

Peppard Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123135
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327855
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	75
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Sell
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Jarvis
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Peppard Henley-on-Thames RG9 5JU
Telephone number	01491 628354
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small, rural primary school that draws pupils from a wide area. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. Very few pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a dedicated Reception class. Older pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Until the current academic year there had been major instabilities in staffing, and many staff are relatively inexperienced. At the last inspection the school was judged satisfactory. However, a subsequent visit in January 2008 by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors identified major inadequacies in teaching and pupils' achievement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. It has made major improvements in the last year and continues to improve rapidly.

Throughout the extensive staffing disruptions, the school has steadfastly maintained its outstanding pastoral care for pupils. Parents are very appreciative of the care provided, and many commented on their children's positive relationships with teachers. The high levels of care mean that pupils' personal development continues to be outstanding. Pupils like and trust their teachers, know that they and their views are valued, and are extremely confident and happy in school. One said, 'There's always someone looking after you.' Behaviour is excellent and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Improvements to the curriculum, which is now good, have enhanced their great enjoyment of all the school has to offer. Relationships between pupils are excellent, because they are successfully encouraged to work together and to care for each other. Pupils have exceptionally good collaborative skills and the way older pupils look after younger children is exemplary. Pupils are very well involved in the local community and contribute substantially to making the school itself a harmonious and happy environment.

The school found it more difficult to maintain levels of achievement during staffing disruptions, but pupils' progress has improved recently. For some time pupils had entered the school with attainment above expectations, but the subsequent standards in many year groups were only average, representing inadequate achievement. Improvements to the quality of teaching have resulted in achievement now being satisfactory, and good in reading. Standards in science have improved considerably over the last year, and the underachievement of more-able pupils in the subject has been eliminated. Achievement in writing and mathematics is satisfactory and rising. However, the school's own tracking of progress shows there are still inconsistencies between year groups and subjects. Despite this, overall standards are now above average throughout the school. Provisional results of national tests for the small group of pupils currently in Year 6 show that their attainment is well above average. All six have made at least the progress they should since Year 2.

With stable staffing levels over the current academic year, teaching has improved and much better assessment systems have been put in place. These have been the main factors in raising achievement. Governors have been rigorous in challenging the school to make improvements. The headteacher has led improvements well, with the backing of the governors and making good use of extensive support from the local authority. All staff have worked hard as an effective team to make changes for the benefit of the pupils. The improved assessment systems have been used well to identify those pupils who are not making the progress they should, so that extra help can be provided. This is becoming increasingly effective as teachers improve the sophistication and accuracy of their assessments, although inconsistencies remain.

Teaching is now satisfactory with an increasing proportion of good lessons taking place. Teachers make lessons interesting for pupils so they are keen to learn. Positive relationships and high expectations of work and behaviour mean classes are orderly and the pace of learning is brisk. The good use of interactive whiteboards enhances the clarity of explanations and makes work more interesting. Teachers are increasingly good at using assessment information to match work to pupils' particular needs, although this is not yet consistent, and pupils are still sometimes given tasks that are too hard or too easy for them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Although good leadership has supported the improvements made, too much responsibility has rested on the headteacher. This is largely because a high proportion of the current teaching staff have been too inexperienced to take on subject responsibilities. Sensible plans are in place to widen leadership next year, building on the positive work of the science leader in raising standards. The 'gap' in leadership has been filled this year by extensive extra support from local authority staff. There are still uncertainties in staffing for next year, for reasons beyond the school's control. The headteacher and governors have worked closely with the local authority to minimise the likely impact of these.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

After the last inspection, standards and provision for the younger children declined, as the many changes of staff had particular impact on this class. The teacher currently in place has worked well with support from advisory staff to restore the good provision. Reception children this year have made increasingly good progress over the year and are attaining standards that are well above average in all areas of learning. Standards have shot up in some aspects of learning, eliminating some weak results seen at the end of last year.

The strong pastoral care and children's very positive relationships with the teacher mirror the excellence in the rest of the school. Children settle happily into the class and the school, greatly helped by the care and support they receive from their 'buddies' in the oldest class. They thoroughly enjoy all the interesting activities that are provided, both indoors and out. They have lots of opportunities to explore and play. During the inspection they threw themselves enthusiastically into a variety of play linked to fairytales. They were absorbed by making 'magic potions' and cooperated exceptionally well in role play as princesses and knights. The teacher greatly enhanced children's understanding through well-judged questioning to encourage their thinking and extend their language skills. There is a good balance between activities directed by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. However, staffing levels limit the variety of what can be done. Occasionally this can limit progress when children have to wait too long for attention during directed activities. The joint management of the provision by the headteacher, local authority staff and the teacher herself has been effective in raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement by using the improved assessment systems to eliminate inconsistencies in pupils' progress in different subjects.
- Increase the consistency of teaching quality, particularly by making sure that pupils are always given work that is well matched to their needs.
- Improve leadership and management by sharing out responsibilities for subjects more evenly, in line with current plans.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are now above average, and are well above average in some year groups and subjects. This represents satisfactory achievement in the light of children's relatively high levels of attainment when they start in Reception. Progress throughout the school has improved to be at least satisfactory, although it is still patchy in some areas. Progress is good in reading and science, and satisfactory in writing and mathematics. The school's tracking shows that achievement and standards continue to improve. The very small proportion of pupils with learning difficulties do well because they are often given effective extra help from teaching assistants. The systematic underachievement of higher-attainers has been eliminated, although occasionally they are still not challenged sufficiently in individual lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They get on extremely well together and show great consideration and concern for others. They enjoy all aspects of school, both at work and play, and are proud of the contribution they make to the community through the responsibilities they take. Pupils in Year 2 highlighted that 'people in school are very friendly', and that the school is 'happy, joyful and kind'. Attendance is good. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves and others safe, and follow procedures assiduously. Year 6 pupils enjoy supporting their younger 'buddies' and show an affectionate and tolerant kindness to them, even when they are sometimes 'a menace!' Pupils are very enthusiastic about a variety of exercise, and greatly enjoyed the recent sports day. They know a lot about healthy eating, although this is not always shown in what they actually eat. Pupils' appreciate the small size and consequent family atmosphere of the school, summed up by one girl as, 'It rocks!' Their very positive attitudes to learning, excellent social skills and strong basic skills stand pupils in good stead for their future lives, in school and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' learning and progress are getting better as teachers improve the quality of lessons. Teachers successfully generate enthusiasm by providing interesting and work with a practical base. A variety of ways are used to engage pupils' interest and involve them all. A particular strength is the consistent use of discussion for pupils to clarify and extend their ideas. This supports pupils' very good speaking and listening skills, and high levels of teamwork. Work is increasingly well matched to individuals' needs, although inconsistencies remain. Teachers make it clear what pupils are to learn, but seldom give pupils of different abilities clear enough indications of expected outcomes to judge how well they have done. Pupils are successfully encouraged to be independent, for example in their writing. As a result, they tackle writing tasks confidently, although they are slow to develop a joined style of handwriting, and teachers do not always insist on this sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

One pupil said, 'We don't spend all our time sitting in the classroom, we learn through action.' This accurately describes the variety and interest that underpins pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Improvements to the science curriculum in the last year have greatly increased progress and raised standards. Teachers are increasingly using links between different subjects to make learning more relevant and meaningful to pupils. An emphasis on work in the arts has been rewarded by a Silver Artsmark. Very good provision for personal and social education pervades the curriculum, is enhanced by opportunities for reflection in assemblies and contributes to the excellence of pupils' personal development. Good use is made of specialist teaching in sports to extend pupils' experiences. A number of good quality extra-curricular clubs support interest and learning, exemplified by the high quality singing of the choir, and pupils' enthusiastic response in the well-established Latin club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is excellent. Very positive relationships and good liaison with parents underpin pupils' positive feelings of safety and security in school. Pupils' individual social and emotional needs are well known and staff work tirelessly to ensure they are met. The procedures to welcome new arrivals into the school are strong, with the 'buddy' system for new Reception children typifying this. The required safeguarding and child-protection procedures are all in place.

Academic guidance is good overall, but with a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. The improved tracking procedures mean that any pupils in danger of falling behind are identified and given good quality help to catch up. The challenge of work for more-able pupils has increased, but there is further room for improvement. Pupils are given targets to help them understand their learning, but these vary in the extent to which they are matched to the specific needs of individuals. Work is marked conscientiously, but pupils are not consistently given clear pointers about how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

This year good teamwork from staff under the leadership of the headteacher and governors has raised standards and maintained pupils' high quality personal development. The many previous changes of staff undermined much of the work that was done in the past. However, in liaison with the local authority, the governors and headteacher have worked well to set a clear direction for the future and to minimise any negative impact. Better assessment has led to the setting of more challenging targets, better teaching and raised standards.

The parents are strongly supportive of the work of the school, but a significant minority have reservations about the effectiveness of management, largely related to the many staff changes, and the fact that they do not know all the reasons behind the changes. In the last year the school has managed the issue well, and has given the parents as much information as possible within necessary constraints.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is extensively involved in the local community, and is itself a great example of a thriving community with a very positive ethos. Although the school does some interesting work with pupils to learn about the variety of different communities in the United Kingdom and beyond, this is not very systematic. An audit of provision by the school has identified this as an area to work on in the future.

The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and in many ways is well placed to improve further. However, there are some remaining uncertainties about staffing and finances, and the distribution of responsibilities is still uneven. Its capacity to improve further is thus satisfactory.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	3
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peppard Church of England Primary School, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 5JU

Thank you for all your help when I came to visit. I really enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work and at play. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education, and is getting better all the time. The most important thing I found out is that you are all growing up into sensible, thoughtful, caring and friendly young people who are a credit to your parents and your school. Your behaviour is excellent and I was particularly impressed by how well you all get on together, and by how well older pupils look after the younger children.

You are all making the progress you should, and do really well in reading and science. Your progress is getting better because the teachers have better systems to keep track of how you are doing. Another reason is that the adults give you more and more interesting and exciting things to do, so that you all enjoy your lessons. I have agreed with your teachers that they are going to help you make good progress in all subjects from now on. They are going to concentrate on making sure that you always get work that is at just the right level. They have got better at this since the last inspection, but occasionally some of you still get work that is a bit too hard or too easy.

I have agreed with the headteacher and governors that the teachers are going to share out responsibilities for different subjects next year, so that they can all give each other tips on how to help you learn more. All the adults are keen to make the school even better, and I know they can rely on you to help by keeping up with your hard work and your excellent behaviour.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of term.

Yours faithfully

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector