

Parklands Primary School

Spinney Hill Road, Northampton, NN3 6DW

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is good school.

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach test results which are average by the time they leave the school. As a result of improvements in teaching, their achievement is good.
- Most teaching is good and provides pupils with main activities that are well matched to their ability because teachers plan lessons carefully based on what pupils already know.
- Through regular discussions with their teachers, pupils know how they can improve their reading, writing, mathematics and, where necessary, their attendance and behaviour.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good because pupils take responsibility for their own conduct and staff apply behaviour policies consistently. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- The leaders and managers of the school, including the governors, know the school well and have set out a clear plan for how to improve further.
- Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff and governors, together with focused support to deal with underperformance, is driving school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet sufficient outstanding teaching because the pace in lessons occasionally slows and teachers do not always ensure that all questions and work are at the right level for all pupils throughout the entire lesson.
- When the youngest children are finding out for themselves, the work is not always clearly focused or sufficiently demanding. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to inspire children to write.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons. Some were joint observations with the headteacher or the assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with senior managers and subject leaders, representatives from the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Information from the school’s website and 28 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken to account in planning and conducting the inspection. Questionnaires from 32 staff were also evaluated.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documents. In particular they heard pupils read, evaluated pupils’ books, teachers’ planning, safeguarding information, the school’s systems for improving teaching and learning, the school’s parent and carer and pupil questionnaires, and minutes from the governing body meetings.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Angela Kirk, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Verna Plummer | Additional Inspector |
| Terry Mortimer | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Parklands is larger than the average-sized primary school and serves an area in the heart of Northampton.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funds provided for those eligible for free school meals and others, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average, but the proportion supported at school action is below average. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties, behaviour and speech and language difficulties.
- All pupils attend the school on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The position of Chair of the Governing Body became vacant at the end of December 2012. At the time of the inspection, the Vice Chair was leading the governing body until the next meeting when a new Chair could be elected.
- Two registered childcare settings share the school site. The Parklands Learning and Care Centre which is privately managed and Parklands Nursery School which is managed by the local authority. These are inspected separately by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that all activities in a lesson are at just the right level to challenge all pupils
 - ensuring that the pace in lessons is maintained to engage pupils continuously.
- Improve independent learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that activities have a clear learning focus and that they are sufficiently demanding to engage children
 - increasing the opportunities that will inspire children to write when playing and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overall achievement of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They make good progress in most lessons and are attentive, participating well in all activities.
- Pupils join the Reception classes with a wide range of skills. When they start school, children's skills are most often below those expected for their age. Through careful planning of a wide range of learning activities, especially those that are adult led, children make good progress. By the end of Reception, the majority of children usually reach the levels expected for their age.
- There is little difference in pupils' achievement in reading, writing or mathematics because the school has ensured that programmes of work for each of these subjects have been given equal focus. In the past there has been some weaker pupil progress but the headteacher, supported by a very committed teaching staff, has ensured that pupils have been learning at a much faster rate, especially across Key Stage 2 in the last two years.
- The linking of letters and sounds (phonics) is taught well across the school and pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils gradually become confident readers who enjoy reading and can discuss their preferences for particular books. They are able to apply their reading, writing and communication skills across the curriculum as a result of good links between subjects.
- An improved focus on solving problems and applying what they have learned in mathematics is shown in pupils' science and some topic work. Pupils of all ages are confident in using computers and other technologies to help their learning.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs are given effective help and guidance in class and through additional one-to-one or small group teaching where needed. A rigorous analysis of each pupil's needs including the type of additional help required ensures good progress.
- Pupils who are known to be entitled to the pupil premium make similar progress to others because their needs and support are analysed in a similar way. This is resulting in gaps in attainment closing between these groups of pupils for those currently in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers provide interesting lessons which motivate and interest pupils. The main activities in each lesson are usually at just the right level to challenge all pupils. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to ensure challenge at each stage in the lesson, for example when they are introducing a new idea or concept, when more-able pupils would be able to learn at a faster pace.
- Relationships are good and classrooms have useful displays to help pupils with their learning. Teachers use demonstrations and questioning well to help pupils to learn. For example, pupils in a Year 6 reading lesson were asked if they would consider a particular town to be a good holiday destination based on the descriptive language provided by the author.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's independent learning activities are usually

connected well to the topic theme to help children to make links between the different areas of learning, but at times they are not sufficiently well focused or engaging. Opportunities to encourage children to write during their learning and playing are sometimes limited and the organisation of the resources and equipment is uninspiring, so children do not choose to use them.

- The introduction of various groups for mathematics, including when pupils are set by ability, has ensured that basic skills are secure. Opportunities for problem-solving and application of mathematics have been extended, resulting in pupils being confident in tackling increasingly harder mathematical problems and showing good perseverance to solve them.
- Improved training for all staff in phonics has improved the teaching of reading and writing, especially for the younger pupils. In Key Stage 2, an increased focus on using whole-class texts has, for example, encouraged pupils to read more widely and enabled them to discuss varied books, their characters and authors in a greater depth. In Year 6, there is a particular strength in the teaching of reading comprehension, which is given a relatively large focus within the weekly timetable.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils and through comments when marking their work is good and individual targets are used well by teachers. Most pupils are clear about where they have achieved well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers ensure that their marking helps pupils to correct previous errors or, when learning is secure, supports them to move on to the next step.
- Teaching assistants teach pupils successfully, including those who are disabled, those who have additional needs and those entitled to the pupil premium. Many of these pupils are taught individually and in small groups to help them keep up with the others in the class during lessons. Many also receive additional teaching to help them to catch up when they fall behind.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to do well and work well with each other. They talk enthusiastically about the school's mentoring system which helps them to know where they are achieving well and where they need to improve in their learning and behaviour. Pupils know that the school demands good behaviour. They are usually polite and courteous to adults and to each other.
 - Older pupils play their part in supporting good behaviour around the school and act as play leaders. The many and varied lunchtime activities, together with before- or after-school clubs, help pupils of all ages to engage productively in sport, music and drama.
 - Pupils know about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare and are confident that, when instances do occur, staff deal well with their concerns.
 - Safety is promoted well in the curriculum. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using different forms of technology, including the internet. They say they feel safe in school.
 - Pupils are able to explain that everyone should be treated equally and it is wrong to make judgements about people simply because of their appearance. This promotion of equality ensures that the school is free from discriminatory language or actions.
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- Attendance is above average. All pupils' attendance is carefully monitored through individual discussions with their teachers. The school tackles any lower attendance through letters and support meetings with the pupils' parents or carers.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has improved since the previous inspection because the headteacher, staff and governors have systematically and effectively tackled the issues identified in the previous inspection report. Progress has speeded up, especially in Key Stage 2, because of improvements to teaching and learning, particularly in the quality of teachers' marking. Teachers' assessments are now accurate, so the school is able to rely on detailed information about how well pupils are doing to help in its monitoring and evaluations.
 - Staff are held to account for the progress of the pupils that they teach, linked well to their targets for improvement. Pupils' achievements are discussed through regular pupil progress meetings where teachers identify successes, diagnose any areas of weakness and outline to senior staff how they intend to improve progress still further. Underperformance has been tackled effectively by the headteacher and governors, and staff continue to receive effective guidance and training to help them to improve.
 - The improvements over the past three years show that leaders are capable of moving the school forward. The senior leaders and teachers in charge of subjects have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The initiatives in the school's action plan are well focused on the priorities for improvement. As well as improving pupils' progress, each teacher also has a target to support overall school improvement through their area of responsibility.
 - The curriculum is broad and the different subjects are well balanced. There are very good opportunities for school trips and a range of visitors to the school to help make lessons more interesting. Music is a strength within the curriculum, with over a third of pupils in Key Stage 2 learning a musical instrument.
 - The safeguarding of pupils meets the government's current requirements. The school carries out the required checks on adults working with pupils and all staff have received appropriate training to help to keep pupils safe. Staff provide good care for the pupils throughout the school.
 - Concerns were raised by a few parents and carers through Parent View and through other channels about behaviour and various other aspects of the school. However, inspectors found that these were not representative of the opinions of the very large majority of parents and carers. Inspectors looked into these concerns and did not find any further evidence to support any of the main concerns raised.
 - The local authority has provided good support for the school, which has also brokered support from other consultants and companies. This has been well targeted and effective in improving pupils' reading and mathematics achievements and in ensuring the school has clear information about how well pupils are doing.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the strengths and areas for improvement in the school for teaching and learning and, through scrutinising data, how well pupils are doing. This is because governors have a good understanding of school data. It challenges and supports the school in
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equal measure and its members are appropriately involved in undertaking monitoring of the school's action plan with senior staff. The performance of headteacher and staff is well managed. Systems are in place for approving pay awards which are linked effectively to how well staff help pupils to achieve. Governors ensure that statutory duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding of pupils, and all necessary checks are carried out to ensure pupils' safety. The governing body sets and monitors effectively how the school budget is spent and make sure, for example, that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used well to support pupils' achievement. This funding has been spent on additional staffing to support pupils in improving their skills in English and mathematics through small group tuition, and on funding additional learning activities for eligible pupils.

- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are able to reflect upon different values and beliefs in assemblies and throughout the curriculum. Discussions with individual pupils support them in their moral and social development. The school has developed global links to extend pupils' understanding of diversity and improve their understanding of the wider world.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 121925 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 402066 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 412 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Fred O'Dell (Vice) |
| Headteacher | Sally Gedney |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 November 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01604 491769 |
| Fax number | 01604 645410 |
| Email address | head@parklands.northants-ecl.gov.uk |

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