

# The Parks School

Burley Road, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6GY

**Inspection dates** 17–18 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders and governors have not provided sufficient challenge to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not always given the opportunities they need to progress through active learning and discovering things themselves. As a result, they do not make sufficient progress in all areas of learning.
- Staff do not explain the next small steps children need to take to help them to improve their progress.
- The school does not use all of the data and information it collects to identify what children need to learn next or to evaluate how much progress the children are making.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance does not have a sharp enough focus on children's achievement and is not related closely enough to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Federation with Oakham CE Primary School has strengthened governance, leadership and management. The school now has access to the effective policies and practices of its partner school.
- The headteacher has managed the move to the new premises very effectively and has ensured that the two staff teams are working together cooperatively.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral and social education particularly effectively.
- Staff relationships with children are excellent. The staff are dedicated, enthusiastic and provide a very high standard of care.
- Parents value the school very highly and say that the staff have transformed the lives of their children, particularly in enabling them to communicate.
- Behaviour and safety of children are good. Staff work particularly effectively with families and colleagues in health and social care to support families and meet medical needs.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, and visited several play sessions. The headteacher watched most of the lessons with the inspector.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, representatives of the local authority, parents and the governing body.
- There were insufficient responses from parents to the online parental survey (Parent View). The inspector considered the schools' parental survey and letters from parents, and she also met parents.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation including the school's information on keeping children safe, children's progress, self-evaluation, development plans and reports from the local authority.

## Inspection team

Rosemary Mackenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Parks provides specialist nursery provision for children with severe and complex learning difficulties. Many of the children also have associated learning needs such as autism, communication difficulties, medical needs or developmental delay.
- Most children attend on a part-time basis. The school can accommodate children in Key Stage 1, but there are currently no children in this phase.
- All children either have a statement of special educational needs or are being assessed. The school currently has places for 10 full time equivalent places.
- At the last inspection, the school was located on a separate site and educated 16 children. There was a different headteacher who shared her post with an acting headteacher.
- The Parks moved to a new purpose-built school in September 2011 and is co-located with Oakham C of E Primary School, which was last inspected in November 2011. The two schools are now federated and have a single governing body and headteacher. The new headteacher was appointed in 2011 and the new single federated governing body was confirmed in July 2013.
- The school currently has a lead teacher, supported by a team of teaching assistants. Some additional teaching is being provided by staff from the federated partner school.
- The Parks works closely with parents and professionals from health and social care services to assess and identify young children's special educational needs.
- The school receives additional pupil premium funding for two children. This is additional funding for children who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are looked after by the local authority or who are part of a service family.
- A children's centre and a private nursery are also located in the new purpose-built complex. Both are inspected separately.

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

- Ensure that the teaching is consistently good by:
  - making sure that adults' feedback is constructive and helps children to understand what they need to learn next
  - giving children more opportunities to learn for themselves through active investigations and exploratory play
  - ensuring that planning and assessments follow the guidance in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework for both inside and outside the classroom, .
- Use the data and information the school has collected about children's achievements to identify what children need to learn next and to provide a clear evaluation of how much progress children are making in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Ensure that the school's evaluation of its own performance has a sharp focus on children's achievement and is closely related to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children's progress is not good because staff sometimes, they step in too quickly to provide guidance, with the result that children are not able to explore and discover things for themselves when this would be beneficial.
- Assessment is not used well enough to guide learning. In particular, annual and termly learning targets, daily planning, and staff comments on progress, are not linked closely enough to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. This means that children's progress is limited.
- Children are making the progress that is expected in developing early mathematical and literacy skills and in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the development of communication, physical and social skills and has had a positive impact on progress in these areas of learning.
- Children make good progress in developing their communication skills because of their interaction with adults when they have personal one-to-one teaching sessions. Adults work enthusiastically with the children. Signed support is used very effectively. Children who were unable to communicate when they joined the school make rapid progress in learning how to communicate, to express their needs and to access learning.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is not enough good teaching, because adults can sometimes provide too much support which limits opportunities for children to learn through active and exploratory activities. Adults do not always encourage children to think and problem solve for themselves.
- Staff do not provide sufficient verbal guidance to help the children understand what they need to learn next.
- Many of the inconsistencies in teaching come from planning that is not related closely enough to teachers' assessments of what the children know and can do. Staff do not identify clearly enough from this information the next small steps children should take in order to make good progress.
- Sometimes, the children play alongside their peers from the private nursery or visit the federated partner school nursery. However, outside play is not planned with sufficient rigour or attention to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, as not all activities cover all areas of learning regularly enough.
- Where teaching is good, staff are very enthusiastic and motivate the children. They know the children's detailed learning needs, and provide a strong focus on communication and interaction. Relationships are excellent and there is a calm and happy atmosphere. Medical needs are met in a discreet manner.
- Individual learning sessions are a particular strength. Children respond well to adults developing their communication, interaction and learning skills. Children enjoy their individual sessions and

develop good attention and listening skills. They work very cooperatively with adults. However, the large proportion of time given to adult-directed activities limits children's ability to learn by discovering things for themselves.

- Children have positive attitudes to learning during their individual sessions. They concentrate on their tasks and persevere to complete the activities presented. However, adults choose which activity is to be completed next. This again limits the opportunity for children to make their own choices.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are enthusiastic and skilled. They have very good relationships with the children. They work effectively to support learning and care needs.
- Staff from the federated primary school have begun to work with staff from The Parks on curriculum and lesson planning, which is beginning to improve as a result.

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

- The behaviour of children in lessons is calm and cooperative. There are excellent relationships between staff, children and parents. Children respond very well to staff expectations of good conduct.
- Children are kept safe by good systems and a high standard of care and support. Where problems are identified, all agencies work extremely effectively together on behalf of children and their families. Approaches are common across the two schools.
- The school works extremely effectively to support parents. Two comments from parents indicate the impact on their children's development: 'The difference The Parks has made is incredible,' and 'Communication between teachers and parents is.'
- Attendance was above average during the previous academic year. Absences are mainly related to medical needs. If children are absent, the school works with families and carers to find ways of supporting children to improve their attendance.
- Children's attitudes to learning are good during the individual sessions. However, children are very dependent on adults and do not demonstrate sufficient curiosity or that they are able to investigate things for themselves.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Until recently, there has been insufficient challenge from leaders and managers to ensure that teaching is consistently good and that children have the full opportunities to learn through following the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.
- School self-evaluation does not relate closely enough to outcomes for children nor focus sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching and learning. There has been no clear analysis of achievement to indicate what is working well and what needs to be improved. Annual learning targets are not clear. Progress over time has not been monitored with sufficient rigour.
- Leaders and managers have not provided sufficient challenge for staff to ensure that they are having maximum impact on children's progress. Performance management systems are shared across both The Parks and its partner school. However, training related to improving learning

has not yet been fully established at The Parks.

- Leadership and management have started to improve since the school's federation arrangements with its co-located primary school have been finalised and a new governing body has been appointed. The headteacher and senior managers have formed a strong team and have worked very effectively to successfully federate the two schools. Staff and governors share the headteacher's vision for the future of the federation.
- Subject leaders and senior staff are beginning to work together across the two schools and share best practice. The governing body has determined that The Parks will use Oakham C of E School's model for self-evaluation and school improvement planning which have clear and precise targets for improving achievement and the quality of teaching. Policies and systems are being brought together across both schools.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the federation of the two schools with the co-location of the children's centre and private nursery. However, it has not provided sufficient challenge to leaders for The Parks to ensure the consistent quality of teaching and learning, focused school self-assessment and the full implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.
- The school offers the children a wide range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences in the community. Children have opportunities to experience awe and wonder in the community and natural environment. This includes walks in local parks and visits to churches and garden centres. Children respond with a calm stillness upon entering the church, show an appreciation of natural environments and enjoy listening to music from around the world. The children particularly appreciated listening to a visitor playing the didgeridoo.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The recently federated governing body has rigorous self-evaluation and strategic planning systems, and clear policies and procedures. This is demonstrated through the partner school's documentation. The previous separate governing body did not take action soon enough to ensure that the current planning for improvement is rigorous and focused on teaching and learning. The current governors know the school well and are committed and supportive. Performance management is sound, with good teaching being rewarded appropriately. Governors monitor the use of the pupil premium and the impact it is having.

## 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>	120355
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland
<b>Inspection number</b>	424950

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	10
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Tummom
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joan Gibson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 January 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01572 722404
<b>Fax number</b>	01572 724337
<b>Email address</b>	office@oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk



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