

Petersfield CofE Aided Primary School

Hurdleditch Road, Orwell, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5QG

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not maintained the good quality of education since the previous inspection. Despite considerable improvements since the appointment of the current headteachers, pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are no longer good.
- As a result of a period of staffing instability and inconsistent teaching, pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable across both key stages 1 and 2.
- Some teachers are not adept at moving pupils on quickly enough in their learning. This is particularly true for the most able pupils, who do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teaching assistants, some of whom are new to their posts, do not consistently use strategies that help pupils they are supporting learn as well as they could.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress from their individual starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils make variable, albeit much-improved, progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils make varying progress in subjects across the curriculum, such as in history and geography.
- The attendance of a small number of pupils is lower than it should be.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteachers and their leaders have an accurate understanding of what needs to change. They are successfully bringing about improvements in the quality of education provided.
- Governors now know the school well. They offer precise support and challenge to leaders.
- Pupils, including those who are most vulnerable, are well cared for. As a result, they develop increasing confidence in their learning.
- Leaders have established a welcoming and caring ethos throughout the school. The school values of friendship, creation, love, peace and trust are important to pupils. Relationships in school are harmonious.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. They are polite and supportive of each other and of adults in the school.
- Children make a good start to their education in early years. This is because of the strong leadership and the good teaching they receive.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that all teachers are skilled in moving pupils, especially those who are most able, on to more challenging work in a timely way, filling in the existing gaps in their knowledge and skills
 - providing training to ensure that all teaching assistants make use of strategies that enable the pupils they support to deepen their understanding and accelerate their progress.
- Improve pupil outcomes by:
 - ensuring that higher proportions of disadvantaged pupils make at least good progress from their individual starting points across the curriculum
 - continuing to accelerate the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - teachers applying the same high standards to the delivery of subjects such as history and geography as are increasingly evident in other areas of the curriculum.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that the attendance of a small number of pupils improves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since their permanent appointment in February 2016, the two headteachers have faced considerable challenges bringing about improvements to the school. They are successfully overcoming these and share an unwavering commitment to restore the good quality of education. Together with other leaders, they are making appropriate changes to many aspects of provision. Staff understand and willingly commit to the school's ethos. As a consequence, Petersfield is a well-organised and improving school in which pupils are well cared for and develop confidence in their learning.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Making good use of the information they gather through regular monitoring, leaders identify the correct priorities for improvement. The impact of their work is evident in improved outcomes, in particular in early years and key stage 2.
- When they took up their posts, the headteachers judged the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be low. They set out their high expectations clearly and ensured that vacant teaching posts were filled. Through a well-organised programme of challenge and support, leaders are now accelerating improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Headteachers manage teachers' and leaders' performance well. Staff welcome leaders' clarity of expectations regarding their performance. Teachers appreciate the regular line management meetings, which focus upon the progress pupils make. One teacher commented, 'We have time to talk through issues', while another stated, 'You know you are supported well.' All staff who completed the survey agreed that they enjoy working at Petersfield and are proud to do so. Almost all staff agreed that they were well led and managed.
- Leaders rightly take steps to ensure that they, and their staff, have a detailed and accurate understanding of the progress that pupils make. Working with teachers, they make good use of this information to ensure that pupils who need additional support receive it. This is helping pupils make improved progress.
- Middle leaders are making a valuable contribution to school improvement. As a result of the literacy leaders' amendments to the curriculum and appropriate support for teachers, pupil progress in writing improved considerably by the end key stage 2 in 2017. To address previous underachievement in mathematics, leaders sought advice from external advisors and led training for teachers. This led to a rise in academic standards, and improved pupil progress by the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2017.
- School leaders have ensured that pupils have access to an appropriately balanced curriculum that provides them with the opportunity to make strong progress. Leaders keep the curriculum under regular review and make suitable amendments. They are rightly proud of the opportunities that exist for pupils to demonstrate their creativity across a range of subjects. Evidence of this is seen in the impressive artwork on display and in pupils' sketchbooks. This high-quality work is not consistently evident in all subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for. Pupils learn

about different faiths and cultures in subjects such as art and religious education. Assemblies and personal, social, health education lessons cover themes of reflection, tolerance and understanding. The impact of these activities is evident in pupils' considerate and reflective behaviour.

- Leaders have taken care to ensure that pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of life in Britain. For example, pupils spoken with confidently explained what democracy is and how they have taken part in elections for their school council representatives.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is increasingly well used and its impact regularly reviewed. Leaders have a precise understanding of pupils' barriers to learning and help them to overcome these. As a result of well-judged support, pupils are making improved, although not yet good, progress across the curriculum.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving quickly and funding is allocated well. Pupils' needs are now accurately identified and appropriate intervention put in place. Parents explained how pleased they were with the level of care on offer to their children. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and more confident in their learning. However, leaders know more needs to be done as these pupils' academic progress is not yet consistently good.
- Leaders make skilful use the physical education and sports premium funding. Through activities such as circus skills, multi-sports, cross country and daily running, a large number of pupils take part in sporting activities. Pupils explained how much they appreciate and enjoy these additional opportunities.
- School leaders have accessed support from a variety of external agencies. For example, the local authority support for leaders in English, mathematics and early years has made an important contribution to the improvements evident in the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance is significantly improved. Governors now provide a clearer strategic direction for the school.
- Governors acknowledge they did not take effective action to reverse a decline in the quality of education since the previous inspection. In the academic year 2015/16, they acted upon the findings of an external review and improved the structure and focus of the governing body.
- The chair of the governing body ensured that governors were recruited who could bring a broad breadth of skills and knowledge to improve governance. Governors use these attributes well to ask precise and appropriate questions of school leaders and are helping to accelerate school improvement.
- The governing body checks that the information that leaders provide them with is accurate. For example, governors visit the school regularly, meet with subject leaders and carry out annual surveys of parents. Governors are also careful in their monitoring of the impact of additional government funding.
- Governors ensure that performance management, including that of the headteachers, is carried out rigorously and in line with school policies.

Safeguarding

- Leaders have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils explained they feel safe because 'teachers take care of us'. All staff, and the overwhelming majority of parents, who responded to the Ofsted surveys agree that pupils are safe and well cared for at Petersfield CofE Primary School.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate awareness of how to keep safe, including when using the internet. Pupils explained the strategies they would use to keep safe when near roads and when using bicycles.
- Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, including that relating to the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff spoken with were alert to their responsibilities to ensure the well-being of pupils in their care. Teachers know how to identify the signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk, and how to report any concerns they may have.
- School records show that leaders take timely action to support children who are in need of additional care, including those who benefit from the provision provided by external agencies. These records are well kept and provide a comprehensive chronology of leaders' actions.
- Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory safeguarding duties. For example, they regularly monitor the document of checks carried out on staff who work at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Staffing changes and subsequent inconsistent teaching have meant pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable. On their appointment, headteachers rightly made improving the quality of teaching central focus of their work. Although the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving at a more rapid pace, it is not yet consistently good enough. This is why the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is judged to require improvement.
- Teachers take account of the different starting points of pupils when planning learning activities. However, some teachers are not adept in ensuring that pupils, in particular the most able, move on to activities that enable them to practise and develop higher-level skills in a timely way. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching assistants, some of whom are new to their posts, have a variable impact in their work with pupils. In some classes, teaching assistants do not apply strategies that enable pupils to further their knowledge and understanding. This is because the adult offers the answer too quickly, or does aspects of the work on the part of the pupil. Where teaching assistants apply the correct balance of challenge and support, pupils gain in confidence and delight in the progress they make.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils in their class and create a positive environment in which pupils can learn. In many classes, pupils display enthusiasm for their learning and take pride in their work. In the small number of lessons where work is not matched well to pupils' needs, or when teachers' explanations are not clear, a few pupils lose focus and become distracted.

- Evidence seen in pupils' books demonstrates teachers do not apply the same consistency of expectation when delivering subjects other than English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils' progress varies across the curriculum. For instance, pupils' strong progress seen in science and art is not as evident in geography or history.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved over the past year. Pupils enjoy and respond well to 'challenge activities' that require them to apply their reasoning skills. However, in some classes, pupils are not able to move on to these activities quickly enough as they are required to complete simpler tasks for too long.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to question pupils about their learning. For example, as a consequence of the teacher's well-chosen questions, pupils in an upper key stage 2 class were able to develop a deeper understanding of the vocabulary they could use in their creative writing.
- As a result of recent training, teachers are more confident in their teaching of writing. This is particularly the case in key stage 2 and has resulted in an improvement in pupil achievement across that key stage.
- Leaders have placed a particular focus on developing pupils' listening and speaking skills from an early age. Pupils are provided with plentiful opportunities to read and given enthusiastic and skilful support in doing so. The impact of this is evident in the confidence and skill with which pupils of all ages speak in front of their classmates.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have worked with considerable success to ensure that pupils, including those who are most vulnerable, are well cared for. Staff know pupils well and are alert to any changes in a pupil's behaviour or mood that may indicate that they need support. Where it is needed, leaders put in place effective additional provision, such as nurture groups or one-to-one support.
- The values of friendship, creation, love, peace and trust have a significant influence on the school's ethos and daily work. Pupils explained how these have helped them to understand the 'importance of friendship and trust' and that, 'We understand how to look after each other; if we fall over, we help each other up.' There is a profoundly supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils are proud to take up the leadership roles available to them. Year 6 play leaders explained how they learn to 'work with younger children' through their organisation of lunchtime play activities. School council members are rightly delighted with the popularity of the sports equipment they raised funds for. Through these activities pupils develop their sense of responsibility and understanding of decision-making processes.
- Pupils know what bullying is. Pupils spoken with struggled to recall any incidents of bullying in school. They were confident that were it to occur it would be dealt with well by adults at the school. School records confirm this to be the case.

- Older pupils have the opportunity to visit other schools and colleges and there are visits to the school by adults from differing professions, such as authors and uniformed services. However, leaders acknowledge that the provision of careers information, advice and guidance needs to be more effectively coordinated.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- On taking up their posts, the headteachers made clear their high expectations of pupil behaviour. In 2015, the headteachers introduced a new behaviour policy, which adults understand and consistently implement. This has led to improvements in pupil behaviour, especially for those who had found it hard to make good behaviour choices.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in many lessons. They respond well to adults' high expectations as to how they should behave. Relationships are characterised by respectful and supportive discussions. This creates an atmosphere in which pupils develop confidence in their learning.
- Pupils make energetic use of the wide variety of play equipment, much of which was chosen by the school council, available at break and lunchtimes. They play cheerfully and mix easily and well with pupils of all ages.
- Leaders have ensured that good behaviour is recognised and rewarded. Pupils are proud to receive a headteachers' award and happily celebrate each other's achievements in assemblies.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance carefully and take swift action where a pupil's attendance begins to fall. As a consequence, overall attendance remains in line with the national average.
- There are a small number of pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, who do not attend school as regularly as the majority of their classmates. Leaders work well with families and external agencies to ensure that these pupils' attendance improves. However, leaders have rightly made improving pupils' attendance a priority for the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- As a consequence of poor or disrupted teaching in the recent past, pupils have made inconsistent progress across each key stage. Better-quality teaching, learning and assessment has led to pupils making improved, but not yet consistently good, progress.
- In 2016, in key stage 1, similar proportions of pupils achieved the expected standard in the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics as was the case nationally. In 2017, while progress improved in mathematics, it remained inconsistent in reading and writing. This does not represent good progress from pupils' individual starting points. Key stage 1 pupils currently in school are making improved, but not yet consistently good, progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, pupils made significantly less progress than their peers nationally in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. They made similar progress to other pupils

nationally in reading. As a result of improved teaching, learning and assessment, pupil achievement by the end of key stage 2 improved in 2017. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils currently in key stage 2 are making better, but still variable, progress from their individual starting points.

- In 2016, similar proportions of pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonic screening test as is the case nationally. Given these pupils' starting points, this does not represent good progress. This was also the case in 2017. Inspection evidence confirms that, until recently, the quality of teaching was variable. It is too early to assess the impact of leaders' recent improvements to the quality of phonics teaching on pupils' achievement over time.
- Due to the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils, it is not possible to report on the outcomes in each individual year group. Due to the well-judged support that disadvantaged pupils across the school now receive, they are making improved, but not yet sufficiently good progress across the curriculum to close gaps in their previous learning.
- In 2016, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made significantly less progress in writing and mathematics than their peers nationally by the end of key stage 2. In 2017, pupils' progress improved. This trajectory of improvement is being maintained, although the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains variable.
- Most-able pupils across the school make variable progress. This is because, in some classes, they are not moved onto challenging activities in a timely way, to enable them to achieve their potential.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make a good start to their education at Petersfield CofE Primary School. This is because they learn in a safe, stimulating environment that is enabling them to quickly develop their confidence in learning and play.
- The leader of early years has a precise understanding of the quality of education provided. She has correctly and successfully taken swift action to improve many aspects of the early years provision.
- Children who started in Reception in 2016 did so with a wide range of skills and abilities, as was the case in previous years. The proportion achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average. Several children exceeded expectations in some areas of the curriculum. From their different individual starting points, this represents good progress and prepares them well for key stage 1.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and provide bright, well-organised environments in which learning can take place. Adults make effective use of these areas and provide learning activities that interest and enthuse the children.
- Adults quickly and accurately establish the capabilities of each child. Adults then make good use of this information to plan activities that are well matched to each child's needs and capabilities. Making effective use of additional government funding, intervention activities are put in place for children who need them. This is helping children, including those who are disadvantaged, to make good progress.

- Effective teaching ensures that children can develop basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics quickly. Adults reinforce these skills in their work with children in other areas of the curriculum. During the 'busy learning' session, at the suggestion of an adult, children were carefully drawing letters in the sand and were delighted with the results.
- Children are proud of their achievements. They relish the 'challenge activities' that adults set for them. One child was thrilled to demonstrate how he could write his name, while another proudly explained how her drawing was linked to the book the class was studying.
- Children behave well. Inspection evidence demonstrates children understand routines for harmonious and safe learning and play. They develop good relationships with each other and adults. Children move easily and well between activities and are quick to settle to their learning.
- Leaders work hard and successfully to engage parents in their children's learning through activities such as parent sessions and the reading café. Parents spoken with were very positive about their children's education in Reception.
- All appropriate aspects of welfare and safety are met in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	110836
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10036191

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Meredith
Headteachers	Karen Gwynn and Laura Penrose
Telephone number	01223 207382
Website	www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 December 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The role of headteacher is shared. The two current headteachers took up their substantive posts on a permanent basis in February 2016.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of a White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- While the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is slightly above average.

- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Learning in every classroom was observed at least once and in most classes more than once. Several of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. An assembly was also observed.
- Discussions took place with the headteachers, other senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. Meetings were also held with a group of three governors and with a representative from the local authority.
- Information from these meetings was then reviewed against a variety of school documents, including: minutes of governor meetings; school self-evaluation records and improvement plans; the school's information about pupils' progress and attainment; pupils' attendance and behaviour and a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with two groups of pupils as well as many pupils in a range of informal settings, including playtime and lunchtime.
- The views expressed in: 13 staff survey responses; 47 responses from the online parent view forum and 36 free-text responses from parents were also considered. The inspector also took account of the views of parents during discussions at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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