

Peak Dale Primary School

School Road, Peak Dale, Buxton, SK17 8AJ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, other leaders and governors have improved teaching since the previous inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants direct pupils' learning well.
- Teaching is consistently good in Years 1 to 6. Teachers are self-critical and make excellent use of local partnerships to improve their practice.
- Children in the Reception Year are taught well and make good progress.
- Pupils, some of whom join the school part-way through the year, make good progress from their starting points. They attain average standards at the ends of Years 2 and 6 and achieve particularly well in reading and mathematics.
- The school's excellent links with specialist agencies enable staff to provide skilled support for pupils who need extra help to succeed.
- The successful promotion of values by the staff, such as tolerance, respect and kindness towards others, is shown in pupils' good behaviour and warm relationships with each other and with the staff.
- The school's procedures to ensure pupils' safety are good. Consequently, pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- The headteacher leads her colleagues well. They make pupils' care and well-being a priority. Parents much appreciate the school's work in the quality of care provided for their children.
- The headteacher and staff work very effectively together to identify relative weaknesses in pupils' skills and take rapid action to tackle them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most-able pupils well. Consequently, some do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils' progress in writing is held back by their errors, limited vocabulary and the sentences they compose.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector made visits to all classrooms to check on pupils' learning. On three visits, he was accompanied by the headteacher. They also looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, a group of pupils, three governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the eight responses to a questionnaire completed by staff and the 17 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. He also analysed parents' and pupils' responses to the school's own questionnaires. He spoke informally with a few parents during the inspection.
- The inspector checked a range of evidence including: consultants' reports; the school improvement plan; the school's own information on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Peak Dale Primary is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- It has close links with The Peaks Pre-school. Pre-school children join Reception and Year 1 pupils every Wednesday to share their activities.
- The school is part of a local small schools support network (SSSN).
- Children in Reception attend on a full-time basis and are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1 pupils. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- More pupils than usual join or leave the school part-way through the school year. Some have a range of complex physical, social and communication difficulties.
- It is not possible to report, reliably, whether the school meets the government's current floor standards because there were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 on which to base a valid judgement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more pupils reach the higher levels across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers in Reception provide the most-able children with challenging activities to accelerate their progress
 - teaching of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 uses questioning more effectively to deepen the understanding of the most-able pupils and to extend their learning.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils edit their work carefully to avoid making simple errors in spelling and punctuation
 - pupils make more use of varied sentence structures, range of vocabulary and the expression they meet in their reading texts to enrich their writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by other leaders and governors, provides strong leadership of teaching. Leaders and staff have worked successfully together to improve teaching and to maintain pupils' good achievement and behaviour since the previous inspection.
- Leaders' checks on the school's work are timely and accurate. They use this information and links with other local schools and specialist agencies to identify the training needs of staff and to support pupils. As a result, leaders have established a culture where teaching is consistently good and pupils behave well and want to learn.
- The school benefits from stable staffing. This situation has helped the headteacher to plan carefully to develop the leadership skills of her colleagues, including those of the leader of the early years. The training provided has equipped these members of staff to exercise their middle-leadership roles capably. Consequently, middle leaders have contributed well to taking teaching and learning forward.
- Information about pupils' progress is shared fully with staff. Leaders, recognising the dip in pupils' achievement in writing last year, prioritised writing in the school development plan and in the arrangements for managing the performance of staff. The action taken has resulted in some improvements in pupils' attainment in writing, but leaders recognise that weaknesses remain in aspects of pupils' written work.
- The school ensures that pupils enjoy the same opportunities to succeed and that no pupils suffer from discrimination. Leaders know where support is needed to raise the attainment of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Senior leaders have allocated staffing and other resources to accelerate these pupils' progress and to improve their well-being. As a result, these pupils are gaining academically and personally from the extra support they receive.
- Staff use their in-depth knowledge of pupils particularly well to direct the teaching of those who need extra help with their learning. However, less emphasis is placed on ensuring that teaching for the most-able pupils is fully effective. As a result, not all the pupils capable of working at the higher levels in Years 2 and 6 are doing so.
- The school's work, shared with its partners in the SSSN, in developing its preferred method of assessment following withdrawal of National Curriculum levels, is well advanced. The curriculum (the subjects taught and other educational experiences) is regularly reviewed and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is planned well to ensure that topics and activities give pupils good breadth of knowledge and successfully foster their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils acquire valuable citizenship skills as sports leaders and school councillors. They develop resilience and an understanding of the importance of teamwork during their annual residential visits.
- The promotion of British values is deeply ingrained in the school's ways of working. For example, pupils have attended an informative mobile exhibition on British values organised through the SSSN. They followed up this experience with thoughtful, written manifestos on their interpretations of democracy, freedom, the rule of law and tolerance and how they follow these principles in their daily lives.
- The local authority recognised the school's strengths and was rightly confident in leaders' capacity to drive improvement forward. Consequently, it has provided limited support since the previous inspection. The questionnaires and comments received by the inspector show that parents and pupils endorse the local authority's positive view of the school's work.
- Leaders have taken account of pupils' views when making decisions about spending the primary sport funding. They have used this funding effectively. For example, leaders have improved teaching in gymnastics, increased the numbers of pupils who can swim competently and enabled disabled pupils and

those who have special educational needs to participate in specialist sports, such as boccia. Consequently, pupils have gained in physical health and well-being.

- Leaders, including governors with relevant professional expertise in safeguarding, check that current government requirements are met and that safeguarding arrangements are effectively applied. Relevant policies, staff employment checks and training are up to date. As a result, pupils are kept safe in all school activities.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. Governors take a keen interest in the initiatives staff take to develop the curriculum to meet new government requirements. They understand the benefits the school derives from its involvement in the SSSN. They know how well pupils are achieving compared to other pupils nationally. They are aware that pupils achieve better in reading than in writing and explain confidently the steps leaders are taking to tackle this relative weakness. They consider carefully the uses they make of pupil premium funding and identify positive impact from this expenditure.
- Governors have checked pupils' books to assure themselves of the progress made. Governors are well informed about procedures for managing the performance of staff. They consider carefully reports from the headteacher and external consultants on teaching in order to satisfy themselves that its quality remains good. They use this information to make sure that any salary increases for staff, including the headteacher, are merited.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave equally well in public areas and in lessons. They show respect for all staff, including teaching assistants and midday supervisors. They behave sensibly in the dining hall, follow the established routines, and help staff by keeping tables tidy and putting away their lunch trays neatly on the racks.
- Play and lunchtimes are enjoyable occasions because pupils like each other's company. They show due concern for each other by using all the space in the extensive playground areas so all can play safely or socialise freely. Pupils are self-reliant at these times and behave responsibly when not directly supervised by adults. They show that they are capable of organising their own games, such as football or 'bulldogs', which they play in a friendly spirit. Pupils make good use of the play equipment at lunchtimes to take healthy exercise, or, more quietly, to practise their model-making skills.
- Most pupils know each other well because they have grown up together in the village. This familiarity helps them to take turns in conversation and to listen carefully to each other's point of view.
- Pupils' good behaviour in lessons helps them to achieve well. Although some pupils prefer sport and art to writing and mathematics, they are keen to work equally hard in these lessons in order to succeed. Pupils are not highly articulate, but respond willingly to their teachers' questions. Good relationships ensure that learning proceeds smoothly and that tasks are normally completed on time.
- Incidents of serious misbehaviour are extremely rare. There have been no exclusions for several years. The school's records show that, over time, there have been very few instances of any form of bullying.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average. Most pupils attend regularly, but attendance rates for some pupils have been affected by extended hospital stays or medical appointments undertaken outside the village.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school has taken useful actions, such as installing electronic keypads, to control internal access to school buildings. Staff supervise pupils well, ensuring that every pupil is dressed in suitable rainwear, for example, when working outdoors in inclement weather.

- Staff provide pupils with clear rules for all activities undertaken in the public areas of the school or during educational visits. Pupils understand the purpose of these instructions and other regular events, such as fire drills. Pupils feel valued, are safe in school and know that staff act in their best interest at all times and care for their well-being. Staff work actively to avert potential risks to pupils, for example, by checking websites for inappropriate content and training pupils on e-safety. Pupils know how to stay safe in a range of situations and have been taught how to recognise some allergic reactions.
- Staff work tirelessly to ensure pupils' well-being in school. They monitor pupils' behaviour regularly to check for any emerging patterns of concern. They liaise swiftly with parents to discuss any problems which arise and the strategies they intend to use in seeking to solve them. They record any incidents meticulously and keep detailed analyses of the impact of the actions they take.
- Staff work very successfully with pupils who join the school part-way through the school year to ensure that they are fully included in school life. They also check carefully that pupils who leave school at other than the usual times have settled into their new school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good in the early years and in both key stages. Teachers are self-critical and reflect on their own practice. They constantly seek new ways to improve how they teach. They work successfully with their partner schools in the SSSN to share good practice in teaching and to check the accuracy of their assessments.
- Staff monitor and assess pupils' progress carefully and know what aspects of pupils' skills need further development. Improvements in the planning of learning since the previous inspection ensure that activities have an explicit purpose to extend pupils' learning. All activities provide regular opportunities for pupils to check their understanding and to judge how well they are doing. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to direct pupils' learning.
- Staff know pupils well and use this knowledge expertly to manage behaviour. They skilfully refocus the attention of individual pupils with questions to check their understanding. This good practice ensures that all pupils remain on task and work hard during lessons. Mutually supportive relationships enable pupils to work productively on their own, in pairs and in small groups, when not directly supervised by staff.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well in small groups and in one-to-one work. Teachers and teaching assistants assess what these pupils know and can do and tailor their support to move learning forward effectively.
- Early reading skills are taught well. New texts have encouraged pupils to read more regularly. As pupils move through the school, they show a good understanding of the purposes and uses of the conversational styles employed by modern, popular authors.
- Good teaching of basic mathematical skills enables pupils to acquire a secure command of number bonds, inverse operations and mathematical vocabulary. Staff provide pupils with an interesting range of practical activities. These help pupils to break down, understand and apply new ideas in everyday situations confidently. This was shown, for example, in a lesson in Years 2 and 3, when pupils constructed arrays accurately to help them decide the best ways to move in an orderly way from the classroom to the playground.
- Writing skills are usually taught well and teachers regularly give pupils opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects, such as science. Teachers provide pupils with interesting contexts for writing, for example, summaries of their experiences on educational trips and residential visits. They review pupils' writing targets regularly and, through their marking, provide pupils with detailed, helpful and encouraging feedback.
- Teachers have concentrated this year on developing pupils' command of spelling and punctuation. This work has, so far, only had a limited impact on improving pupils' technical skills in writing. This is because

pupils do not check the accuracy of their writing closely enough or edit their work, so simple mistakes are sometimes repeated. Teachers do not prompt pupils sufficiently to use the structures, range of vocabulary and expression they meet in their reading texts in their writing. Consequently, pupils' written skills lag behind those in reading.

- When teachers pose questions they do this skilfully to ensure younger pupils in the mixed-age classes can contribute effectively. However, on occasion, their questioning lacks sufficient variety to challenge and deepen the understanding and extend the learning of the most-able pupils.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards at the end of both key stages have fluctuated since the previous inspection. This variation is explained by the small size of the year groups, which contain varying proportions of pupils with additional needs and specific circumstances affecting individual pupils. In addition, the pupils who join the school part-way through the year sometimes start from lower levels than those of their classmates.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was broadly average but very few pupils attained the higher Level 3. Provisional results for current Year 2 pupils show a similar picture. However, most of these pupils have made good progress since joining the school at different times during the key stage.
- Attainment in Year 6 in 2014 was average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Pupils made good progress from their starting points in Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics, but achieved less well in writing. Provisional results for current Year 6 pupils show improved standards in all subjects. This improvement is more marked in reading and mathematics than in writing, and is at the nationally expected Level 4, rather than at the higher Level 5.
- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to compare their attainment with others in the school or nationally without risk of identifying individual pupils. Across the school, the few disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Staff know them exceptionally well and make expert use of the school's excellent links with specialist outside agencies to ensure that they meet their targets. For example, pupils who join the school with severe speech and language difficulties improve their communication skills steadily. This boosts their self-confidence and encourages them to take a full part in discussions in lessons.
- The achievement of some of the most-able pupils within the small year groups is too variable. They are not given consistently good opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding over a sustained period of time. On a few occasions, they work below their capabilities in lessons when planned activities and teachers' questioning do not present them with sufficient challenge to achieve highly.
- Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds represented by letters) were above the national average in both 2013 and 2014. Most pupils continue to achieve well in reading in Key Stage 2. Younger pupils identify literary features, such as alliteration, readily. They understand the purpose of varying one's expression to distinguish between statements and questions. Most read short texts accurately.
- Older pupils sometimes read books containing words that are new to them and which contain language more usual in literature intended for adults. However, they do not apply features, such as a variety of connectives, metaphors and personification, readily in their written accounts to enable them to achieve the higher levels in writing.

The early years provision is good

- The knowledge and skills of the small groups of children who join Reception vary from year to year but are usually below those typical for their age in language and communication, reading and writing. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2014 broadly matched the national average. Most of the current Reception children joined the school with levels of skills typical for their age. Provisional results for 2015 show that these children have made good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children settle quickly in Reception. They are assisted by most having had the opportunity to become well acquainted with the school's environment, routines and expectations through working beside Class 1 (Reception and Year 1) pupils every week on 'Welly Wednesday'. This experience accustoms children to working with their older peers and helps to awaken their interest in the natural world through the activities they undertake in the woodland area.
- Working with older pupils for much of the school day encourages Reception children to act responsibly. They enjoy positive relationships with adults and behave well, including outdoors, where they happily initiate play for themselves and their classmates.
- All welfare requirements are met. Children are safe because staff ensure that the indoor and outdoor areas are secure. Children are taught about ways to keep themselves safe, for example, through wearing suitable forms of head cover outside during sunny weather.
- Teaching is good. Staff plan an interesting range of activities in the classroom that enthuse children and enable them to reinforce new learning, for example, in phonics. They use a variety of methods and resources well to sustain children's concentration and to enable them to recall simple number facts accurately.
- Good leadership of the early years is shown in the quality of links which have been established with the pre-school, and agencies which provide children with specialist support in improving their speaking skills. Staff training is up to date and the leader of the early years has observed teaching in other schools in the SSSN to learn from, and to share, best practice.
- Staff check children's progress regularly and use the records of their observations suitably to adjust their planning of learning. However, sometimes, activities intended to accelerate the progress of the most-able children are not challenging enough and these pupils do not learn as well as they could. The questions put to these children do not consistently enable them to extend their learning systematically and quickly.

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	112656
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	461614

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie Keable
Headteacher	Helen Stamp
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2012
Telephone number	01298 22695
Fax number	01298 74753
Email address	info@peakdale.derbyshire.sch.uk

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