

# Peak Dale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	112656
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378530
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Keith Williams

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	75
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Murphy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Stamp
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	School Road Peak Dale Buxton SK17 8AJ
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	21–22 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378530



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Keith Williams

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons, taught by three teachers, and visited sessions during which pupils were taught phonics (early reading skills). He listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books. Meetings were held with a member of the governing body and staff, and informal discussions were held with some parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at its assessment and tracking records and documents relating to the school's evaluation of its work, attendance and the safeguarding of pupils. Questionnaires returned by 41 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

Almost all of the pupils at this much smaller-than-average primary school are from White British backgrounds. No pupil is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. Fewer pupils than in most schools join or leave partway through their primary school education. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It has the Activemark award and Healthy Schools Gold status. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes, with children in Reception joining pupils from Year 1.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It has improved in recent years and parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about its work. Staff provide a very supportive, yet challenging, environment in which pupils make good progress. The school is not outstanding because there is not yet enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make consistently exceptional progress, particularly in writing.
- Pupils join the school with widely differing skills and needs. Whatever their starting points, boys and girls achieve well because they are taught well and are eager to learn. Levels of attainment are rising and are now above average at the end of Year 6. Writing, a priority for the school, is improving, although opportunities for writing in different subjects are not yet fully established.
- Teachers are skilled at catering for classes of mixed ages and abilities. Planning has improved and a good level of challenge is provided for more-able pupils. Expectations are high. Occasionally, criteria for checking how well pupils have learned are not shared with pupils. Pupils are now more involved in setting their own objectives, but not yet consistently. Learning is reviewed at the end of each lesson, although this does not always include the learning of different ability groups.
- Pupils' good behaviour has made a considerable contribution to the school's improvement. They say they feel safe in school, a view endorsed strongly by parents and carers, and they have an excellent understanding of how to stay free from harm.
- The headteacher's highly ambitious drive for improvement is shared by staff, governors and pupils. Excellent procedures to evaluate the school's effectiveness provide leaders and staff with a clear sense of what needs to improve. This has had a considerable impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' performance.

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

- By December 2012, raise pupils' attainment in writing further by:
  - monitoring how well they use the writing skills they learn in literacy sessions when they write in other subjects
  - extending opportunities for them to write at length in those subjects.
  
- By April 2013, increase the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - providing pupils with clear criteria by which the success of their learning will be judged, and involving them more in setting their own objectives
  - ensuring that discussions about learning at the end of lessons are more sharply focused on how well pupils of different ability have learned.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Those parents and carers who spoke to the inspector are unanimous that their children make good progress, and this view is confirmed by the inspection. Children join Reception with needs and skills that vary considerably from year to year, but their language and communication skills are often particularly weak. A strong focus on speaking, listening and the early skills of reading and writing ensures that children in Reception soon catch up, and they make good progress in all areas of learning. Across the school, improved systems for tracking pupils' progress are building up a clearer picture of each pupil's starting points, attainment and progress. This information, confirmed by the work seen in books and lessons, shows that progress is consistently good. Pupils reach broadly average levels of attainment by Year 2, while those currently in Years 5 and 6 are on track to reach above average standards. This is higher than the results achieved in 2011, particularly in English, although the small size of each year group means that analysis of national test results must be treated cautiously.

Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Progress in writing is accelerating too, particularly during literacy lessons when pupils gain a good understanding of what makes writing successful. In a literacy lesson in Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils of all ages showed a good understanding of how adjectives can make their writing more interesting, while older and more-able pupils could evaluate their efforts and improve the quality of adjectives they used. Pupils are using these skills with increasing accuracy when they write in other subjects, although this is not yet firmly embedded across the school. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well, because they are taught and supported well. Teaching assistants play an important part in successfully closing the gap between the performance of these pupils and that of all pupils nationally. Indeed, there are examples of some pupils making exceptional progress from low starting points. The few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, also make good progress.

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## Quality of teaching

All parents and carers who expressed an opinion rightly feel that teaching is good; most strongly agree with this view. Pupils, too, say that teaching is good and this helps them to learn a lot. Better teaching has had a strong influence on the improvement in pupils' learning since the last inspection. At that time, the school was charged with improving its use of assessment to plan for different groups of pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils. The staff's success in tackling this is a key reason why pupils now make good progress. In a successful mathematics lesson in Years 4, 5 and 6, for example, the teacher carefully modified the level of difficulty of problems involving ratio according to pupils' capabilities. They rose to their individual challenges and, consequently, pupils of all abilities learned well. As a result of this improved planning, a higher proportion of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are on track to reaching the higher National Curriculum Level 5. Across the school, the curriculum for teaching reading and writing has improved and this contributes to the rising standards.

Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. All staff place a high priority on promoting pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and this has a positive impact on their learning and well-being. Lessons are invariably well organised, calm and purposeful. Lesson planning is usually clear about what pupils are expected to learn, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils are increasingly involved in setting their own objectives for learning, and teachers are usually clear about how they will judge pupils' success in reaching those objectives, but these steps are not always shared with the pupils. This limits the extent to which pupils can check their learning for themselves during the lesson. Occasionally, when the learning is reviewed at the end of the lesson, the discussion is too general, and is not focused precisely enough on what each ability group has learned. Nevertheless, teachers provide good quality feedback for pupils when they mark their work, so they have a good understanding of what they need to do next to improve it.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically good, and sometimes outstanding. This view is confirmed by parents and carers, who also say that their children feel safe, and most pupils. Pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with great respect. They enjoy sharing each other's success, for example when they applaud the procession of 'finer diners' (pupils and local community representatives chosen for their outstanding contribution) on their way to the top table at lunch time. A considerable strength is pupils' understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, demonstrated impressively in two assemblies during the inspection. Pupils say that bullying of any kind is extremely rare, and are confident that if any did arise it would be dealt with effectively by staff.

Pupils respond well to the steps taken by staff to promote positive attitudes to learning. They find lessons interesting and are invariably ready and willing to learn.

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Children in Reception quickly develop independence, gathering equipment speedily to start their work and tidying away sensibly at the end. This is not always the case across the school, however, and the pace of learning occasionally slows when pupils take too long to change activities or gather together for discussions. Pupils of all ages and abilities show great determination when faced with difficulty. Examples of pupils wrestling with a challenge until they had 'got it' were seen in each class and this adds to pupils' sense of achievement. Consequently, pupils enjoy school very much and this is reflected in the rate of attendance, which rose to average levels last year and is continuing to rise this year.

**Leadership and management**

The determined, sharply-focused and able leadership of the headteacher has led to a strong sense of teamwork and a shared commitment to providing the best possible education for pupils. Leaders recognise that they have not yet fulfilled their ambition, particularly in securing even better teacher and learning, but no stone is left unturned in the pursuit of improvement, and complacency is not tolerated. The small group of staff share responsibility for managing a wide range of areas and contribute well to leadership at all levels which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Very rigorous systems have been introduced to assess and track pupils' progress and check on the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, any pupil at risk of underachieving receives the help they need, and areas for improving teaching are agreed with staff and pursued robustly through extra training and support. Governors are increasingly well placed to hold leaders to account and the headteachers of the local schools work well together to provide a 'fresh pair of eyes'. All safeguarding requirements are met and robust steps are taken to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children.

The school has worked successfully to improve the way subjects link together, which staff call the 'creative curriculum'. This is accelerating pupils' progress in English and mathematics and, increasingly, their work in other subjects. Initiatives to widen the range of pupils' writing in other subjects are bearing fruit, although the checking of their writing skills in these subjects is at an early stage. A particular strength of the curriculum is the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are welcomed and included fully, and leaders promote equality and tackle discrimination well. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders' success in improving the school's effectiveness and the quality of teaching, raising pupils' attainment and attendance, and accelerating their progress shows there is good capacity for sustaining this improvement.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Peak Dale Primary School, Buxton SK17 8AJ**

Many thanks for being so friendly when I visited your school recently and for taking the time to speak to me. Thank you also to those who filled in questionnaires. I enjoyed watching you in lessons, outside and in the dining hall. I agree with you, your parents and carers, and the teachers that this is a good school. These are some of the things liked most.

- Your work has improved because you work hard, are keen to do well, and stick at it even when you find work difficult. You can be proud of the way that you tackle everything with such great enthusiasm.
- Your teachers make sure that lessons are interesting and challenging and they give you good feedback when they mark your work. They keep a close check on how well you are doing and make sure you get the right amount of help or extra challenge.
- You told me that you feel safe in school, and I could see for myself that you behave well and take good care of each other. I was impressed by your good manners.

Your headteacher, staff and members of the governing body know what to do to make the school even better and they are determined to succeed. I have asked them to help you to:

- improve your writing in topic work and subjects like science and history - you can help by making sure you always use the writing skills you learn in literacy lessons
- understand how to check your learning in lessons, and give you the chance to decide for yourselves what you would like to learn - here you can help by listening carefully when your teachers explain what you are going to learn and thinking hard to come up with your own ideas.

I know you will do everything you can to help. Please keep doing your best in everything you do.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams  
Lead inspector

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