

Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Peak Forest, Buxton, SK17 8EG

Inspection dates

1–2 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils are not making consistently good progress.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is slower than that in reading or writing because the pupils are not sufficiently fluent in using calculation skills. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use and apply these skills.
- Sometimes teaching assistants do not play an active enough role in aiding pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not always adapt their teaching during a lesson according to how pupils respond to the learning.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Work provided, especially at Key Stage 2, does not match fully pupils' needs and abilities sufficiently accurately
- Leadership and management require improvement because recently introduced good ways of working have not had time to make their full impact.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and progress are consistently good in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2.
- In Key Stage 2 progress is accelerating as teaching is improving.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are considerate and behave well in class and around the school. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are strong and productive. Pupils and their parents are confident that they feel safe in school.
- The acting headteachers have been effective in driving improvements during the time they have worked at the school.
- The quality of teaching, and consequently pupils' progress, has improved over the last year, due to their rigorous monitoring of teaching and strategies to improve it.
- The governing body has improved since the previous inspection and is very supportive, aiding the pace of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four teachers and visited nine lessons or part lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with an acting headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the acting headteachers and other senior leaders, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' work, looked in their exercise books and listened to them read.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, information on pupils' progress, and documents regarding safeguarding and key reports and policies.
- The inspector took account of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and analysed eight questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Peak Forest Primary is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils attend from the village and surrounding area.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for Reception-aged children, who are taught in a mixed-age class with Years 1 and 2. There is also one mixed-age class for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, (Key Stage 2).
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- There are no pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has suffered considerable staffing problems since the previous inspection. It is now more settled following the appointment of a new teacher to Key Stage 2 from September 2012.
- The substantive headteacher has been absent since June 2013. Since then the school has been supported by two acting headteachers. One acting headteacher took up her post the day before the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by making sure that:
 - work provided for the pupils is always matched accurately to their needs and abilities
 - during lessons, teachers assess pupils' responses to learning and adapt their planning so that pupils can learn at the optimum rate
 - teaching assistants play a more active role in aiding pupils' learning throughout lessons.
- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics by making sure that:
 - a system is put in place to improve pupils' skills of handling number and calculations
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills.
- Secure the full impact of the good processes brought in by the acting headteachers by continuing the momentum of improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment dipped after the previous inspection, especially in mathematics. There remain weaknesses in pupils' skills in the rapid recall of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts.
- Pupils' progress is not yet consistently good, but it has improved rapidly over the last year. Previous signs of underachievement have been reversed because teaching has improved in Key Stage 2. The more regular and robust tracking of pupils' progress has made sure that any pupil whose progress slows is identified quickly and helped to catch up.
- Pupils' rates of progress in mathematics, although improving, are not yet the same as those for reading and writing. Progress is held back because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to develop greater understanding and fluency in calculation.
- Children in the Reception class join the school with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. They benefit from good teaching and are making good progress in all areas of learning. Accurate assessment leads adults to be able to plan appropriately for next steps in learning. As well as effective teaching of key skills, children are helped to think about what they are learning and to develop the skill of working by themselves and collaborating with others. For example, some were observed writing grammatically correct simple sentences. The majority enter Year 1 with broadly average standards.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are also making good progress. An above-average proportion of pupils attained the expected standard in the 2012 national screening check in Year 1 for phonics (linking sounds and letters) because phonics teaching is strong. The strategies that have been put in place have led to an increase in reading skills for this age group, which is leading to higher standards in reading. Pupils in Year 6 read competently and enjoy their reading and many read widely.
- Although pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has been inconsistent due to uneven teaching, most pupils have improving attitudes to learning, are accelerating their progress, and reaching levels in line with their age, in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in writing have improved because pupils are encouraged to talk with a partner before writing so they have more ideas and good opportunities to organise their thoughts.
- Work that the inspector scrutinised during the inspection and school assessments show that nearly all pupils in last year's Year 6 reached the levels expected nationally. An above-average percentage of pupils, especially the most able, reached a higher level in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A number of initiatives have been successful in raising attainment. For example, pupils participate widely in physical education and sports and this helps to support improvement in their academic performance.
- Pupils identified as disabled and those with special educational needs usually make the same progress as their classmates. The school's current focus on good planning for their specific needs is accelerating their achievement.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not had a good impact on pupils' achievement since the last inspection. It is not always well matched to the abilities and needs of the range of pupils in the mixed-age classes so their progress is not consistently good.
- Teachers are at an early stage of assessing pupils' progress during lessons, so they are not yet good at adapting their teaching based on pupils' responses to their learning.
- The quality of teaching has improved over the last year. In Key Stage 2 most teaching is now good, but its impact has yet to be fully apparent in pupils' attainment and progress over time.
- During the inspection examples of outstanding practice were observed in the Reception/Key Stage 1 teaching of phonics, which support pupils' good progress in reading in this class. Teaching in the Reception/Key Stage 1 class is consistently good and results in these pupils making good progress.
- Teaching assistants play a valuable role in aiding learning, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, they are sometimes poorly directed so that they are often inactive while the teacher is teaching the whole class. Occasionally, they miss opportunities to use supplementary questioning to extend learning.
- At its best, teaching includes high levels of challenge and engagement, such as in a geography lesson in Key Stage 2 where pupils learned rapidly because active learning outdoors and the teacher's use of questioning skilfully assessed pupils' understanding and made sure that pupils were quickly taken on to the next stage of learning.
- Teaching of literacy is effective as basic concepts are a high priority, as was seen in a literacy lesson in Key Stage 2. Pupils developed good skills in the use of rich adjectives that they derived from studying 'Varjac Paw'. The teacher's high expectations and wide range of strategies engaged the pupils fully and made sure that learning was rapid.
- Teachers set pupils appropriate targets for learning, which pupils say help them to know how well they making progress. Marking and feedback to pupils on how well they are doing are of good quality across the school. Pupils respond positively to comments from teachers and use these to make improvements to their work.
- At Key Stage 2 pupils are asked to judge how their personal development supports their academic learning. Each week they choose from a number of learning attributes, for example, perseverance, confidence or self-esteem, which has helped their learning and accelerated their acquisition of knowledge and understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are courteous and considerate and there are good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults.
- None of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View expressed any concerns about pupils' behaviour. The inspector found that there are very clear systems for dealing with any inappropriate behaviour and that these are used effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour during playtimes is good. A wide range of play activities is supported well by

skilful and sympathetic adults and this leads to a calm and harmonious atmosphere. Pupils were observed mixing happily together. Pupils also behave well in lessons and were seen engaged and enjoying their work. Pupils, staff and records seen, confirmed that the good behaviour seen during the inspection was typical.

- A small minority of the parents responding to the on-line questionnaire stated that they did not know about the way the school deals with bullying. There are no recorded incidents. Pupils confirm that incidents are very rare, minor and dealt with extremely well if they occur. Pupils have good knowledge of different forms of bullying and, for example, confirm the school's records which show that name-calling and discrimination are extremely rare and minor.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because a few pupils display unevenness in their attitudes to learning and this affects the rate they acquire fresh knowledge.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and attend regularly; attendance is well above the average for primary schools nationally. The school uses a wide range of approaches to make sure all pupils attend regularly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have, until recently, not had a consistently good impact on pupils' achievement. Uncertainty in staffing has been an added factor.
- The changes in leadership have been largely responsible for the improvements over the last few months. However, as many of the initiatives are new, they are not completely secure and their full impact is not yet seen in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- In these improvements, the school's leaders have been well supported by the governing body and the local authority. The acting headteachers have successfully bridged the gaps in leadership. There is now an evident drive for improvement, shared by all staff and governors, and the school is well placed to continue on the upward path.
- The local authority has provided much support, for example enabling a mathematics consultant to spend time in the school improving pupils' achievement.
- The management of teachers' performance is being sharpened, alongside effective training, to support and extend teachers' skills. Improvements are evident, and are making sure that teaching is becoming consistently good or better.
- Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's values and this is demonstrated in the drive for similar progress for all pupils. It is also shown in the lack of discrimination and harmonious relationships across the school.
- The subjects taught have been developed well and pupils say that they particularly enjoy the interesting topics planned for them and the 'fun that teachers put into our learning'. Learning is significantly enriched by visits, visitors and after-school clubs. There are particular strengths in art, music, and modern foreign languages. External agencies are used productively to support the needs of pupils' learning and development.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on their learning and their place in the world and their responsibilities towards it. One example was pupils' imaginative writing about sessions using

'Forest Schools' learning. They used their senses during the seven-week programme to increase their knowledge of the world, investigate scientific phenomena and write about what they observed. One pupil reflected, 'We just let our imaginations run wild.'

- The school has fostered extremely good relationships with parents and carers. Many parents view the school to be the 'hub of the community', and as the on-line questionnaire revealed, are very supportive and positive about all aspects of the school.
- The school is using its primary sports funding to embark upon an extensive programme of physical education to enhance the well being of all pupils by employing a specialist coach for four hours each week. This runs alongside the school promoting a healthy lifestyle, supported well by the school providing a good, balanced diet for the large proportion of pupils who opt for a school lunch.
- The acting headteachers have a history of effective liaison with local schools and have supported newly appointed headteachers, one through being a local leader of education. One subject leader has shown good practice in teaching writing at Key Stage 1. These links have strengthened leadership and helped to improve the quality of teaching, so that both are improving rapidly.
- Funds are managed very carefully. Effective management is evident in the way that resources are provided to make sure that pupils' well being is a prime focus and that the wide range of pupils' needs are supported well, including through the use of outside agencies.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and fully meet requirements; pupils are kept safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been strengthened this year by a new Chair and other new, knowledgeable and skilled governors. It is now a strong body, and carries out its role effectively. Governors are acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school by, for example, undertaking 'learning walks' in the school. They have a good understanding of the school's performance in the national and local context because they check the school's performance for themselves. They undertake training, for example, in data analysis, safeguarding and finance. This means they are able to give good levels of challenge to the school's leaders about, for example, pupils' progress, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Governors carry out their statutory duties very diligently, making sure that the headteacher's performance is rigorously assessed through annual objectives. They have offered strong support to management within the school in the drive to improve. Governors know how good teaching is and the effectiveness of the management of teachers' performance and how this is aligned to pay progression. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underachievement. Governors manage the budget effectively, and they carefully monitor the school's finances. The governing body does not yet evaluate how well it is fulfilling its responsibilities, for example, by considering what it has achieved after its meetings.

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	112848
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	424978

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Fox
Headteacher	Sylvia Bunting, Vicky Keen (Acting headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2011
Telephone number	01298 22074
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