

Paston Ridings Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110778
Local Authority	CITY OF PETERBOROUGH LA
Inspection number	310418
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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 on roll	
School	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Victoria Thomson
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Gash
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Paston Ridings Paston Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE4 7XG
Telephone number	01733 762742
Fax number	01733 703514

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and focused mainly on the following issues:

- factors that impact on achievement in English and why progress is better in mathematics and science
- pupils' achievement at different stages of the school
- the impact of support strategies and setting at Key Stage 2 in supporting achievement.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified. Evidence was collected from observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, governors and pupils, parent questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this larger than average primary school come from the local area. About three quarters are from White British families and the remaining pupils represent a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Thirteen languages other than English are spoken and twenty-eight pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. Attainment on entry to Reception is well below that typical for children of this age, particularly in terms of communication skills and personal development. A larger than average number of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational need. The proportion claiming a free school meal is much higher than the national average. The school is part of the Peterborough Excellence in Clusters partnership. This is a Health Promoting School and has the Basic Skills Quality Mark. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is correct in judging its overall effectiveness as good. From a low attainment on entry, pupils achieve well and standards are average by the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science are generally above average but this year they are average. Children start school with personal, social and emotional development and communication skills that are particularly weak. Because of effective teaching, they soon begin to make good progress in the Reception classes, but do not manage to reach the nationally expected levels by the time they transfer into Year 1. Pupils progress well through Key Stage 1 but standards are still below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. Progress is good through Key Stage 2 and overall standards are broadly average at the end of Year 6. However, test results over recent years show that standards and attainment in English are not as good as in mathematics and science. Results have been average in English and generally above in mathematics and science. Standards in Year 6 are currently similar to those nationally expected for pupils of this age. Pupils have average numeracy and literacy skills but their ability to work together and organise themselves so they progress well when working in groups is strong. This means that they are prepared well for the next stages in their education.

The school has built a comprehensive profile of each pupil's achievement in reading, writing and mathematics and has conducted a searching analysis of progress as they move through the school. This shows progress accelerates at the end of Key Stage 2, when the school provides extra support for individuals and groups of pupils who might not reach their full potential. The school has just started to identify younger pupils who they feel could make greater progress and provide extra support lower down the school. The school provides good support for those with English as an additional language and these pupils soon acquire enough English to make progress as well as other pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Although the quality of teaching is good overall, there is some variation in its quality across the school. Interesting lessons engage pupils' attention and at these times, behaviour is excellent. On the few occasions when lessons have insufficient structure to develop skills progressively or when pupils are not actively involved, they lose concentration. However, pupils exercise self-control and behaviour is still good.

The school has developed good systems to monitor each individual's progress as they move through the school and leaders and managers use this information well to identify areas of weakness they need to focus on, such as improving writing. Not all teachers use assessment information well enough to match closely work to all pupils needs. However, assessment information is used well to set challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils receive good academic guidance, are fully aware of targets and know how well they are progressing towards achieving them.

The school shows extremely high levels of pastoral care for all pupils. Parents value very highly this aspect of the school's work. Pupils know they are valued and consequently feel secure and safe in school. They say they all know of an adult they trust and to whom they would readily go to for help if necessary. This all contributes to the extremely high level to which pupils enjoy school. Attendance is satisfactory, but has improved during last year. The school is a health promoting school and as such makes sure that pupils have a very thorough knowledge of health issues, including keeping to a healthy diet. Pupils keep physically fit and take an active and enthusiastic part in the wide range of opportunities the school offers, both in lesson time and in activities out of school hours. Pupils know staff listen to them and feel they have a significant

say in how the school develops and what it provides for them. They support each other well, through initiatives such as 'Play Pals', who help look after playground equipment and befriend pupils that have no one to play with.

Pupils like the exciting range of learning opportunities the school has to offer. They find the curriculum interesting and mention it as one of the things they enjoy about school. The curriculum is effective in enabling pupils to achieve well, particularly in their personal development through a strong support for this aspect of their growth. Parents support this view strongly. Information and communication technology (ICT) has a strong place in the curriculum and is used well to support both teaching and learning. Planned links between different subjects, particularly using subjects other than English to improve writing are not well developed.

Since being appointed a year ago, the headteacher has established himself as a strong leader, who is willing to challenge staff to provide a good quality education. He has empowered staff with leadership responsibility so they can be effective in their roles. He has set up a new senior management team, who between them carry responsibility for all stages of the school and key subjects. Although relatively new, they have made a significant impact on running the school. They provide good levels of support for the headteacher in monitoring and evaluating what the school does and in holding the staff to account for their performance. They play an important part in strategic planning for school development. The governors support them well in their work and some, particularly the chair of the governing body, question them and the headteacher about the school's performance. Effective leadership, the level of improvement since the previous inspection and the accurate identification of areas in need of development, together with appropriate strategies to secure improvement, mean that the school has a good capacity to improve even more.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides a good start to pupils' schooling. When children join the Reception classes, their communication skills and personal development are particularly weak. Teachers and other adults in the Foundation Stage work hard at helping children settle in, gain confidence and make a quick start to learning. There is a good range of activities to support development in these areas as well as in other areas of learning. High levels of interaction between adults and children and learning through play mean that pupils soon settle in, become confident and make good progress. Adults carefully monitor each child's movements and guide them sensitively so that each experiences a good balance of learning activities each day.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the curriculum more creatively by providing opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills across other subjects.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good in all classes so that all pupils make equally good progress.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

1 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Paston Ridings Primary School, Peterborough, PE4 7XG

I really enjoyed the short time I spent in your school and I would like to thank you for making me welcome. I particularly enjoyed the opportunities I had to talk to you, both in and out of lessons. You go to a good school and I was pleased to see and hear that you appreciate what teachers and other adults in school are doing for you to give you a good start. It was clear from the way in which you cooperate with teachers that you enjoy school very much. This was clear in the excellent behaviour I saw around school and in lessons. The way in which you look after each other and contribute to life in school is very pleasing and this helps pupils settle in quickly and feel safe.

The headteacher has not been with you very long, but he and other teachers with responsibility have made a good start in making a good school even better. There have been a number of improvements this year but there are some things still to do. They have recognised that standards in English are not as high as in mathematics and science and that your progress as you move through the school is quicker at the end of Key Stage 2. I have therefore asked the headteacher, other staff and governors to think about ways of improving your writing by using other subjects such as history or geography to provide opportunities. I have also asked them to make sure that the quality of teaching and learning is always at least good so that pupils of all ages and ability make equally good progress. You can play your part by continuing to cooperate and behave as well as you do.

I wish you all well for the future.

David Speakman (Lead inspector)