

# Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 114518              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | East Sussex         |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 378877              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 9–10 November 2011  |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Melanie Knowles HMI |

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

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|--|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                     |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                       |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 87  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                          |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Zoe Macleod                                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Alexander McMillan                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 8–9 July 2009                               |
| <b>School address</b>                      | School Lane<br>Peasmarsh<br>Rye<br>TN31 6UW |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01797 230325                                |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01797 230325                                |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | office@peasmarsh.e-sussex.sch.uk            |

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|---------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 4–11               |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 9–10 November 2011 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 378877             |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 10 lessons taught by five different teachers. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documentation including data on pupils' attainment, progress and attendance, evidence of the school's monitoring and lesson plans. Inspectors also looked at a sample of pupils' work books. Inspectors considered the 43 responses to the questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils in Key Stage 2 and members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for raising standards and increasing rates of pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching and the pace of learning in lessons.
- How well teachers use assessment to support learning.
- The contribution made to school improvement by leaders and managers at all levels.

## Information about the school

Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School is a small, rural school. Most pupils come from the village or from estates that border it. At present, almost all pupils are White British and none of the pupils is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. After the Reception Year, when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. The Chair of the Governing Body and most other governors have been appointed since the last full inspection. The school received a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector in February 2011 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress in making improvements.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils, but it is clearly an improving school. The school is now settled after a period of instability and there is a sense of confidence and optimism about its future. One parent reflected the views of many others by writing, 'Although the school had problems in the past, I feel now it is going from strength to strength.'

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2009. Since then, there has been a steady improvement, particularly in mathematics, so that the results in the 2011 Key Stage 2 tests were once again broadly average. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 also show a trend of improvement, especially in reading and mathematics. The school is successfully tackling a legacy of underachievement for a group of pupils in Key Stage 2 and these pupils are now attaining standards that are closer to the national averages. Improving achievement in writing is a focus this year and the school has introduced a new handwriting scheme, reviewed the way sounds and letters are taught and planned a series of events to raise the profile of writing.

Most of the teachers have joined the school since the last full inspection and the quality of teaching and learning is improving, but is not yet consistently good across the school and in all subjects. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve in lessons and the pace of learning is still occasionally too slow. This is reflected in the uneven progress that pupils make in their learning. However, school tracking data and work in lessons and books show that pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, and an increasing proportion are making good and sometimes outstanding progress.

The school's mission statement, 'Love learning and love your neighbour as yourself', underpins every aspect of its work, so that all members of the school community are valued, cared for and supported. Pupils are happy and behave well, staff work as a good team and a very large majority of parents and carers are satisfied with the education their children receive.

School leaders have introduced a new curriculum that is structured around broad topics. There is good provision for cross-curricular work in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT), but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out investigative work in science and to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving activities. The impact of the new curriculum is already clear in pupils' enjoyment, but there has not been enough time for this to have an effect on

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raising standards. More work remains to be done to ensure that there is a clear progression of skills in all subjects.

Since the last full inspection, the leadership of the school has been strengthened and the headteacher is now ably supported by an assistant headteacher, appointed in April 2011, and a newly constituted governing body. Together, they are strong driving forces for improvement in the school. Some middle leaders, for example the subject leader for ICT, are also beginning to make an impact on outcomes for pupils. The school plan reflects the priorities for development, but targets for improvement do not always have outcomes that can be measured and there are no timescales for implementation. It is not clear how the progress of the plan will be monitored. School leaders regularly assess the quality of teaching through lesson observations, but feedback to staff does not always lead to agreed actions and there is insufficient follow-up to see if specific improvements have been made and sustained. Self-evaluation is accurate and this, together with the achievements since the last inspection, indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Accelerate pupils' progress by increasing the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better, ensuring that:
  - teachers' high expectations lead to good outcomes for pupils in every subject
  - when monitoring teaching and learning, high-quality developmental feedback always includes agreed actions that are followed up
  - existing good practice in teaching is spread across the school.
- Develop the curriculum further by:
  - providing more opportunities for scientific investigation and problem-solving activities in mathematics
  - ensuring there is a clear progression in key skills in each subject.
- Ensure that all aspects of school development planning have measurable outcomes that can be monitored rigorously by senior leaders and governors.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

When children start school in Reception, their skills and knowledge are generally at levels typical for their age. This year, most children entered Year 1 with levels of attainment above the expected levels. This represents good progress from their starting points. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, school tracking data show variable rates

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of progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and, like their class-mates, some make good progress. Rigorous tracking of pupils’ progress and regular meetings with class teachers to discuss any underachievement are resulting in improving rates of progress and has enabled some pupils, who had previously fallen behind, to catch up. Pupils’ achievement overall is satisfactory. Lessons observed during the inspection showed a picture of mostly satisfactory learning and progress. However, some elements of good practice were evident in all classes visited.

The vast majority of pupils say they feel safe in school and the school ensures that they have a very good awareness of the risks posed by the internet. They also have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives and engage in plenty of exercise at playtimes, helped by the older pupils who act as play leaders. A high proportion of pupils take on responsibilities in the school as school councillors, Reception class ‘buddies’, computer monitors and classroom helpers and they enjoy these roles. Even children in Reception are encouraged to contribute by acting as ‘register monitors’.

There are very few pupils from different ethnic and religious groups represented in the school and pupils do not currently have sufficient opportunities to explore and develop their understanding of cultural diversity. School leaders are planning changes to the curriculum to address this. Pupils have respect for each other and the school is a harmonious community. Working in mixed-age classes has a positive effect on pupils’ tolerance and understanding of differing abilities and levels of maturity. Pupils develop some good work-related skills. For example, they are confident in the use of ICT and work well in teams. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are all good, reflecting pupils’ high level of enjoyment of school. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in real-life contexts, solve problems or undertake scientific investigations.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>                             | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>  | 3        |
| The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress   | 3        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>                           | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>3</b> |

## How effective is the provision?

Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently good across all classes and in all subjects, there are some good aspects to current practice. For example, all teachers make good use of ICT to enhance learning and teaching assistants are well deployed in lessons. In one lesson observed, a teaching assistant acted as scribe for a small group of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling them to compose a piece of factual writing about Tutankhamun. She showed good skills in questioning pupils and encouraged them to spell words for themselves and apply their knowledge of letter sounds. There are still occasions when there is too much learning directed by the teacher and not enough independent work in lessons. However, it is clear that teachers are eager to learn and develop their practice.

Rigorous moderation exercises and training for staff in assessment practices have increased the reliability of the assessment data that is gathered so that teachers know the levels that their pupils are working at. In the best lessons, teachers consistently use this information to provide work that is closely matched to all pupils' needs, which leads to accelerated progress in learning. The marking of written work is generally thorough and pupils say it gives them guidance on what they need to improve.

The curriculum is increasingly well matched to pupils' interests and teachers make learning enjoyable by linking subjects together. For example, in the Reception class the topic 'Whizz, Bang, Pop!' linked learning about the celebrations of Bonfire Night and the Indian festival of Diwali. Enrichment opportunities, such as outings to local places of interest, are being carefully matched to each topic to give pupils memorable experiences and enhance their learning. Staff provide good care, guidance and support for all their pupils. The school identifies pupils who may be vulnerable to underachievement at an early stage and puts appropriately targeted support in place. Links with outside agencies enhance the good work the school does in this area. There are many examples of how the personalised care at Peasmarsh helps pupils to overcome barriers to learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>                                    | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning | 3        |

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|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>2</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s vision and ambition for the school have remained clear throughout a challenging period in the school’s development which has seen a big change of staff. Now, with a determined governing body and a committed assistant headteacher, the school is back on track and well placed to make accelerated progress. The drive for improvement is supported by the whole staff and morale in the school is now high. The governors have built a good relationship with the headteacher and have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. Key governors have a high profile in the school and there are plans to develop their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

School leaders and governors ensure that arrangements to keep pupils safe are good and that child protection procedures are well understood by staff. They pay good regard to the need to promote equality and are in the process of monitoring the implementation of the school’s equality scheme. School leaders evaluate the performance and participation of all pupils and have made particular efforts to extend the learning of gifted and talented writers through workshops and activity days. The school’s work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. There are increasingly strong links within the local community and work to improve pupils’ understanding of national and global diversity is continuing. Links with parents and carers are good. They are kept well informed through letters and meetings, and regular newsletters, which are also available on the school's website. There are some links with schools in the local cluster, but joint working with other similar-sized schools is not extensive.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 3        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |



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|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>                  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b> | <b>3</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Assessments indicate that most children are at age-appropriate levels in all areas of learning when they join the school in Reception. Outcomes for children in Reception have fluctuated over the last three years, but the school’s assessments of children’s learning and development in 2011 show that they made good progress towards the learning goals in all areas of learning last year. This is due to the improved consistency of teachers’ assessments as well as improvements in provision.

The ratio of adults to children in the Reception class is exceptionally high and provision is good. The three staff work closely together in supporting all children. Adults carry out regular observations and assessments of children’s achievements and these are recorded in ‘learning journey’ books. These books provide a comprehensive record of each child’s achievement, with samples of work, photographs and jottings from conversations with children. There is an interesting and engaging range of activities on offer that excite and motivate the children, such as a ‘shape hunt’ in the outside area. Adults use skilful questioning to deepen children’s knowledge and understanding, but also try to ensure that they allow children time for independent learning. Staff have a high regard for children’s safety and well-being. The inside and outside learning environments are well organised and resourced but the outside area is less attractive and inviting for the children. There are plans to develop this. Effective induction procedures support a smooth start for children and relationships with parents and carers are good. As one parent wrote, ‘I am very pleased with how much my child has come on in their first term at school.’

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The leader is keen to develop partnerships with other settings to allow the sharing of ideas and continue the drive for further improvement.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 2        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 2        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2        |

## Views of parents and carers

Half of registered parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire, a

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higher response rate than is typical. All of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire believe that their children enjoy school and feel that the school keeps their children safe. All parents and carers also feel that the teaching is good and say that they are happy with their child's experience at the school. A few parents and carers feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team found that this area of the school's work is good. Inspectors saw good behaviour in almost all lessons and at break times. Pupils moved around the school in a calm and orderly way and showed good self-discipline and control. A few parents and carers express the view that the school does not give them sufficient information about their child's progress or take account of their suggestions. A similar proportion of parents and carers do not agree that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors found that the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and improving.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 28             | 65 | 15    | 35 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 25             | 58 | 18    | 42 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress   | 19             | 44 | 20    | 47 | 2        | 5  | 2                 | 5 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 18             | 42 | 21    | 49 | 4        | 9  | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 26             | 60 | 17    | 40 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning  | 17             | 40 | 22    | 51 | 4        | 9  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 22             | 51 | 19    | 44 | 1        | 2  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 15             | 35 | 23    | 53 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs  | 19             | 44 | 22    | 51 | 2        | 5  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 18             | 42 | 19    | 44 | 2        | 5  | 1                 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 15             | 35 | 19    | 44 | 4        | 9  | 2                 | 5 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 17             | 40 | 20    | 47 | 5        | 12 | 1                 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school   | 26             | 60 | 17    | 40 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.  |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.  |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.  |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

### Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 43  | 47   | 10           | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 46   | 42           | 6          |
| Secondary schools    | 14  | 36   | 41           | 9          |
| Sixth forms          | 15  | 42   | 41           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 30  | 48   | 19           | 3          |
| Pupil referral units | 14  | 50   | 31           | 5          |
| All schools          | 10  | 44   | 39           | 6          |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.  |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.  |
| Learning:                  | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.  |
| Overall effectiveness:     | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul> |
| Progress:                  | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.   |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School, Peasmarsh TN31 6UW**

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently with a colleague. While at your school, I visited lessons, talked to some of you, looked at the work in your books and talked to teachers about the work of the school. I enjoyed seeing your work on display around the school and hearing about the topics you are covering at the moment. All this has helped me to understand how well your school is doing and what would help it to improve.

These are the main things I found to be best about your school, which was judged to be satisfactory overall.

- The way you behave is good and you get on well with each other.
- The staff at the school care for you well, and this helps you to feel safe.
- The way the school works with your parents, carers and other people makes a good contribution to your learning and well-being.
- You come to school when you are supposed to and arrive on time for your lessons. This helps to make sure you make the most of your education and also shows that you enjoy coming to school.

I have asked your school to do three things to help it to become even better.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all of you make good progress in all the subjects you learn.
- Provide you with more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics lessons and undertake investigations in science and make sure that teachers help your skills to develop as you move through the school from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Check more carefully and rigorously that the school's plans and priorities are helping the school to get even better.

It was a pleasure to visit your school. I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard, and let teachers know if the work is too easy or difficult for you. I wish you every success and happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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