

Parkend Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115553
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311974
Inspection date	3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Don Mason

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	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Rosalind Escott
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Yorkley Road Parkend Lydney GL15 4HL
Telephone number	01594 562407
Fax number	01594 562407

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds and most are from White British families. Their attainment on entry to school is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but varies considerably from year to year. The school accommodates a privately run nursery. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school in which pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and personal development. Parents express strong support for the school, with many sharing the view that, 'The staff cater not just for my child's school needs but they offer a very varied after-school curriculum with interesting clubs.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, including children in the Foundation Stage, and standards at the end of Year 6 are average. This is a result of satisfactory teaching in all classes. Pupils are well behaved and cooperative. However, in lessons, they are often passive and sometimes show little enthusiasm for learning. The curriculum is satisfactory, ensuring that pupils make sound progress in the basic skills and in information and communication technology (ICT). The school provides good curriculum enrichment that is much appreciated by pupils and parents alike. Links with the Forestry Commission and activities such as the gardening and creative cookery club contribute well to the pupils' personal development and enjoyment of learning. Pupils feel safe and secure because of the good care provided by adults who know their pupils very well. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall because the academic guidance provided for pupils is at an early stage of development. Learning objectives for lessons are made clear but pupils are not given enough advice about how to improve their work. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through the school council, village and church events, charity fundraising and special days.

The headteacher is enthusiastic and energetic. She has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to bring about improvements. She has introduced a new system to assess pupils' progress and keep track of their attainment. However, teachers are not using the information gained to set work which always meets pupils' needs appropriately. The school does not make use of department of education support materials to assist pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and relies instead on the generous staffing ratio and general support from teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils generally make as much progress as their peers but no more. The headteacher carries out formal monitoring of teaching but does not visit classes often enough, informally, in order to check that the teaching is consistently enabling pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Because of the good care provided for them, children settle into school very quickly and make good progress in their personal and social development. As noted by one parent, 'The children are made to feel very welcome, as are the parents. After just a few weeks my child has settled very well.' Children make satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning and standards are in line with those expected by the end of the Reception Year. Teaching and the curriculum provided are satisfactory. Children enjoy their activities but too many are teacher directed and the children sometimes have to sit for long periods with older pupils. The children have relatively few opportunities to learn through play and some activities do not extend their learning sufficiently because the planning does not make the learning objective of the activity clear. A further consequence of this is that the best use is not always made of teaching assistants and other adults because they are not sure of their role in the activity.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information to set work which meets the learning needs of pupils to ensure that they make as much progress as possible in every lesson.
- Improve the information given to pupils about their achievements and what they need to do to improve further.
- Revise planning in the Foundation Stage to give children more opportunities to learn through play and make the learning objectives of these activities clear to all staff.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start school with broadly average skills and capabilities. They make sound progress in the Foundation Stage and nearly all reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils of all abilities continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 and reach average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. There is some variation in standards in national test results because the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies considerably from year to year. The 2007 Year 6 tests saw a significant improvement in the achievement of more able pupils in writing. This was a result of the school's work to improve the teaching of writing and to give pupils clear advice about how to improve. However, this improvement has not been extended throughout the school and does not reflect standards in writing in other year groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have relatively few opportunities to work in teams, to plan activities together and to make decisions about their learning, and this limits their personal development. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are friendly and cooperative but are sometimes restless or unresponsive in class. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and topics on the food, language and traditions of a number of countries make a good contribution to their understanding of other cultures. Pupils' improving self-esteem is promoted through the 'Star of the Week' assembly and the fact that they are encouraged to express their views through the school council. Members of the council enjoyed the responsibility of designing the newly installed adventure playground. Pupils know the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise, as was recognised in Parkend winning a Healthy School award. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the many clubs and other opportunities which the school offers them in their beautiful woodland surroundings. The skills that pupils will require in their future lives are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress because the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils get on well with their teachers. They respond well to clear routines and the learning

objective for each lesson is shared with them. Lesson planning is satisfactory but too little account is taken of the wide range of ages and abilities in each class. This has the result that pupils are not generally enthusiastic about their learning. They find it difficult to listen for too long, although they are more animated when they are sent off to work on their activities. Assessment information is not used well enough to match work to the needs of pupils and there is too much reliance on worksheets aimed at the middle ability group. This especially affects the progress made by more able pupils because less able pupils usually receive appropriate support from teaching assistants. However, the best use is not always made of these adults, particularly when the teacher is talking to the whole class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is beginning to improve as the school rightly seeks to make it more creative to stimulate the pupils' interest and enhance their learning. The forest classroom and work with a ceramic artist are examples of this endeavour. In general, however, the activities provided are not stimulating and challenging enough to enable pupils, especially the more able, to make better progress, especially in writing. Curriculum enrichment is good. Residential visits for Years 5 and 6 and a variety of well attended clubs make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and enjoyment. Lessons in personal, social and health education, regular sporting opportunities and activities such as the gardening and cooking clubs contribute to the pupils' good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

In this small school community, with its generous staffing ratio, pupils feel safe and secure, benefiting from the good care they receive from adults who know them very well. Conscientious teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities participate fully in lessons. When necessary, the school seeks and makes good use of advice from outside agencies to ensure that those with disabilities, for example, visual impairment, receive the support they require. Policies to ensure pupils' safety are securely in place. Systems to advise pupils about their progress and 'next steps' in learning are not secure. Pupils have group targets in writing but these have had little impact on their achievement so far. Marking is mainly congratulatory and does not often give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear action plan is in place to bring about improvements. She is making good use of support from the local authority and a consultant headteacher. However, staff changes and illness have slowed the pace of improvement. An important improvement has been the introduction of a new system for checking pupils' progress. As a result, teachers formally assess their pupils' achievements more often. However, they do not use the information well enough to ensure that the work they set matches pupils' learning needs. Challenging targets for pupils' achievement are being set but the school has yet to clarify how it intends to support those pupils in danger of not meeting them. Whilst the headteacher carries out regular, formal

monitoring of teaching, there is not enough day-to-day checking to focus the discussion of how teaching can be improved.

Governors are supportive of the school. They recognise that they have not always done enough to question staff about standards and improvement and they are about to undertake training to support them in their efforts to challenge the school more effectively. The recently improved assessment and tracking arrangements and the improvement in writing in the 2007 Year 6 national tests demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to move forward.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

3 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkend Primary School, Lydney, GL15 4HL

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking to you about your school. We think the woodland surroundings, the outdoor classroom and the new adventure playground are super.

We agreed that your school is giving you a sound education. You behave well in school and particularly enjoy the many after-school activities and special events which the teachers provide for you. You get on well with the adults in school and they take good care of you.

The teachers are checking your work more often to see how well you are doing and the headteacher has introduced a good system to record this term by term. We have asked your teachers to use this information to set work which really interests and challenges you. We have also asked them to give you more advice about how well you are doing and what you need to do to get even better, just as they have started to do in writing.

The children in the Reception Year have settled into school very quickly. They enjoy their activities and are getting on very well with each other. We have asked the teacher to have another look at her planning to give the children more opportunities to learn through play and to tell other adults how they can help the children learn in these activities. You can help, too, by continuing to work hard and doing your best, and by asking your teachers how you can make your work even better.

We wish you very well for the future.

Don Mason Lead Inspector



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Lead Inspector