



The Park School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125461
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 293269
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector Greg Sorrell

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Onslow Crescent
School category	Community		Woking
Age range of pupils	11–16		GU22 7AT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01483 772057
Number on roll (school)	106	Fax number	01483 545040
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Ruth Ray
		Headteacher	Mrs Karen Eastwood
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	18–19 January 2007	293269

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Park School draws pupils from a wide area within the county of Surrey. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties, although there is a wide range of other needs including autistic spectrum; severe learning difficulties and some have behavioural, emotional and social needs. One third of pupils have been identified as meeting the local authority's criteria for having language impairment.

The vast majority of pupils have White British heritage and a small number are learning English as an additional language. From September 2007, it is planned that the school will provide only for secondary aged pupils. Since the last inspection, the school no longer has specific speech and language support from the charity 'ICAN', although links are maintained, and the local authority categorises the school as having a language specialism.

The school has recently benefited from improvements to its accommodation including additional specialist rooms for practical subjects. It has Investors in People status and is participating in the Healthy Schools Scheme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Park School is an outstanding school with many strengths.

The pupils' achievement is excellent as a result of good teaching, a very carefully planned and relevant curriculum and excellent care, support and guidance.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school where relationships are excellent. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted both within the curriculum and via external activities. The emphasis on economic understanding, healthy living and contributing to the community enables the pupils to leave school well prepared for life after school, which usually leads to further education. The care, support and guidance the pupils receive are excellent.

The headteacher, supported by her very effective management team, gives outstanding leadership. Pupils' achievements are monitored very closely as is the quality of teaching and learning. Interventions are quickly made to maximise opportunities for learning. Staff are well deployed to provide a very rich curriculum that meets pupils' needs very well, particularly in relation to language development, key skills, accreditation and personal development.

The school uses a number of appropriate ways to evaluate its work but recognises the need to widen the scope of its evaluation to include the whole school community more systematically. The quality of governance is good although there is a need for governors to become more active in the school's self-evaluation.

School improvement (including to the accommodation) has been excellent since the last inspection and there is an outstanding capacity to make further improvements. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, although a few would like more information about what pupils learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Broaden the scope of self-evaluation to include all stakeholders.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievements are outstanding. The standards attained are understandably below average, but all pupils make excellent progress according to their abilities.

Pupils' achievement in relation to their starting points and capabilities as measured by national criteria is excellent. Key Stage 4 pupils achieve very well on work experience and in a range of accredited courses including GCSE, the National Skills Profile and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

The school's analysis of achievement data shows no significant difference in achievement between any of the different groups of special educational need, race or

gender. The school also collects data on the pupils' progress in key skills and uses this to set challenging targets that the pupils' achieve successfully.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They enjoy school as shown by their very good attendance, the good staying on rates at the local college and their enthusiastic participation in the many activities in school. All are encouraged to develop their language skills and show an increasingly mature approach when they talk about their school.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. The pupils show respect for others, behave well and show a mature attitude to study. All pupils elected to the vibrant school council contribute to the school community, represent their classes with pride and are aware of their responsibilities. Fundraising for others and musical performances in the community enable all pupils to play a part. Opportunities for reflection are used well whether in prayer, lessons or assemblies. The wider celebration of other faiths and cultures is assured by the proposed creation of the multi-faith garden within the school's grounds.

The pupils show a very good understanding of the benefits of proper diet and exercise. They eat healthily at lunchtimes and participate in a wide range of physical activities. They develop strong personal and social skills, which prepare them well for the next stage of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features that lead to the pupils' outstanding achievement.

Teachers' good specialist subject knowledge and accurate view of pupils' abilities enables them to pitch lessons at the right level. From the outset, the pupils know what is to be covered and have their understanding checked at regular intervals. Teachers' use of 'assessment for learning' is excellent and extends beyond the academic curriculum. At the end of every lesson the pupils reflect on not just what they have learned, but also their attitudes to learning. These evaluations by teachers and learners have a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

The vast majority of teachers use the wealth of available assessment data to plan appropriate lessons. Assessment is thorough. All teachers have a good understanding of pupils' attainment, and use this effectively to plan lessons. Occasionally, teaching is not so precise and appropriate support by senior managers is provided.

The widespread use of interactive whiteboards is a strong feature of teaching at the school. Typically, teachers have appropriate resources and enable pupils to experience the whiteboards for themselves. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for this valuable 'hands on' experience for the pupils.

The quality of teaching literacy, numeracy, science and ICT is consistently good. Practical subjects, including art, physical education, design technology and work-related learning, also benefit from the high expectations and good subject knowledge of the staff. Relationships with pupils are good. Typically, lessons are good humoured with a strong focus on learning and appropriate behaviour.

Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching. Several have undertaken advanced training to support learning and all undergo regular professional development. Some teaching assistants have additional skills such as counselling which are used to good effect. Visiting specialists provide additional expertise in music and physical education.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Curriculum provision is excellent. In all years the pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum with a strong emphasis on language development, literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), citizenship and other key skills. In Key Stage 4, the pupils have access to accredited courses that prepare them well for their economic well-being. All pupils benefit from appropriate interventions to support their special educational needs. Excellent 'personalised learning', may include, speech and language therapy, counselling or energetic drum therapy with a visiting specialist. For some pupils, visits to local mainstream schools are also a planned part of their curriculum.

The pupils follow a well-constructed personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme that promotes safe and healthy living as well as a good understanding of society. Provision for enterprise and work related learning are strengths of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Pupils receive good careers advice and are very well prepared for their future economic well-being by part-time attendance at a local college of further education.

A significant strength of the curriculum is the range of clubs and extra-curricular activities much enjoyed by the pupils. These include extensive sporting opportunities, subject related activities and visits, some of which are residential, that enrich the curriculum and enhance the pupils' learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The provision for pupils' care, support and guidance is excellent.

The school's innovative Park School Challenge results in a profile of the pupils' well-being and progress in key skills. This information along with comprehensive

analysis of achievement by different groups of pupils enables appropriate interventions to be made to promote their health, safety and economic well-being. For example, additional reading support or therapy and counselling sessions resulted in improved achievement and attendance. Pupils make supported, yet informed choices when leaving school and many succeed at the local college of further education.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, one wrote, 'My only regret is that my child didn't attend Park School sooner.' Written reports and meetings help keep parents and carers well informed about their children's progress, although a small minority would like more information on the curriculum and the progress made by their children. The vast majority of academic reports contain valuable information about academic progress, occasionally some reports focus too much on attitudes as opposed to academic progress. Reporting arrangements for looked after children are effective.

Relationships with other agencies, including speech and language therapists, local schools and careers staff are very good and enable the pupils to receive appropriate support for their needs. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in accord with the latest guidance. Risk assessments are regularly undertaken, and child protection procedures are well understood by staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very effectively supported by her senior leadership team. Governance of the school is good.

The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development as seen by an accurate self-evaluation. She leads this process and recognises the need to widen its scope to involve all staff and governors.

The current project focussing upon self-evaluation, mentoring and professional development is a useful contribution in this regard. Formal monitoring of teaching and achievement is well established, accurate and leads to effective support for teachers and intervention programmes for pupils. The sharing of this successful practice with other schools is much valued by partnership schools.

The school is well staffed and skilful deployment of all staff, including those who work part-time, has resulted in a rich curriculum designed to prepare the pupils well for life after school. The school's progress since the last inspection and its capacity for further improvement are both excellent.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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.

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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	2
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

Thank you for helping me to find my way around your school and for making me so welcome.

I'm pleased to say that your school is judged to be outstanding and you make excellent progress while you are there! Like many others, I was impressed by the friendly working atmosphere I found during my visit. As well as working hard, I could see that you enjoyed your learning too. I was especially impressed by your behaviour during one of the windiest days ever!

The teachers and all other staff help you to do well in lessons. I know that you can share problems with the staff and that you feel safe at school. As you get older, it is clear you enjoy taking more responsibility and look forward to going on work experience and attending college.

I was very pleased to see the many different things you do. Not just your lessons, but I also know that you have lots of lunch-time activities to choose from as well as a residential ski-trip, school camps and visits to places of interest locally and in London.

Your work is well displayed and I know you are proud of what you achieve. As you will know, I met the school council and learned of your views. You told me that you felt safe, happy and enjoyed being at school. I agree with the council that their notice board should be kept up to date. Perhaps, someone may wish to take on that job? It is also good that you can achieve certificates in a wide range of subjects that will help you when you leave school.

I'm asking Mrs Eastwood, who does an excellent job, to encourage everyone in school community to become more involved in seeing that the school goes from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely

Greg Sorrell

Lead Inspector