'I am extremely pleased with the education provided by Parkgate Primary.' Pupils say they feel safe, a result of the school safeguarding them well by meeting all current requirements. One pupil mirrored the comments of many when saying, 'We like our school; it is a kind and caring place. We really enjoy learning and we like to keep fit and healthy.'

Reception children learn and achieve well, with most, by the time they enter Year 1, reaching at least the expected early goals for their age, from starting points that are usually similar to those typically seen nationally. Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Recent improvements in setting learning targets for writing and marking pupils' written work have resulted in higher attainment overall. The writing children produce shows that their progress is consistently good. In mathematics, number skills are also good. However, some mathematics lessons do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems, which limits their mathematical progress. This factor results in pupils achieving a little less well in mathematics than in English.

Teaching is good. Teachers skilfully tap into pupils' willingness to learn, their positive attitudes and cooperative behaviour. Teachers' assessments are accurate and help them to set challenging but appropriate learning targets for pupils. In lessons, pupils' enjoyment of school and their determination to succeed is reflected in their enthusiasm to tackle challenging tasks. Relationships at all levels are good, so that pupils feel appreciated and cherished. Well-informed teaching assistants support vulnerable pupils very effectively, enabling them to make good progress in lessons. The curriculum is good. Pupils particularly appreciate the breadth and balance of activities in the school's revised curriculum that make learning exciting, relevant and meaningful. In addition, high-quality enrichment opportunities enhance learning experiences, for example the out-of-school activities and exciting visits, including residential visits, and visitors. There are some good local community links that help pupils to appreciate their situation and role in society, although not enough is yet done to broaden pupils' understanding of other world cultures.

The school's evaluation of its work is accurate. School leaders are unambiguous in their vision, and fully committed to improving outcomes for pupils. Governors make a good contribution to school development, engaging well with school improvement action. Staff work well as an effective team, clear about their individual roles and accountabilities and how their contribution might further enhance provision. Hence, this is a self-aware and self-improving school with good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that mathematics lessons consistently provide opportunities for pupils to use their skills of mathematical enquiry and investigation
 - improving opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills to problem solving.

- Promote pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures nationally and internationally by:
 - completing an audit of the current provision for promoting pupils' awareness of other cultures
 - implementing fully the action plan for using the international links as a conduit to promote community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils in Year 6 have attained consistently above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics for nearly all of the last five years. Current Year 6 assessment records show that pupils are on track to meet the school's own challenging targets for the 2010 Key Stage 2 national tests, reflecting the good quality of their work seen during the inspection. Written work in English demonstrates pupils' use of a wide vocabulary, their ability to write in a variety of styles and genres and good use of their writing skills across other subjects, such as in history when writing letters from Pompeii or producing information leaflets about the amenities at a recently visited residential activity centre. Current assessments of attainment show that progress is good in reading, writing and number, though attainment is lower in pupils' application of number skills to problem solving. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in both key stages make good progress because there is effective support from adults and appropriately suitable work in class to match their learning needs.

Pupils feel safe and readily comment on their trust in the care provided by adults for their well-being. The school's good climate for learning and good provision for personal and social education make a strong contribution to pupils' academic growth and their spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and the wider community, including through the work of the school council, raising money for a children's hospice and producing the posters to promote the summer fair. The school has taken good steps to broaden pupils' understanding of religious diversity through visits to a number of places of worship. Pupils have a secure knowledge of traditional British culture through good provision in the

performing arts and music, also reflected in many examples of high-quality 2D and 3D art work. They have begun to learn about some other world cultures from their new curriculum but the school has not yet fully audited this provision or implemented the action plan to embed cultural development more securely.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils' learning, gained from effective assessments, to provide work that is interesting and engaging, to build on pupils' earlier achievements. Teachers' planning is detailed and takes into account the range of ages, abilities and needs in every class. Lessons mostly provide the right amount of challenge for pupils to achieve well, although in a few mathematics lessons too much time is spent consolidating established number skills, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their good skills to investigate and solve mathematical problems. These are not frequent features of lessons, however, and teaching is good, with some outstanding practice evident.

Teaching assistants and the learning mentor work very closely with teachers and play a full and important part in lessons. The support they provide for pupils, particularly for those who have difficulties with learning, has a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of lessons and the progress they make.

A broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and successfully promotes their enjoyment of learning. Teachers and pupils are enthused by the opportunity to apply key skills in exciting and engaging ways in their recently adopted curriculum. Learning is particularly well enhanced by enriching creative opportunities, such as achieving many sporting successes, taking part in exciting residential activities and playing musical instruments. Such activities promote pupils' confidence and contribute significantly to their personal development and enjoyment.

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

The school has good collaborations, such as through the Education Improvement Partnership, which enable pupils to follow their interests. For example, an increasingly wide range of out-of-school clubs and workshops for the gifted and talented helps to promote pupils' good enjoyment and achievement. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Particular strengths of provision include the inclusion of vulnerable pupils in curriculum plans to ensure their good learning and the quality of care provided for pupils who need guidance or experience difficulties. A well coordinated team of adults works to direct children and their parents and carers to extensive support networks.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

School staff work well as a team. Good leadership has improved many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection, most notably the careful tracking of each pupil's progress to inform staff if pupils are learning as well as they should in each year group. Additionally, school leaders make robust and accurate checks to confirm that teaching is consistently good for all pupils. Leadership responsibilities are distributed well, so that all members of staff have a role to play in improving the school further. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection through careful monitoring, evaluation and sharing of best practice.

Governors play an effective role in evaluating and supporting the work of the school. Their clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses enables them to provide strong strategic support for the headteacher's drive for improvement. For example, they have evaluated the implementation of a new curriculum alongside school staff. Governors ensure that the school meets the national standards for financial management and that the school gives good value for money. The school engages well with local authority agencies, the partner secondary school and other primary schools. Partnerships to promote the creative and sporting aspects of the curriculum are particularly important and have a very positive impact on the quality and enrichment of pupils' learning. Strong links with local care agencies contribute to the good quality of care, guidance and support provided.

School staff work diligently to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils, for example by providing a curriculum matched to their needs and good additional support for those who need it. The school has the appropriate policies to tackle racial and other forms of discrimination, should it occur. The effectiveness of safeguarding is good due to the rigorous safeguarding reviews held between school staff and link governors. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. School leaders acknowledge the need to audit the new curriculum to evaluate how well it promotes pupils' wider appreciation of other cultures.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children start in the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age. A good partnership between staff, parents and carers and the children ensures that children settle quickly and happily to Reception class routines. They are soon ready and able to take part in whole-school activities, such as assemblies. Children's attainment on entry is assessed early on and their progress is tracked with careful daily observations and assessments to complete the Early Years Foundation Stage profile accurately.

Children make good progress in the acquisition of personal and social skills and in their communication and language development, preparing them well to be good learners. They become accustomed to a good daily routine made up of a suitable mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Good teaching ensures that the children are eager to learn and by the end of the Reception Year most children achieve at least the average level in the early learning goals for their age.

The children enjoy a rich early learning curriculum. They are also well cared for, with effective guidance and support for their emotional, social and personal development. Enjoying purposeful practical activities, they play and cooperate well, such as in a discovering mini-beasts, then drawing them and finding out their names. Good observational assessments in whole-class and small-group sessions identify children who need extra support to secure their understanding of, for example, early writing skills, through extra one-to-one practice with the teacher. Early literacy and numeracy skills are developed through short, focused whole-class sessions. Emerging writing skills are celebrated and reinforced by good opportunities to write for a purpose, such as discussing and writing adjectives to use in describing each other.

The welcoming Reception classroom has good resources to provide well for all aspects of the curriculum for children this age. Teachers plan the use of outside areas effectively and have well advanced plans to improve the children's access to large play equipment outside. The Early Years Foundation Stage leaders have taken good steps to ensure that all children make good progress across all of the areas of

learning. Leadership and management are good, and robust attention is paid to children's safety and welfare by all adults.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspectors would like to thank parents and carers for their helpful remarks on questionnaires. The majority of parents and carers expressed positive views about the school, saying, for example, 'Good discipline provides children with the opportunity to learn without distractions'; and that there is, 'a very caring culture between the children'.

A small minority of parents and carers expressed the view that the school does not take account of their views and suggestions well enough. Inspectors discussed this with school leaders. Inspectors saw that the school's systems for communicating with parents are generally effective. School leaders are keen to improve school and home communication and ensure that parents and carers are consistently well informed, such as through the recent introduction of governor surgeries during parents' evenings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkgate 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	63	31	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	57	35	40	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	38	50	57	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	44	46	53	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	43	49	42	48	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	49	38	44	5	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	39	49	56	4	5	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)	31	36	45	52	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	48	40	46	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	41	43	49	6	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	31	47	54	12	14	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	41	41	47	7	8	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	48	43	49	2	2	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 all 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 pupils' 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.



16 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkgate Primary School, Neston, CH64 6SW

Thank you for welcoming us in such a friendly, well-mannered and helpful way when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed the time we spent with you very much, watching you learn well in your lessons, working hard and enjoying your learning. We agree with you and your parents and carers that you go to a good school.

These are some of the things we found to be good in your school. Your headteacher and other leaders do a good job. The adults take good care of you and you are well looked after. You enjoy your lessons and do well, particularly in your English. Your behaviour is good and you all get on well with each other, such as by being 'buddies' at play times. You are well aware of how to develop healthy lifestyles, joining in well with active playground activities and sports and eating healthy food. You show good responsibility in caring for your school and your local community. You have a good community spirit, looking after each other well and doing good things to help to improve the quality of life for people in your neighbourhood, such as entertaining people with your singing and helping at the Summer Fair.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make the most important improvements happen we have asked them to:

- help you to improve your mathematics, especially in using your number skills to investigate and solve problems
- help you to learn and understand more about the ways that people from other cultures around the world enjoy and celebrate their lives.

You told us how much you want to help your school to keep getting better, so please make sure you work hard and do your best all the time. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Graham Martin
Lead inspector

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