

# Park Lane Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109790
<b>Local Authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	356625
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Ratcliff

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	426
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Wall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs N Browne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	School Road, Tilehurst Reading RG31 5BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9015515
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 9015516
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 25 lessons involving teachers, and met with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books, tracking data on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plan, examples of monitoring, the minutes of governing body meetings and a range of policies. The team received 136 pupil questionnaires, 132 questionnaires from parents and carers and 29 questionnaires from staff.

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

- Whether standards have continued to rise since the last inspection for all groups of pupils.
- The impact of leadership at all levels on improving the quality of teaching, learning and in raising attainment.
- How assessment information is used to ensure teaching and the curriculum are meeting the needs of all pupils and providing them with the challenge and support they need to achieve well.
- Whether care, guidance and support are a particular strength.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average school on a split site. The Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage departments are a five minute walk from the main building, two further classrooms are across the road from the main building, and a large playing field is 200 metres away. Plans to rebuild the school, which were at an advanced stage, have recently been halted due to financial cutbacks. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a minority coming from a range of other minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals, although this percentage has almost doubled in the last year.

**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

Park Lane Primary School is an improving school which provides a good standard of education for its pupils and has many outstanding features. The extremely strong leadership team is very much at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher work effectively with the middle managers. Together they inspire the school community to work towards ambitious but realistic targets to improve the school further. Staff morale is high across the school and there is a strong commitment to help pupils do well. The school provides an inclusive environment where each pupil is highly valued as an individual. Excellent care and well-targeted support is effective in ensuring pupils make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. One member of staff reports, 'I am proud to work at Park Lane. All staff are committed and professional. We care about the children we work with, whatever their ability, and I think the children benefit from this.' Consequently, the school has a good capacity to build on their success and sustain improvement.

The school has extremely positive relationships with all groups of parents and carers, particularly those who are more reluctant to engage with the school. Parents and carers express their satisfaction with the work of the school and this is reflected in comments, such as: 'a well-organised and structured school with excellent teachers and support staff, and an extremely effective headteacher'. The school is highly committed to working in partnership with others in an imaginative way to promote pupils' learning and well-being. For example, anger management courses have helped pupils feel more able to deal with personal stress and this has been highly effective in improving behaviour. Pupils enjoy being at school and are motivated to learn. They are proud of their school and take their responsibilities very seriously; for example on the school council and being part of the healthy eating action team (HAT). They say they feel valued by staff. One pupil commented, 'adults listen to us and our ideas about how to improve the school'. Pupils have been actively involved with the development of an exciting new curriculum, which is embedding a more integrated approach, for example by linking history, art and literacy skills in a World War Two topic exploring propaganda posters.

Attainment in English and mathematics has continued to improve since the last inspection. Children start school broadly in line with national expectations. They settle well into Reception and make good progress in their learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make good progress overall and achieve well, with no groups of pupils significantly underachieving. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptionally good progress relative to their starting points. This is because of the school's extremely accurate early identification, superb links with other agencies, very well focused support during lessons and the very close monitoring of their progress.

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The quality of teaching is good, with much that is outstanding, particularly in the older year groups. A common feature of teaching throughout the school is the focus on meeting individual needs through carefully matched activities. Support staff are extremely effective in supporting small groups and individuals. Expectations are high and, as a result, pupils behave and achieve well. While no teaching is inadequate, some is less effective because the pace of lessons is slower. The senior leadership team has excellent systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and the impact this has on pupils' learning.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently as good as the best by:
  - ensuring that the pace of learning is maintained throughout lessons by limiting the time that pupils spend inactive
  - ensuring that teachers' explanations and instructions are consistently clear and precise
  - ensuring that the good practices in assessment are fully embedded across the school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

The lessons observed during the inspection confirm that pupils across the school achieve well with no groups underachieving. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making exceptionally good progress in their learning due to early, effective interventions and well-targeted support, which is meticulously monitored. Attainment in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently above average in the past, and in 2010 was high. Attainment in Key Stage 2 has been consistently above average over time. Most pupils achieve the expected levels in English and mathematics and a slightly above average proportion exceed this.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they feel safe, secure and very well cared for by adults. Levels of attendance are high. Pupils have a good appreciation of how to keep themselves healthy through regular exercise and a healthy diet. They show a clear understanding of the need to 'warm down' after an active physical education lesson. Pupils are articulate and polite. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and show an outstanding understanding of a wide range of social and moral issues. They value others' differences and show outstanding levels of care for younger pupils. Pupils respond well to the effective behaviour management strategies such as 'golden time' and 'marbles in a jar' and as a result, they behave well. Pupils take an active part in both the school and wider community. They demonstrate mature and healthy attitudes towards their environment, for example by helping to design the school gardens. Pupils talk confidently about raising money for charity and participating in community events such as singing at church. They are developing effective workplace skills as they are given responsibility to lead specific projects and manage budgets such as in purchasing new lunchtime play equipment and planning what to make and sell at the school fair.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

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

## How effective is the provision?

Care, guidance and support for pupils are of extremely high quality, are consistently applied and do not disadvantage any one group. Pupils demonstrate confidence and ease in taking part in activities because they have strong relationships with adults who know them well and demonstrate high levels of pastoral care. A particular strength is the way in which the school works closely with outside agencies, parents and carers to provide excellent support for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, most make outstanding progress relative to their starting points.

Teaching is good because lessons are carefully planned to support individual learning needs and provide suitable challenge for all pupils to improve. A strong feature of all lessons is the positive and caring relationship that exists between adults and pupils. In the best lessons, teaching is lively and moves at a fast pace. An example of this was seen in an imaginative design and technology lesson, which focused on a favourite story 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. This lesson excited and motivated pupils. They were highly engaged as they developed their problem-solving skills by assembling and combining materials in order to make an effective basket to transport the lighthouse keeper's lunch using a pulley system. Clear explanations and effective questioning which extends pupils' learning enhance the pace of lessons. However, in the small number of satisfactory lessons observed, the pace of learning was not brisk enough because explanations were

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too lengthy or repetitive and pupils were required to sit for too long on the carpet, resulting in a loss of concentration.

Assessment information is used well to identify targets and track pupils' progress. Pupils' work is well marked and they feel that teachers work hard to help them learn from their mistakes. Targets and success criteria are clearly explained and pupils' involvement in assessing their own work is developing well. They know their targets in English, but less so in mathematics. Occasionally, however, the language used in marking and identifying targets is not made sufficiently clear for younger pupils to understand.

The recently reviewed 'creative' curriculum is embedding. It is enriched by moving to a more integrated approach. It provides a broad range of experiences and links areas of the curriculum well, for example making links across science and English as pupils explore and write about the bone structure found in skeletons. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn in these more exciting and interesting ways.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is ably supported by a skilled and enthusiastic senior team. They are passionate about the work of the school and are successfully inspiring and motivating the school community to overcome previous weaknesses and ensure that the school continues to improve. One member of staff reports, 'This school is made up of great teams that strive endlessly to give the best to our children.' The governing body knows the school well; governors have good levels of expertise and provide a good balance of challenge and support.

The school provides good value for money. The accommodation across the four sites is used efficiently. The school does not see the split site as a problem, and works well to make the best use of the available resources. Leaders at all levels are highly effective in driving improvement because, as a result of rigorous and accurate monitoring, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils. Policies and procedures are robust and consistently applied. The school is extremely successful in engaging parents and carers and other partners, and working efficiently together to promote each pupil's personal development and well-being. Transition points are meticulously planned, taking full consideration of the needs of individuals and groups. This is confirmed by one parent, who commented, 'My oldest child has always found transitions

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quite challenging but the teachers have shown great support and with each year he has grown in confidence.'

The school has strong links with the local community and a positive approach to community cohesion. It has established links with schools in local and overseas communities and has set in place an action plan to develop links with a school in Cornwall.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with national expectations and make good progress in all aspects of learning. Carefully planned transition arrangements, which include home visits and to local nurseries, mean that children settle quickly and feel secure, happy and confident to leave their parents and carers. Partnership with parents and carers is good and parents and carers feel involved with their children's learning. Children are quickly gaining a good understanding of how to cooperate and share with each other while they play. This is because adult-led activities focus on helping children to understand that there needs to be an agreed code of behaviour. There is a wide range of exciting activities both indoors and outside. These are well resourced and are of great interest to children. They enjoy making 'yucky' sandwiches in the mini beast caf☞ and show excitement as they explore shaving foam, with sparkles. They use their imagination well in role play, for example when packing their cases to go on holiday to Turkey.

Adults work closely as a team and planning is good, taking account of children's individual needs and all areas of learning. They make effective use of assessment information to plan for children's next steps and identify where children require extra support. A focus on communication, language and literacy, in particular engaging boys in writing, has seen an



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increase in the progress they make at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, adults plan activities that engage boys effectively, such as the making of 'magic watches' which the boys then use to develop their adventure stories. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has a clear understanding of areas to improve. As a result of her actions, provision has improved for more able children. Consequently, the number of children likely to reach higher levels this year is higher than in previous years. She successfully monitors the work of the team and continually identifies how to improve practice further.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

All of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire say that their children enjoy school. Most say that they are happy with their children's experience at school, that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to support their children's learning. Their responses show high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. A very small minority voiced reservations relating to individual concerns. These did not follow a particular pattern. Several parents and carers made positive comments about the school as a whole such as, 'I have been very impressed with Park Lane School' and 'a well organised and structured school'.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Lane 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 426 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	55	58	44	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	62	49	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	40	65	49	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	37	70	53	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	47	67	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	44	63	48	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	40	76	58	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)	64	48	55	42	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	43	66	50	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	40	58	44	8	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	32	73	55	6	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	68	52	56	42	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	55	57	43	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



1 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Park Lane Primary School, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 5BD**

This letter is to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school and to tell you what we found. We thoroughly enjoyed being in your lessons, attending your harvest festival assemblies and meeting with you. We were particularly impressed by the enthusiasm you have for your school and your good behaviour.

Your school is inviting and an attractive place to learn with lots of displays of your work. You told us that you enjoy school. We were not surprised, having found out about some of the exciting things your teachers plan for you. It was good to hear about the different ways that you help to improve your school and the responsibilities that you are given, such as being on the school council and taking part in the healthy eating action team (HAT). It was good to see some of you enjoying your topic work on World War 2 and others carefully planning and looking forward to their trip to Windsor Castle. Your headteacher and all of the other adults care for you extremely well and work very closely with other people outside of the school to support you well. You told us that you feel safe at school and your parents and carers agree.

Your school is a good school and it is continuing to improve. It provides you with a good education and as a result, you are making good, or for some, better progress in your learning. Most of your teachers help you to understand where you can improve your work further. We have asked the school to do two things to make your school even better. We have asked the staff to make more of your lessons as good as the best ones and to help the youngest children to reach higher levels in their learning. You can help by continuing to work hard in your lessons. Thank you again for making us feel so welcome when we came to your school.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ratcliff

Her Majesty's Inspector

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