

The Park Infant School

Elm Road, Stonehouse, GL10 2NP

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in Reception have a successful start to their school life and make good progress.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2.
- The school has successfully raised achievement in reading and writing after a dip in performance. Attainment in Year 2 is above average.
- Pupils' writing is a real strength.
- Pupils generally receive good teaching and there are examples of outstanding practice.
- Teachers and teaching assistants convey high expectations of learning and establish very positive relationships with pupils.
- In most lessons, teachers set demanding tasks which are well suited to pupils' abilities and learning needs.
- Pupils show extremely positive attitudes to learning. They are proud of their own and others' achievements.
- Behaviour is often exemplary in lessons.
- Pupils feel extremely safe and very well cared for by staff.
- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and educational direction and other key leaders also contribute well to improving teaching and raising achievement.
- Positive action has been taken to raise achievement in reading and writing.
- An exciting range of learning activities is provided with art, outdoor learning and writing being key strengths.
- The school has established successful partnerships with parents and carers and other organisations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There are a few elements of teaching to improve so that it is outstanding.
- At times, the more-able pupils are not set sufficiently demanding tasks.
- Occasionally pupils are not always moved on to the next steps of their learning quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, including some joint observations with the headteacher.
- They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, parents and carers, an external consultant, members of the governing body and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 43 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the findings of the school's own survey.
- Responses to an inspection questionnaire from 14 staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' planning of learning, pupils' work and the school's planning for improvement.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Joanna Pike

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average infant school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent or carer in the services.
- The headteacher took up the post in November 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and ensure that all teaching is at least good by making sure that:
 - teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, especially for the more able
 - learning in all lessons proceeds at a quick pace and pupils are moved on swiftly to the next stages of their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception with skills at levels lower than those typically expected for their age, particularly their communication, language and social skills. They make good progress in the areas of learning because of good teaching and the interesting range of activities provided.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. Attainment in reading and writing dipped to average levels recently. Extenuating staffing circumstances contributed to this decline. The decline has been tackled well and attainment in the current Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive.
- In 2012, the Year 2 pupils supported by the pupil premium attained standards lower than those of the other pupils. They were a few months behind in reading and mathematics but six months behind in writing. More recent information shows pupils supported by the pupil premium are making faster progress than the others in reading and similar progress in writing and mathematics.
- The more-able pupils make good progress because they are usually set challenging and demanding activities. Just occasionally in lessons, tasks are not demanding enough and learning slows.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. This is because of well-planned opportunities for them to discuss their learning. Pupils respond very well to teachers' questioning and they explain their learning clearly.
- Raising achievement in reading and writing has been a real success and the efforts of the staff are bearing fruit
- In reading, pupils benefit from the good teaching of reading skills and the wide range of attractive books on offer. They say they read at home independently or with members of the family. Good reading habits have been established. The results of the phonics (linking sounds and letters) reading check for Year 1 pupils in 2012 were much higher than average.
- Pupils' writing is a key strength and is worthy of being shared more widely with other schools. Pupils love to write and produce detailed and extended accounts in English lessons and in other subject areas. For example, children in Reception wrote letters to friends with help from adults and posted them. In Year 1, pupils made good progress in creating 'once upon a time' stories. In Year 2, pupils created interesting descriptions of characters in stories they studied and used a clear plan to draft their ideas about appearance and personality.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and apply their numeracy skills well to solve a range of problems. In a successful Year 2 lesson, pupils used a variety of practical apparatus to solve division problems. They explained their learning clearly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching contributes considerably to pupils' good progress. The pupils say, 'Teachers make it fun to learn.' A parent wrote, 'The teaching staff at Park Infant are fabulous and my daughter has flourished.'
- There are examples of outstanding practice but, very occasionally, teaching dips to being less than good.
- Teachers successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They create an attractive and positive classroom environment for pupils to learn in and establish strong relationships. Consequently, pupils are cooperative, work well together and show consideration and respect for others.
- In the Reception class, children are provided with an interesting range of activities inside and outside the classroom. There are plenty of opportunities for children to explore, be creative

and to learn independently. Children also benefit from well-focused teaching from all adults.

- Teachers convey high expectations of what pupils should learn and ensure that lessons have a clear purpose so that pupils understand what they are to do. Specific steps to success are set to successfully guide pupils' learning.
- Essential reading skills, including phonics, are effectively taught through a discrete, regular and well-structured programme.
- The teaching of writing is highly effective. Teachers choose exciting topics which inspire and motivate pupils to write. Visual stimuli are used well to generate ideas for writing. Teachers demonstrate how to create powerful openers and sentences. Mapping out what the story is to include, structured planning of the intended content and note taking are effectively encouraged to help pupils plan their writing. Pupils do not spend long periods listening to the teacher but are given plenty of opportunities to practise their writing skills. They receive constructive feedback on their progress, which helps move their writing on. In response to teachers' expectations, they are highly productive and create detailed pieces of work of good quality.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. Activities and additional support are closely suited to pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants are used to good effect in guiding and supporting pupils' learning.
- In most lessons, teachers make effective use of the information about pupils' attainment to plan their teaching and to match activities to pupils' different abilities. As a result, pupils are challenged well and make good gains in acquiring knowledge and deepening their understanding. However, at times, tasks are not sufficiently demanding enough for the more able.
- Occasionally, pupils' learning does not move at a quick enough pace. This happens when too long is spent consolidating previous learning rather than moving pupils on to the next stages of their learning.
- The marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful. Good work is acknowledged and praised, and comments effectively guide improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children in Reception settle well into the school because of effective induction arrangements and very positive relationships established with adults. They enjoy the activities offered as they learn and play very well with the other children.
- Parents and carers who responded to the survey, Parent View, strongly agreed that their children were safe and well looked after. They also state that the school promotes good behaviour. The inspection findings support these positive views.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their determination to do their very best are real strengths and contribute to their good and sometimes outstanding progress. Pupils proudly informed the inspectors: 'I really enjoy literacy', 'I love reading' and 'I like phonics and maths'.
- Pupils take care and pride in their work. They acknowledge and appreciate the achievements of others.
- The behaviour of pupils is at least good in lessons and around the school. In numerous lessons and in assembly, behaviour was exemplary. Pupils are courteous, friendly and respectful. The school's clear records of incidents show that conduct is typically extremely positive over time.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including name calling and physical bullying. They know that bullying is unpleasant and unkind. They told one of the inspectors, 'There has been some bullying but it is always sorted out.'
- The school strives to promote good attendance and punctuality. The vast majority of parents and carers support this drive. Attendance levels have improved since 2011.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear educational direction for the school. Her vision of success for the school sets high expectations for pupils and staff.
- The headteacher has developed a positive, professional culture among the staff where there is an attitude of driving for continuous improvement and doing the very best for the pupils. The pupils astutely remarked, 'Our headteacher helps the school to get better and better.' Leaders and staff are well focused on being outstanding.
- The school's work is systematically and thoroughly checked. As a result, key leaders and governors have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and where areas need improvement.
- Key leaders, including the deputy headteacher and leaders of English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage, all play an effective role in checking performance and improving their areas of responsibility.
- Considerable emphasis is placed on developing teaching. Senior leaders observe classroom practice and provide constructive feedback to teachers. There are effective procedures for appraising staff performance and developing their professional skills. Targets to improve performance and training are well linked to school priorities. Leaders and staff are striving to ensure that all teaching is at least good and that more of it is outstanding.
- The local authority has an accurate overview of the school's performance and has confidence in its ability to improve. The school, therefore, receives light touch support. An external consultant is used well to support the school's drive for improvement.
- An interesting range of subjects and topics is provided to promote good achievement and outstanding personal development for pupils. The outdoor learning facilities, including the woodland area and a pond, are used well. The 'forest school' approach makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and development. Pupils' artwork, reading and writing are key strengths of the curriculum.
- All pupils have access to the full range of activities provided, and the staff strive to ensure that different groups of pupils do as well as they can. There are no signs of discrimination.
- Pupil premium funding has been properly planned and allocated. Additional support and new learning materials have been provided to help eligible pupils.
- The school has established very productive partnerships with parents, carers and other organisations. For example, there is a close relationship with the children's centre, and links benefit children and their families. The response to Parent View, to the school's own survey and the discussions with parents and carers indicate that the vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with safety, their children's progress, teaching and leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is effective. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and the community it serves.
 - They have a clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress and how these compare to schools nationally. Governors also have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching.
 - This clear knowledge of the school enables them to challenge senior leaders and hold the school to account.
 - Governors understand recent requirements relating to the management of staff performance and ensure that pay and promotion are linked to the progress that pupils' make.
 - They check how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact the actions have on eligible pupils' achievement.
 - Governors attend a range of appropriate training to increase their effectiveness.
 - They ensure that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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

Unique reference number	115581
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	412888

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Stephens
Headteacher	Rachel Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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