

Petersfield CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110836
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	356822
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wayne Talbot
Headteacher	Amanda Tuck
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2008
School address	Hurdleditch Road Orwell, Royston SG8 5QG
Telephone number	01223 207382
Fax number	01223 208567
Email address	office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed and five teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, representatives of the governing body and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' progress, evidence of monitoring, the school development plan, a variety of policies and safeguarding documentation. In addition, they analysed the questionnaires returned by 54 parents and carers, seven members of staff and 58 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The rate at which Reception children progress in the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class.
- The impact that leadership and management have had on the apparent variation in pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- The features of provision which give rise to the school's view that pupils develop well as individuals.
- The extent to which changes to the curriculum have impacted on pupils' enjoyment and attitudes to learning.

Information about the school

Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage in this smaller than average school. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. While the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, there are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than is usual for a school of this size. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural needs. Staff turnover has been higher than normal. The governing body provides a before- and after-school club most days each week. The school has gained, amongst others, the Active Schools and Eco School Bronze awards and has national Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This satisfactory school lies at the heart of the communities it serves and is improving because of the good steps being taken to strengthen teaching and learning. Its strength lies in its strong Christian ethos and good care which ensure pupils feel happy, safe and develop into mature individuals. A good programme of social and emotional development does much to raise pupils' self-esteem and develop their independence. Pupils' attendance is good and opportunities such as the eco-council, school council and the buddy system help pupils take responsibility and exercise judgement. The school's awards reflect pupils' good understanding and adoption of healthy eating habits and taking more exercise than is typically found.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class. Faster progress is being held back by the quality of the resources in the classroom and the layout of the outdoor area, both of which are in the process of being upgraded. Writing is a weaker area of attainment in the Reception class because not enough focus has been given to teaching letters and sounds to aid early writing skills. The information gained from regular assessment is not used well enough to plan activities that are finely tuned to the needs of each child.

By the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress in reading but satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics leading to satisfactory achievement overall. Within this picture, pupils make consistently good progress in Years 2 and 6 where the best teaching is found. Although improving in some classes, teaching and learning are variable in Years 3 to 5 because daily assessments are not used well enough to provide activities that are well matched to pupils' differing abilities. Teaching assistants are well used in withdrawal sessions but not always well deployed and actively involved throughout normal lessons. Marking is improving but it does not comply fully with the school's policy and there are inconsistencies in communicating to pupils the clear next steps in their learning.

Although the curriculum is enriched well, aspects of it limit progress in writing and mathematics from being higher than satisfactory. Not enough use is made of different stimuli such as art, music, drama and film to promote purposeful writing. In mathematics, not enough priority is given to addressing the gaps lower ability pupils have in calculations and the higher ability pupils have in problem solving and reasoning. To help raise attainment, the school is in the early stages of developing a more 'creative' curriculum which links subjects together. Several new units have proved successful in helping pupils to develop their workplace skills, research and computing abilities. These have helped forge stronger links with literacy and numeracy but overall such links have a satisfactory impact on raising attainment.

The school is now better placed to address remaining weaknesses and the headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body are keen for improvement to quicken. Self-

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evaluation is satisfactory and the focused development plan reflects an accurate diagnosis of the school's performance. Although more needs to be done, an upturn in results, better links with parents, enhanced accommodation and improving teaching reflect a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Quicken children's progress in the Reception class by:
 - enhancing resources and providing a high quality outdoor environment
 - providing more opportunities for children to use letters and sounds to aid their writing
 - ensuring activities are well matched to children's individual needs.
- Ensure teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are consistently good by:
 - ensuring teachers make better use of daily assessment to match activities more closely to the needs of pupils of all abilities
 - deploying teaching assistants consistently well throughout each lesson
 - making sure all marking identifies clearly the next steps in learning.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - implementing an enhanced pattern of topic work in all years with clear opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills
 - introducing more stimuli such as film, drama, art and music to help promote extended writing
 - providing more calculation for lower ability pupils and problem-solving and reasoning activities for higher ability pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics dipped after the last inspection reflecting staffing changes. A steady recovery has taken place. Attainment is now above average at the end of both Year 2 and 6. This reflects satisfactory progress from pupils' typically above average starting points. High attainment in reading reflects its high profile in the school and the support provided by members of the community and parents and carers who help with guided reading each week.

Pupils progress and learn at a faster pace in some classes than in others. This was clearly evident in the good learning in one lesson older; pupils listened intensely to a story which included the technique of 'flashback' and responded very well to questioning so that they could identify how they could use this method in their own writing. Work in pupils' books in Year 2 shows that they are making good gains in writing sentences and paragraphs which are well punctuated, in their calculations and in solving simple mathematical problems. In some classes in Years 3 to 6, pupils often make satisfactory progress. This was best seen in one lesson where pupils, while working steadily on using different shapes

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to identify halves and quarters, were not given different or extra challenges to stretch their understanding.

The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall. Within this picture, many pupils with a statement of special educational needs, and those who receive more intensive support, make good progress in withdrawal sessions because of skilled teaching assistants who use well-honed learning approaches. For example, one such pupil worked enthusiastically and made good gains in learning with the good support of a teaching assistant using much patience, signage and other visual aids to support activities closely linked to targets on the pupil's individual education plan.

The pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is reflected in a recent 'weights and measures' exercise. Pupils take a keen interest in the smooth running of the school through school monitors and class helpers. The school council also is currently aiming to raise funds for an eco-class managed garden to promote environmental awareness. Pupils have a good understanding of a range of religious beliefs, respect those people who do not, and have a good sense of right and wrong. They have a good insight into other people's cultures and of how people live in a variety of contrasting communities in the United Kingdom and in other countries. Pupils' good personal skills and above average attainment prepares them well for their next stage of education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Pupils are keen to learn in lessons and their behaviour is good. The better teaching results from good planning which identifies challenging activities to be tackled by pupils of different abilities and clear lesson targets for them to attain. Sharp questioning enables pupils to think clearly about what they are going to learn and how they are going to make good progress. However, in some lessons not enough is expected of pupils and the pitch of work is not consistently as challenging as it might be. This limits achievement from being good. Increasingly, teachers mark pupils' books using 'tickled pink' to celebrate good achievement and 'green for growth' to indicate areas to be improved. However, inconsistencies still remain.

The curriculum provides pupils with a sound range of activities in all National Curriculum subjects. Some good links are already in place between subjects but these are not fully established in all topics. For example, Year 6 pupils used their literacy, scientific and research skills to explore the topic of 'stepping into sustainability' which has explored the arguments for and against situating a wind farm locally. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are included well in the curriculum which is personalised to their learning needs. The curriculum provides well for aspects of pupils' personal development, such as promoting their emotional development and awareness of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. The majority of pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular clubs such as French, multi-skills, knitting and film and this helps to extend their interests.

Good care, guidance and support underpin the positive ethos within this small school. The headteacher and staff know the needs of pupils in vulnerable circumstances very well and offer them good, timely support. Good use is made of a wide range of external services to provide specialist support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Typical of the good care provided is the breakfast and after-school club which pupils say, 'Provides us with a healthy snack and lots of fun activities to do.' Good transition arrangements operate with secondary schools and, consequently, pupils are well informed of their choices and helped to settle in.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A number of parents wrote to say that the school is better than it was. The headteacher provides a sound drive for improvement and a realistic view of the schools' strengths and areas needing improvement. With good support from the governing body, she has tackled some difficult staffing issues and resolved many of the problems with the school's

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accommodation. School development planning has improved and has been informed by regular monitoring and mentoring of teachers and good tracking of pupils' progress. Leaders recognise that there is still more to do to raise pupils' progress, especially in writing and mathematics, and to enhance the amount of good teaching.

Members of the governing body bring good financial, educational and personnel expertise to the school's work. The outcomes and provision committee provides a good strategic steer and ensures that members are directly involved in setting appropriate priorities for improvement. While they can point to some successes in managing a very tight budget and improving the school environment, they are aware of the need to monitor more closely the impact that their work has on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding systems are good. Every effort is taken to ensure pupils are well looked after, are safe and secure in school or when on trips, and risks to them are minimised. Parent and carer partnerships have improved and there is almost 100% attendance at consultation evenings. Informative weekly newsletters and a weekly 'learning link' booklet are sent home to facilitate two-way communication. Strong partnerships with the local network of schools, specialist support services and local organisations have a good impact on pupils' knowledge of healthy lifestyles, welfare and life experiences although more could be done to involve partners in curriculum development. Although discrimination is tackled well, remaining variations in teaching and the use of assessment information means that the promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The school effectively promotes community cohesion. There are many positive links with the individuals and organisations in the local area which help bind the community together. Established links with a number of schools abroad and in inner London do much to raise pupils' awareness of ways of life which are much different from their own rural community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Satisfactory teaching and a well-planned range of interesting activities ensure that children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Children enjoy their learning and show good safety awareness such as when hopping, skipping and moving in other ways in the hall. They behave well, care for the equipment they use and make sensible choices about the activities they are undertaking. During the course of the week, there is an appropriate balance of teacher-directed and free-flow activities. Children particularly enjoy exploring with their senses, such as when they used their knowledge of letter sounds to draw letters in shaving foam or seeing how boats made out of different materials floated in water. Links with parents and carers have been strengthened, especially through the 'learning link' booklet which is sent home each week and helps give parents and carers guidance on how they can support their children's learning at home. Good approaches have been identified to support the newly appointed member of staff in developing assessment procedures and enhancing the internal and external environments.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The rate of response from 54 out of 89 families to the questionnaire was better than that found nationally for a school of this type. Most of those who responded agree or strongly agree with the statements in the consultation. A very small minority of parents and carers do not think that the school is well led and managed and this was often linked to their view that behaviour is not always well managed. No instances of misbehaviour were seen in lessons and pupils with behavioural difficulties are carefully supported. A few parents and carers did not think that the school promoted healthy lifestyles well enough. The inspectors' judge this aspect of the school's work to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Petersfield CofE Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 113 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	57	20	37	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	61	20	37	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	31	32	59	3	6	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	19	39	72	3	6	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	13	24	38	70	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	33	30	56	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	26	30	56	6	11	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	33	31	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	33	31	57	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	26	29	54	6	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	26	34	63	1	2	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	17	31	30	56	3	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	43	29	54	0	0	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Petersfield CofE Aided Primary School, Royston, SG8 5QG

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome at your school and talking about your work. We found out that you go to a satisfactory school. This means that it does a number of things well but could do some things better.

Best of all, you develop well as individuals and your attendance is good. Adults in the school care for you well and that means that you feel safe in school and always have someone to turn to if you need help. Your behaviour is good and you all get on well with each other. In lessons, you are keen to learn and try your best. You help the school in many ways and you play a full part in local community events and celebrations. You know a lot about how to keep fit and healthy and are eager to take on responsibilities around the school.

To help your school improve, we have asked your headteacher and the governing body to:

- quicken children's progress in the Reception class by improving the classroom resources, completing the outdoor area and making sure individuals enjoy activities that are just right for them
- ensure that all pupils in Years 3 to 6 are set work that is not too easy or difficult, checking that teaching assistants when in class spend all their time helping you to learn and marking identifies your next steps in learning
- improve the curriculum, putting in place a new pattern of topic work with strong links to literacy and numeracy, providing more stimuli to promote good writing and addressing gaps you have in mathematics in your calculating or problem-solving skills.

You can help by continuing to work hard, especially on your writing and mathematics, and to think carefully about your next steps in learning.

Yours sincerely

Alan Jarvis

Lead Inspector

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