

Parkfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123714
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314685
Inspection date	7 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

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 on roll	
School	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Summerill
Headteacher	Wynford Sides
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2004
School address	Parkfield Road Taunton TA1 4RT
Telephone number	01823 282125
Fax number	01823 352137

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated:

the dips in standards and achievement in 2007 in writing at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at Key Stage 2

the impact of the curriculum on pupils' personal development and well-being

the impact of assessment on pupils' care, guidance and support.

Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' test results, observation of lessons, parents'/carers' questionnaires, discussions with the senior leadership team, staff, governors and pupils, and scrutiny of samples of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a significantly larger than average primary school situated in a residential area of Taunton. The majority of pupils do not come from the local community and this proportion has been increasing over the last four years. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a very small minority of pupils with English as an additional language. These pupils are of Cantonese, Filipino and Indian origin and some are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much lower than average and the majority of these pupils have social, emotional and behavioural problems.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

A shared passion for learning adventures in this outstanding school is evident in all that it does. 'The school not only educates my children in academic subjects but also provides an education in working together despite any age or cultural differences.' 'This is a great school.' 'The before and after school provision is exemplary.' These are the views of parents/carers, and they are right! Good improvement has been made since the last inspection and the school has excellent capacity for further improvement. It provides excellent value for money.

This learning community has been established by an experienced and long standing headteacher who, along with all staff, has not only sustained high academic standards but also ensured that pupils emerge as caring, confident and socially responsible citizens. Governors' professional knowledge and expertise are used exceptionally well. The whole community sees education as a triangular relationship of child, parent/carer and teacher, all pulling in the same direction. Increasingly more of the pupils live further away from the school. The school has recognised the need to sustain its traditionally effective partnerships with parents/carers to engage them in their children's learning. To help do this it has created a highly effective CD for parents/carers, designed to help their personal understanding of mathematics, English and science. The challenge for the school and its increasingly wider spread community is in maintaining this good relationship and understanding of each other's roles. When they enter the school, most pupils are at the expected starting point for their age, although there is more variation for those who join after the Reception Year. Pupils in Reception get off to a good start because adults carefully analyse and monitor what they know, understand and can do. They then use these data to sustain and develop the individual's learning and development needs. This comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of each pupil is maintained throughout the school. Consequently teaching and progress throughout the school for all pupils are good and in recent years standards have been significantly higher than average by the time pupils have left school. In 2007, there was a dip in standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, although standards in mathematics and reading in Key Stage 1, along with English and science in Key Stage 2, remained significantly higher than average. The school has taken immediate action to reverse these dips, particularly in mathematics, by increasing the sharpness of personal target setting. Because of this and the very strong teaching in the year group, school records show that most pupils in Year 6 have made outstanding progress. The school is well under way to implement the successful work piloted in Year 6 throughout the rest of the school.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are exemplary. There is no unauthorised absence and authorised absence is just below the national average. This, the lack of truancy and the pupils' enthusiasm as they engage in their learning journeys, demonstrate just how much pupils really enjoy coming to school and how supportive the vast majority of parents/carers are. Over half of the parents/carers responded to the confidential Ofsted questionnaire and of these all but a handful had nothing but praise for the school, providing glowing comments about its staff and their hard work. Inspection evidence concurs with their views.

Parkfield invests greatly in learning support assistants who are very effectively deployed to work inside the classroom with small groups that have been identified with learning or behavioural difficulties. This support is monitored and reviewed regularly to meet the needs of the individual pupil. Due to this close support and monitoring, challenging pupils are supported promptly and successfully so that no pupils are or feel excluded.

Pupils take full advantage of the feast of activities offered during and after school. Because the curriculum focuses around many real life situations, pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship skills are developed extremely well. Pupils also develop financial and enterprise skills that are meaningful and useful for their future lives, for example through organising activities and stalls for school functions. A joy to watch is the 'Parkfield Apprentice' which was adapted from the BBC television programme where pupils raised money as part of the summer fete. This can be seen on the very successful website along with the daily pod casts and animations produced by the pupils.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and contribute to the smooth running and decision making processes of the school. 'Parle at Parkfield is alive, well and makes a significant difference,' say pupils and parents/carers. Instead of a school council, Parle ensures that all 271 pupils in the juniors can directly help form decisions. It has been influential in making changes and improvements, such as the secret garden, improving lunchtimes and helping to design the exciting new outdoor adventure area. Pupils say they feel safe, cared for and listened to. They particularly value being able to volunteer for roles of duty and service to others.

Healthy eating and exercise are highlighted from the youngest age in Reception, where pupils sort and group foods and talk about healthy/unhealthy foods as well as gain understanding of the importance of sleep, exercise and keeping clean. Pupils gain a very good understanding about issues relating to sex, drugs and personal relationships in accordance with their maturity.

The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school aims to encourage growth in each individual's inner self and an ability to express this through self-respect, worship and creativity, leading to personal fulfilment and the search for answers to fundamental questions. It does this exceedingly well. Residential trips in Years 4 and 5 help to develop leadership and teamwork skills. The Year 6 week in France exposes the pupils to the French culture and allows them to practise the language they have learned since they were in Reception. It also links carefully with reflection on the impact of past and current wars and conflicts. The school recognises that pupils would benefit from more visits to and from leaders of non-Christian faiths. Nevertheless, its resources of non-Christian artefacts are celebrated around the school and are of such a high quality that other schools borrow them.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Because it is well led and managed, provision in the Foundation Stage is good. When the children start in Reception most of them demonstrate the broad levels of personal skills and attributes expected for their age. However, the proportion of children who have a lack of speaking, listening, independence and thinking skills on entry is increasing. Most children have experienced pre-school education, although more of them did in the recent past. Good teaching and support from dedicated, experienced teachers and teaching assistants ensure that all children make good progress, particularly those with less developed social and communication skills. As a result they make good progress in all the areas of learning by the time they transfer into Year 1. Parents/carers told the inspector that 'Parkfield has achieved the perfect balance between all the important attributes of learning, fun and discipline.'

The children's introduction to the school is very carefully planned so that they feel safe and happy. The 'Play to Learn' afternoons, for children starting school the following September,

allowing them to meet staff and other children starting at the school are particularly successful. They are also used to provide opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to learn and develop leadership and management skills by working with supervised small groups on the various activities available.

The outdoor play area provision, which in the last inspection was inadequate, is now good. Both classes have access to a large playground for bikes and cars, plus a covered courtyard and a separate patio with tables. There are also two gardens for both classes to develop during the year. Teachers use these spaces very well so that children get the opportunity to choose and learn through different types of play with activities that are carefully structured but that allow for personal direction. This was typified by the work observed relating to holidays. Here, children could choose to make collages for their dream destination, plan and design railway tracks, imagine boat rides, paint their holiday, create their own seascapes in the sand pit and make hula-hula skirts and welcoming paper flower garlands.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the successful and sustainable parts of the work piloted in Year 6 throughout the rest of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

8 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkfield Primary School, Parkfield Road, Taunton, TA1 4RT

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I came to inspect your school to see how well all the children are learning. I enjoyed my day at your school, which has a lovely family feel. It was a pleasure to hear you sing so well in assembly and watch Year 6 rehearsing for Bugsey. Thank you for talking to me about your work and what it is like being a pupil at your school. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

?Parkfield is an outstanding school. ?You are superb ambassadors for your school. You are very responsible, play sensibly and look out for each other. You clearly enjoy your time in school and get on well together and with the staff. ?Grown-ups at school listen to what you have to say and try to improve things for you in the way that you want and need. ?You work well in lessons and make good progress because you are taught well. Most of you reach good standards in your work by the end of Year 6. ?All the staff really work well together as a team with you and your parents/carers. As a result, they know you very well and the best ways to help you. As you told me, this has also helped make sure that you feel safe and secure.

Since the school was last inspected, the adults have worked hard on making improvements in the right places. They are keen to make the school even better and they talked to me about how they might do so. I have asked them to expand some of the work they have piloted in Year 6 throughout the rest of the school. Can you think of ways to help them do this, perhaps through Parle?

Thank you for being so polite and helpful to me during the visit. I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning. Please thank your parents/carers for the very helpful comments they made on the questionnaires. I know you have a great website, so if you want to see the full report please go to this link: www.Ofsted.gov.uk

Good luck Year 6 with Bugsey! Having watched the CDs of the other school productions I know it will be just as fantastic! With my very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny Her Majesty's Inspector