

Petersfield Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110836
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	310435
Inspection date	23 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Neil Brice
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Tuck
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Hurdleditch Road Orwell Royston SG8 5QG
Telephone number	01223 207382
Fax number	01223 208567

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following issues:

- whether the school's present leadership can maintain high academic standards, despite many changes of headteacher in recent years and in light of proposed demographic changes in the area;
- whether the school has improved sufficiently since its last inspection in, for example, pupils' knowledge and appreciation of Britain's diverse modern culture, and in raising standards and improving provision in the Reception class.

Evidence was gathered from classroom observations, discussions with the headteacher, staff, representatives of the governing body and pupils, whose work was sampled. Assessment records and other documents were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds. A few are of Traveller heritage. Other minority ethnic groups are represented, but only in low numbers. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who, for identified reasons, find learning difficult is broadly average. Social characteristics in the locality are largely favourable although the school has a small number of vulnerable children on roll. Attainment on entry covers a wide range although, overall, it is a little above what is usually found.

The school has passed through a decade during which it has experienced frequent changes of headteacher. The present headteacher has been in post for nearly one year.

The school holds the British Council's International School status. It is seeking recognition as an eco-school and is working towards a Healthy Schools award and accreditation under the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark scheme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Petersfield is a good school where pupils' individual learning needs are met extremely well. Despite frequent changes of headteacher, good leadership and management, to which governors have contributed much, have ensured high standards in pupils' work have been maintained. Teachers use their skills extremely effectively to assess pupils' performance, track their progress and set highly challenging targets that ensure exceptional achievement. In 2007, for example, results in national tests were very high in English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 2, for similar reasons, standards are above average, sometimes well above, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Progress is often very rapid and a rising trend has been apparent since 2004. Good use of assessment is also apparent for pupils who find learning difficult or who are vulnerable in any way. Their needs are carefully evaluated as early as possible and clear plans drawn up, resulting in individualised attention from experienced and well-trained teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils make exceptionally good progress and, despite the difficulties that they face, frequently attain levels normally expected for their age. Teachers also cater for able pupils effectively. In Year 6 tests in 2006 and 2007, high proportions reached levels above those normally expected for their age. In 2007, performance in English was remarkable; around three quarters of pupils attained at this enhanced level.

The majority of parents are pleased with the school's excellent academic performance. However, a sizable minority do not feel sufficiently involved in their children's education. Many feel let down by the frequent change of headteachers and feel they have been left out of planning for the school's future. A typical view is that '...Yes, it's a good school, but communication suffers - as soon as you get to know the person at the top, they've gone and it takes a while to get to know the new one and how to approach them...' Another said, 'This headteacher seems to have lots of good ideas and she says that she's here for the distance. I think she will be.' Another added, 'I can only hope so.' The headteacher has quickly identified this lack of parental confidence and has begun to address it.

Plans have also been drawn up to rectify inconsistencies in some areas of the school's work. Much has been done already to ensure that planned maintenance goes ahead and that aging resources are identified and replaced, such as those for information and communication technology. At the moment, however, it is too soon for full effectiveness to have emerged. Spasmodic innovations to the curriculum are now being properly driven through. Indeed, the curriculum is already good, giving proper emphases to all the statutory elements that it should. It is enhanced successfully with French, a variety of visits and visitors and an international dimension that includes links with Ghanaian students from Cambridge University.

Care, guidance and support are effective. Safeguarding and child protection issues are taken seriously and systems to support pupils with emotional and other difficulties are strong and managed efficiently by a particularly knowledgeable coordinator. Pupils' personal as well as academic achievements are recognised effectively through awards in assemblies. An active school council and very well thought out 'buddy' systems are providing pupils with opportunities to make their views known. All of this results in pupils' good personal development and wellbeing. Nearly all pupils say that they enjoy school. A high attendance rate reflects this. Pupils know the principles for keeping safe and healthy, based on good teaching in science and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons. They behave well in classrooms and around the building. On the few occasions when upsets occur, there is no evidence that the learning of others is adversely affected. On the contrary, good support systems are in place to help

pupils through emotional or behavioural difficulties. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Celebrations of Chinese New Year and black history, for example, have ensured that pupils are now aware of the positive contributions of minority-ethnic groups to modern British culture. Eco-buddies, who work together across the age groups on environmental issues, make outstanding contributions to the community, both within and outside school. Pupils willingly raise money for charities and support staff by carrying out numerous routine jobs in their classrooms and around the building. Year 6 pupils keep notes of their work when acting as 'buddies' to younger pupils and understand ideas such as keeping accurate minutes and the use of an agenda for school council meetings. These activities, together with excellent literacy and numeracy skills, prepare pupils exceptionally well for the future.

The headteacher's monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, with the support of a strong deputy headteacher, are extremely accurate and realistic. Planning is methodical and very careful. Governors feel involved and able to influence decisions. Initiatives to raise the school's profile in the community and to inform and involve parents better are included. Good ideas to meet the challenge of maintaining future standards are also evident. The governing body is supportive and morale amongst the staff is good, so the capacity to continue improvements is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is managed well. Planning is of a high standard and ensures that teaching in all areas of learning is good. Children settle well at the beginning of each year, owing to good induction and make good progress because routines are established and expectations clear. All adults work as a strong team and set a good example of harmonious relationships. Children respond well to this and their own personal, social and emotional development is a strength. By the end of the year, nearly all of them reach expected goals for the age group and several exceed them. Nevertheless, a lack of shelter in the outside area prevents its full use as an extension to learning in the classroom, especially during inclement weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop further the partnership with parents, so they are better involved in their children's education.
- Address inconsistencies in the school's work by implementing plans as quickly as possible to improve aging resources, maintain the building and provide exterior shelter for children in the Reception class.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

24 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Petersfield Church of England Primary School, Orwell, SG8 5QG

Thank you for being so helpful when I inspected your school recently. It was pleasing that so many of you said that you enjoy school and believe that Petersfield is good. I agree with you. It is a good school and your work in English, mathematics and science is often outstanding.

Here are some of the important things that are good about your school:

- Your teachers know a great amount about the standard of your work and the progress you make. This helps them to teach you very well indeed, so you learn exceptionally well.
- You behave well and are willing to offer a lot of help to your teachers, carrying out jobs and keeping things running smoothly.
- You are knowledgeable about healthy foods and keeping safe.
- Your school councillors are active on your behalf and the buddy systems, including eco-buddies, are important in making your school and Orwell stronger communities.
- Your literacy and numeracy skills are very good, and this is helping to prepare you particularly well for the future.
- Your attendance is outstanding.
- Your headteacher has good ideas for your school's future.

Here are two things that I have asked your governors, headteacher and staff to do next:

- Make sure that your parents continue to receive more and better information about your education, so they are involved more.
- Put all their plans for improvement into effect as quickly as they can.

I wish you every success for the future and hope that you will always be proud of your school and achievements.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull Lead inspector