

Park View School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103524
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286688
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Cathy Morgan HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	597
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tahir Alam
Headteacher	Lindsey Clark
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001
School address	Naseby Road Alum Rock Birmingham B8 3HG
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Park View is a smaller than average, mixed comprehensive school. The school gained specialist business and enterprise college status in September 2005. The vast majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The number of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an overwhelmingly good and improving school. It provides a purposeful atmosphere of high expectation where everyone's right to work and learn is respected. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong and effective personal leadership. She is well supported by a team of skilful senior managers and is very well respected by governors, staff and students. Morale is high and all staff work effectively as a team. Governors contribute to the shared culture of improvement by providing effective support and appropriate challenge to the school.

Significant improvement has been made since the last inspection. The school continues to find innovative and effective ways to engage parents and carers to ensure that they are kept informed about their children's progress. Although standards remain below average, achievement is good and improving. This is as a result of good teaching and the effective monitoring of students' progress, which identifies underachievement and ensures accurate targeting of appropriate support. Sustained improvement at Key Stage 4 led to the school being identified as the most improved school in Birmingham in 2006, and the joint 15th most improved secondary school in the country.

Students, parents and staff are proud of their school. Diversity is valued and celebrated. The senior leadership team has strengthened the school's identity and improved its reputation in the wider community through initiatives such as the introduction of a new school uniform and giving students greater responsibility for managing their own behaviour. The headteacher's clear commitment to the quality of the students' education has resulted in a rigorous focus on managing student attendance and eradicating unacceptable behaviour. Attendance is now excellent and behaviour, around the school and in lessons, is good.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that all students are given every chance of succeeding in life. Staff know their students well and relationships are mutually respectful. There is a strong ethos of helping all students to develop academically and personally. Students feel safe, they enjoy school and feel well supported. They are proud and enthusiastic about taking on posts of responsibility and do so with maturity. They raise significant sums of money for charities and contribute well to the school and wider community. Skilled staff and learning mentors successfully support those with behavioural and learning difficulties, as well as those learning English as an additional language, to improve their progress. Students' personal development and well-being are good. Almost all achieve well and develop as confident young people who are able to make informed choices about their lives.

The curriculum meets students' needs well and is generally flexible in accommodating their choices. The school's specialism in business and enterprise has extended the opportunities available to students and is helping them to enter the world of work successfully. A variety of extra activities encourages students to explore and develop their potential and students appreciate and enjoy the range of opportunities available to them.

Teaching is good. Teachers plan stimulating and enjoyable lessons which enable most students to make good progress, although they are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. Students and parents are actively involved in the target-setting progress which is extremely well developed and effective. The school's policy for monitoring students' learning in lessons, however, is not consistently applied and this leads to missed opportunities for students to further improve their performance.

Strong leadership and effective management ensure the school has an accurate view of its strengths and the areas it needs to improve. Its capacity to improve is good because it examines its performance carefully, anticipates risks and manages to minimise any negative impact on student achievement. The headteacher's investment in the professional development of staff is commendable. However, not enough attention has been given to determine the development needs of the significant proportion of non-teaching and non-permanent staff to secure their involvement in improving the quality of provision. The school is very ambitious for its students and has rightly identified the need to continue to improve achievement, particularly for its most able students and those from one particular minority ethnic background.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the opportunities for students to develop as independent learners.
- Reduce the inconsistency in the monitoring of students' learning in lessons.
- Ensure that all staff avail themselves of professional development, particularly that aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The students come to the school with standards of attainment that are consistently below the national average. Almost one third of students have learning difficulties and disabilities and more than 40 languages are spoken across the school. Although standards of attainment in national tests at the end of Year 9 are below national averages, given their prior attainment, the students make outstanding progress in the lower school and those with learning difficulties achieve well. Recent results in mathematics demonstrate significant improvement, with 67% of students gaining Level 5 or higher in 2006. The predicted results for 2007 in all core subjects demonstrate that further improvement is likely.

The school makes rigorous use of data to identify individual students who are at risk of underachievement in Years 10 and 11 and they receive highly effective additional support. Although still below the national average, GCSE results have risen significantly since the last inspection and all students now achieve at least one qualification. In 2006, 41% of students attained five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Students make particularly good progress in mathematics but few attain the highest grades at GCSE level. Less able students, particularly those with additional needs, make less progress than the most able. Girls continue to outperform boys, particularly in English. Overall, students perform well in religious education and girls excel in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and fully reflects the school's aim for 'respect, opportunity, learning and achievement to the highest standards'. Students enjoy the many opportunities to celebrate diversity and reflect on their lives, through the school's provision of collective worship and well-organised programme of assemblies. Students have very good relationships with staff and with each other and these create a relaxed and orderly atmosphere throughout the school. Students make positive contributions to the community and have raised significant funding for charitable causes, most notably Comic Relief. Students are proud to take responsibility as prefects, mediators, members of the business and enterprise steering group and the school council. As a result, they have influenced many

decisions about school life. The school works extremely hard with families to emphasise the benefits of regular attendance. As a result, attendance is now outstanding. The school holds a Leading Aspect Award for 'raising achievement through improving attendance'. Students enjoy being in school. They feel safe and know how to respond to the very few incidents of anti-social behaviour or bullying. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good with the vast majority of students having positive attitudes to learning. Students have a good understanding of the benefits of physical activity and healthy lifestyles. They develop good workplace skills through the successful work experience and work-related learning programmes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's view that teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan carefully and adopt an effective and consistent lesson structure to ensure that students make at least good progress. There is a very positive rapport between teachers and students. Most lessons include purposeful activities which often enable students to participate in discussions and undertake practical work, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Students with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support from teaching assistants which enables them to make good progress. Occasionally, lessons are led too directly by the teacher and a lack of opportunity for students to be actively involved prevents them from developing their independent learning skills. Students receive informative feedback which ensures that they are aware of their targets. Whilst the school is working hard to embed the effective use of assessment techniques such as peer assessment and questioning, there are still inconsistencies in the application of these approaches across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum which is matched to the needs, aspirations and interests of students. This is an important contributory factor to students' good achievement. Imaginative planning enables students in Years 10 and 11 to choose from a range of 'pathways' which provide good opportunities for them to select appropriate learning programmes based on their prior attainment and personal aspirations. Students are well prepared for either education or work after the age of 16. The school's specialist business and enterprise college status impacts well on the curriculum, particularly in ICT. It creates many opportunities for students to undertake entrepreneurial activities and to apply their skills across a range of subjects, and contributes significantly to their economic understanding and well-being.

The lower school curriculum contains a broad and balanced range of subjects. It is currently being enhanced to further reflect the school's specialism but it does not make the best use of cross-curricular opportunities to extend students' learning. The school works hard to form productive links with local businesses and the wider community which extends students' experiences and supports learning well. The wide range of extra-curricular activities makes a valuable contribution to students' enjoyment of school and helps many to live healthily. There are good arrangements to support students' learning outside the school day, for example additional tuition after school and revision lessons for core subjects over some weekends, all of which are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are very supportive of their students, relationships are strong and built on trust. All requirements for safeguarding students are in place and rigorously applied. Support for the most vulnerable students is very effective and successfully targeted at those with particular difficulties, such as disaffection, problems in preparing for examinations or coping with learning difficulties. The school, particularly the learning mentors, has forged strong links with families and external agencies to support this work. Links with local primary schools are improving and transition procedures prepare students well as they join the school. Careers guidance is effective and used well to raise aspirations and enable students to make informed choices about further study or employment opportunities. The process of setting academic targets and checking students' progress is well developed and leads to prompt intervention which helps to address any underachievement. The development of stronger family learning support is being addressed in order to ensure that all students make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's determined and rigorous leadership has been key to sustaining the rapid improvement of the school. She is well supported by her senior leadership team which, through its passionate belief in school improvement, has successfully engaged the staff and raised morale. As a result, most students achieve well. Students spoke with enthusiasm about their respect for the staff who, in their view, have made the school 'a much safer place to be'. Robust systems for monitoring key areas of work have resulted in the school having a very accurate, if sometimes overly modest, view of its strengths and weaknesses. There is a robust system of performance management that is rooted in developing leadership and sustaining continuous improvement. The headteacher's investment in 'growing her own' staff is strengthening teamwork and enabling individuals at all levels, particularly middle leaders, to realise their potential and add value to the school. The professional development of all permanent staff is given a high priority and is determined by the school and departmental improvement plans. However, not enough attention has been given to the evaluation of the development needs of non-teaching and non-permanent staff, particularly supply teachers, to ensure that they are equally responsible for raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Governors contribute well to the life of the school and are effective in planning its strategic direction. They are well informed about development plans and provide high levels of support and challenge in relation to new initiatives. The school gives good value for money. Financial management is prudent and this has contributed to the high level of impact that specialist business and enterprise status has had on the school. There are notable successes, for example the improvement in the quality of ICT resources and the development of the enterprise village. These provide good opportunities for students to develop their enterprise skills and make a positive contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.

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Annex A

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?	2
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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

27 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Park View School, Birmingham, B8 3HG

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently. You were mature and sensible in the way that you spoke with each of us and we really enjoyed talking to you. Many of you were keen to tell us how much you enjoy school and about recent improvements which have helped to make you feel safe. We were impressed by your good behaviour, your positive relationships with one another and with your teachers. Your parents are very supportive of your school. Your opinions are valued and, through your school council and business and enterprise steering group, you have helped to make some important decisions about your school.

Park View is a good school which is continuing to improve. The quality of teaching is good and you are often able to take part in activities which you enjoy and which help you to learn well. Your teachers work hard to ensure that you make good progress by the time you take your GCSE and other examinations. The results obtained by your fellow students last year demonstrated that your school was the most improved school in Birmingham in 2006, and the joint 15th most improved secondary school in the country. You have a good choice of subjects to study and the results have really improved since the last time your school was inspected. You all receive good care and guidance and you have many opportunities to become involved in a wide range of enrichment activities and visits. The headteacher and her senior managers make a good team. They know how your school is doing, where things are working well and where they can make improvements.

We have asked your school to improve three areas:

- To give you more opportunities to develop as independent learners.
- To ensure that your learning in lessons is always closely monitored.
- To help all of the staff involved with the school to develop their skills further so that they can help you to continue to improve.

These areas are particularly important if you are to achieve as well as you possibly can in your tests and examinations. You can help too by continuing to work hard and do your best. The managers, teachers, governors and staff are rightly proud of your school and are highly committed to their work. We are confident that your school has the potential to do even better and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully Cathy Morgan HMI Lead inspector