



Peak Dale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112656
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278984
Inspection dates 22 May 2006 to 23 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. John Brennan LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Community		SK17 8AJ
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01298 22695
Number on roll	68	Fax number	01298 74753
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Gillian Murphy
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Michael Richards

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Peak Dale is a small school. All pupils are of White British heritage and come from variable socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry, which has in the past been a little below average, has been higher than this in the past two years. Pupils now start school with abilities that are typical for their age.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, giving satisfactory value for money; a view the school has recognised for itself. Pupils have a satisfactory start in Reception. They make steady progress and the vast majority reach expected standards. The rate of progress from then on remains satisfactory and standards overall are broadly average. However, the pattern of progress is not even because, although teaching is satisfactory overall, there are variations in quality. Strengths are to be found in Years 3 and 4 but there are some weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum offered to pupils in Years 5 and 6. This adversely affects the achievement of higher attaining pupils in particular. In contrast, pupils with learning difficulties throughout the school overall do well and many reach expected standards. A parent talked to inspectors about the strong 'ethos' of the school and this is where the strength of the school lies. Thanks to the excellent work of the school cook and the active study of healthy eating, pupils are clamouring to eat healthily. Pupils behave well and know how to get along with each other. Pupils freely accept responsibility and are dependable when carrying out tasks. However, not enough is done to involve them in working out what they have successfully learned in lessons and most are unsure about how to improve their work. Although leadership and management are satisfactory, plans for improvement are insufficient and not enough is done to check on the effects of actions taken. Nevertheless, the school is focused on improvement and the right areas are being targeted. The school has the confidence of most parents but does not always keep them well enough informed about school life. Past weaknesses in information and communication technology (ICT) and in science have been addressed well but weakness in Years 5 and 6 continue to exist. Improvement since the last inspection and the capacity to improve further are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring the curriculum and quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 up to that of the best, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Make action plans more detailed and check more carefully how well they are implemented.
- Ensure that pupils are better informed about how to improve their learning.
- Improve communication with parents to be able to fully inform of school events.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils progress at a satisfactory rate to reach standards that are broadly average. Their achievement is satisfactory and they develop core skills needed for the next stage of their education. Children in the Reception class make steady progress in language and mathematical development and good progress in social development. The vast majority reach the goals expected of them and an increasing number exceed them. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from the school's focus on developing basic skills and many reach expected standards. Pupils

generally meet the realistic statutory targets set in Year 6 and standards have risen steadily over the past few years because more and more pupils reach nationally expected standards. Standards in science, which in this school have traditionally been lower than English and mathematics, are now on a par with these. However, it is only in Years 1 to 4 where higher attaining pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Some shortcomings in teaching and in the curriculum in Years 5 and 6 slows the progress of higher attaining pupils and so relatively few pupils exceed national standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. As one parent put it, 'All children are well behaved and seem very happy.' Pupils show an unstinting commitment to healthy eating. Much of this is down to the imagination and tenacity of the school cook, and involvement of pupils, in devising healthy menus and the rewards for eating healthily. A growing number of pupils are leaving their packed lunch at home, preferring instead 'Belinda Broccoli.' Any bullying, of which pupils say there is very little, is tackled head on through a successful anti-bullying campaign which has taught pupils how to resolve conflicts. As one pupil confidently said, 'I know just to say STOP!' This, and the addition of play equipment, makes for social and energetic playtimes and forms one facet of pupils' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils enjoy school and attendance rates are above average. Most pupils are keen to learn, behave well and become animated when encouraged to talk and use their initiative. Some work in Years 5 and 6 is completed sloppily and pupils are occasionally inattentive when work of a mundane nature fails to ignite their latent enthusiasm. Pupils make a very positive difference to the school. Older pupils are always helping younger ones and the school council is very influential. Pupils respond well to responsibility but the school is yet to give them enough opportunities to develop 'active learning skills' by analysing their own work, making a judgement on how good it is and deciding what they can do to improve it. Assemblies are thoughtful which aids pupils' spiritual and moral growth. However, pupils have only a limited understanding of life in multi-cultural Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Consistent strengths lie in the quality of relationships which allows for frank and open discussion. This verbal approach to learning helps pupils rehearse their understanding and sets up the work they are to do by themselves. Teachers confidently use interactive whiteboards to add to the engagement of lessons. The aims of lessons are made explicit to pupils, who then have a good idea of how to complete their work well. However, marking rarely addresses lesson aims or highlights what pupils need to do next to move their work along. Planning clearly identifies what pupils are to learn in the lesson. The exception is in outdoor learning in the Reception class, which is not given enough thought. What

separates the successful from the less successful teaching is the consistency with which higher attaining pupils are set challenging tasks. This is successfully done in Years 3 and 4 where, for example, pupils regularly solve problems, such as what shapes can be made by using different coordinates. However, work is often too mundane in Years 5 and 6 and is not well enough matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils. For example, problem-solving in mathematics is seen as a 'one off' lesson, rather than part of everyday learning. In addition too much emphasis is given to English grammar and spelling and too little to the study of texts as a forerunner to pupils' planning, drafting and editing their own writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers pupils a satisfactory curriculum. An improved curriculum for ICT and science in which, for example, pupils carry out a good number of experiments, has helped overcome past deficiencies. In Reception a suitable balance is struck between tasks and activities which are led by the teacher and ones where the children can choose for themselves. This is helped by good partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants. The school is beginning to explore how links between subjects can make learning interesting but this is piecemeal. The curriculum in Years 5 and 6 is fragmented because it is distributed among four different teachers. Recent efforts such as increasing the range of trips to places of interest and the number of visitors invited in to the school, such as theatre groups, have broadened pupils' cultural horizons. However the active and regular study of multi-cultural issues is not a sufficiently prominent part of the curriculum. A partnership with a local specialist sports school has added to the sport clubs on offer which, for a school of this size, are plentiful.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Standards of care, guidance and support are satisfactory. An ethos of care pervades the school and pupils say they can talk to staff if they have any worries. A careful eye is kept on safety issues particularly in relation to the building and a detailed log of necessary improvements is kept and acted upon. However, not all difficulties presented by the building have been resolved. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety, such as those for child protection, are in place and staff are increasingly aware of how these work in practice. Teachers regularly assess pupils so that a picture of how well pupils are progressing emerges. In science, resultant information has been used well to adjust the curriculum. The school successfully identifies and helps pupils whose learning is in need of a boost. However, despite knowing what level pupils are working at, too little is done to give pupils specific guidance about what they need to do to reach the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has succeeded in creating a strong sense of cohesion and common purpose amongst staff. All play their part in moving the school forward and give confidence that the school can improve from here. The deputy headteacher offers the headteacher considerable and valuable support, a key necessity given the headteacher's extensive teaching commitment. Pupils too play their part in moving the school forward. The school is working in increasingly closer partnership with parents through for example, gaining their views on school meals. In the main the school has the confidence of parents. However, well founded parental concerns about the sporadic way in which they are informed about key events, often at late notice, causes some frustration. Recent improvements in how pupils are assessed and their progress tracked have given the school valuable information to place alongside national data. This has helped identify the right areas for improvement. The judicious decision to enrol the school in the Primary Leadership Programme has begun to equip all staff with essential leadership skills. The direct monitoring of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work are now more commonplace than they once were. The increasing range and depth of information now collected are encapsulated in an honest and accurate self evaluation of current strengths and areas for development. Governors have also begun to find out for themselves how well the school is doing. However, because of a lack of detail in action planning, these new found skills are not directed clearly enough to checking that actions to bring about change have been successful. This results in patchy improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I would like to share with you what I thought about your school. I really enjoyed my visit because everyone was so friendly and helpful. I was really impressed with how much you know about healthy eating. It was good to see so many of you eating the excellent school meals. Having eaten one myself I can see why they are so popular. You know a lot about how to make up when you fall out and I could hardly turn around without seeing an older boy or girl helping younger children. The School Council is doing a good job. In fact I don't know what the school would do without the help of so many of you, especially the older children. You are very quick to take on jobs and act responsibly. Having seen this I have asked the school to give you more responsibility for your work by giving you a better idea about how to improve it. As well as your behaving well I could see how much you enjoy work that makes you think. I have asked the school to give some of you older pupils in Years 5 and 6 more work that makes you scratch your head. I have also asked your headteacher to think how they could make lessons join together better because at the moment you have a lot of different teachers. There are some interesting things happening in your classrooms and I have asked your teachers and headteacher to pop into each other's classrooms more often to see what is happening and to make sure your parents know what is going on. Good luck in all that you do.