

# Park Lane Primary School

School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5BD

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 a good school.

- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding, so pupils make good progress throughout their time at the school, especially in Key Stage 1 and Year 6.
- Children make very good progress in their Reception Year because teaching is strong and they are given lots of exciting activities to do, both inside and outside school.
- The executive headteacher is well supported by other school leaders who have a determination for continued improvement having reversed two years of pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 which was less than good.
- All groups of pupils are currently making good progress, especially in reading and mathematics, because more is now expected of them.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and on the playground. They are happy, well looked after and feel safe in the school.
- Staff speak positively about their partnership with the other school in the federation and agree that both schools are benefiting from this arrangement.
- Parents and carers are very proud of the school. They are happy that their children are safe and well cared for. They find teachers and school leaders very approachable.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and provide an appropriate level of challenge and support.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- At times, lesson introductions continue for too long limiting pupils' ability to learn more quickly at their own level.
- Progress in writing, especially for those who find writing easier, is not yet as fast as in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Recent actions taken by school leaders to further improve the quality of teaching and progress of pupils in Key Stage 2, especially for pupils who find learning easier, have not yet had full impact on levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons, one of which was undertaken jointly with a senior leader. They also briefly visited one assembly, observed play and lunchtimes, listened to pupils read and made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other member. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 65 parents' and carers' responses to the online Parent View survey (one of which was submitted directly) in planning and undertaking the inspection and also one letter written to them by a parent or carer.
- An inspector met some parents and carers informally before the start of the school day.
- The inspectors also took account of 53 staff questionnaires.
- A range of evidence was reviewed, including the school's improvement plan, the school's data for tracking pupils' progress, monitoring reports, the work pupils have been doing in their books and a range of the school's documentation, including that relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Nick Riddiough, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Beddard

Additional Inspector

Margaret Wolf

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Park Lane is larger than the average sized primary school with two classes per year group from Reception to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils that are known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children from service families, is below the national average.
- A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with other pupils coming from a range of ethnic groups, the largest of which are Mixed White and Black Caribbean. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is lower than in other schools nationally.
- Park Lane federated with another large local primary school in September 2012 and an executive headteacher has responsibility for both schools.
- In 2012 the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching to make sure that more pupils reach the highest levels of attainment by the time they leave the school, especially in writing, by:
  - making sure that all pupils are equally challenged and supported, including those who find learning easier, so they make even more progress through Key Stage 2
  - ensuring that all marking helps pupils to understand better what they need to do to improve, and giving them time to act on this advice
  - improving the quality of support provided by teaching assistants so that it is consistently as good as the best.
- Ensure leaders and managers maintain their high expectations of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, which have increased since the school federated, by:
  - developing a whole-school approach to the assessment of writing
  - measuring the impact of the school's work on different groups of pupils in even greater detail.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's skills on entry to the Reception classes generally match those normally expected for their age. They enjoy their time in school and play imaginatively together. The indoor and outdoor spaces are very inspiring and a wide variety of different activities encourage children to develop a wide range of skills. Adults engage children exceptionally well and as a result children make very good progress across all areas of learning.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress throughout Key Stage 1 and enter Key Stage 2 with levels of attainment that are above those expected of their peers nationally in all subjects.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is good. As a result, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics check in 2013 was above average.
- School leaders have reacted with determination to reverse a trend of slower progress throughout Key Stage 2. Since September 2012, they have raised the expectations of what each pupil can achieve. As a result, pupils who left the school at the end of last year were working overall at a higher level than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils making the expected amount of progress in reading and mathematics throughout Key Stage 2 was similar to that of their peers nationally, as were the proportions of pupils exceeding the expected amount of progress.
- Although the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected amount of progress in writing overall was higher than the national average, this was not the case for the most-able pupils. Leaders recognise the need to further increase the pace of progress in writing by ensuring teachers explicitly know what pupils can do and what they need to learn next. The procedures that are used to assess and monitor the rate of pupils' progress in writing need to be more rigorous and consistently applied across the school.
- The impact of the actions that have been taken by school leaders to increase the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 is already evident in the work that is currently in the pupils' books and the good progress they have made during the last year. For example, improvements in the quality of teaching in phonics have led to better spelling and reading at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make good progress and their attainment is closer to that of other pupils than is the case nationally. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively and the gap has closed between pupils who are eligible for free school meals and other pupils in the school as they made around one year's worth of additional progress in the last year.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers and other adults in the Reception classes make learning interesting and fun. Activities are linked together and encourage children to play imaginatively together. For example, the outdoor classroom contained a hospital where children were taking turns to be doctors, patients, ambulance drivers and a receptionist, talking to a patient on the telephone and writing a prescription. All of the activities encourage the development of communication skills and children show high levels of concentration, cooperation and resilience early in the school year.
- The best teaching can be found in the Reception classes, Key Stage 1 and Year 6 where teachers are adept at asking skilful questions in order to move pupils' learning forward. They ensure that children are active in their learning and do not sit listening to the teacher speaking for too long.
- Where teaching is most effective, the skills of teaching assistants contribute to the good levels of progress the pupils make. They are fully aware of the intended learning outcomes and support pupils to reach these as independently as possible. However, the quality of this support is not yet consistently good enough across the school and consequently, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could in some lessons.

- Targeted support intended to accelerate the progress of older pupils in English, especially those who learn more quickly, is already having a positive impact as a result of adults' excellent subject knowledge, high expectations and expert questioning.
- Support for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is good and the progress of these groups of pupils is at least in line with national averages.
- Teachers mark children's work regularly, although the quality of this marking varies in its effectiveness. At its best, marking tells pupils what is good about their work and how they could improve it even further. Pupils are then given an opportunity to respond to this. Verbal feedback is often given during lessons but this is not always recorded.
- There is not yet an agreed process for the assessment of writing across the school and, as a result, some teachers and pupils are not clear enough about what they need to improve in order to make rapid progress in this area.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils, both in class and around school, is consistently good; a view that is shared by staff, parents, carers and pupils. They work and play harmoniously together regardless of their backgrounds.
- Pupils' have good attitudes to learning when the activities they are doing are engaging. This is especially the case when they are being challenged to think, working together and using the outdoor learning environment. However, where the support provided by teaching assistants is less effective or fails to meet their needs, pupils sometimes lose concentration and therefore do not make as much progress as they could.
- Relationships across the school are very respectful which reflects the strength of the pastoral care. Children are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They are appreciative of the support given to them by adults and there is empathy for children with special educational needs.
- Pupils say that adults treat them all fairly and they feel very safe in school. Bullying, including discrimination or cyber bullying, rarely occurs but pupils know to tell an adult if they experience any unkindness; they are certain staff would sort it out quickly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including moving between the three school sites and playing fields, which involves crossing roads.
- Senior leaders have worked hard to maintain attendance rates which are above average. Additionally, the level of unauthorised absence has reduced this year. This reflects the strong links with parents and carers and the extent to which pupils enjoy school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The reorganisation of the school's leadership has added further capacity for improvement since Park Lane federated with another local primary school. The executive headteacher knows the school well and is now able to more effectively utilise the skills of the two heads of school and the assistant headteacher to improve the school further. There is a strong determination among the leadership of the school to ensure the very best outcomes for all pupils.
- School leaders have taken swift and decisive action to increase the rate of progress in Key Stage 2. This has involved eradicating pockets of inadequate teaching and raising the expectations of all staff about how much progress each pupil can make. Although they have implemented new and improved procedures for the assessment of pupils' work they have yet to include a whole-school approach to writing. However, the impact of the action already taken is evident in the school's own data and in the work of the pupils currently at the school.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve even further. Plans are clear and focused on the right areas, although the criteria by which success will be measured would benefit from being even more specific in terms of pupils' progress.

- Some middle leaders are fairly new to post and plans are in place to ensure that they develop the skills required to lead their area of the school and ensure that the improvements that have been made are embedded.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and engages pupils in their learning. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well, which is reflected in the good achievement of all groups of pupils. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, including very prominent support of two children in Sri Lanka.
- The school has planned to use the new primary sport funding to provide staff with training opportunities to improve their subject knowledge and for making after-school clubs accessible for all pupils.
- The local authority holds the school and its leadership in high regard and has only provided very light-touch support in recent years.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good awareness of the strengths of the school and aspects that require further improvement. Governors receive lots of information about pupils' progress, however, they would benefit from scrutinising data for various groups in even more detail. Governors have a good awareness of the interventions the school is using to ensure improved outcomes for pupils eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium grant and are beginning to evaluate the impact in more detail. They understand the systems that link the salary progression of teachers to the outcomes of pupils, and they know how good teaching is. They make sure safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and check on arrangements to make sure pupils are well looked after and cared for in school.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109790
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	427262

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	419
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Wall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Browne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29–30 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 901 5515
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