

# Pells Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114536
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	378882
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Stephen Long HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	97
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Chartier
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerri Burns
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 September 2009
<b>School address</b>	Landport Road Lewes East Sussex BN7 2SU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 476708
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 473014
<b>Email address</b>	office@pells.e-sussex.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378882



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons, six completed jointly with school leaders. He carried out short observations of additional support sessions for pupils and heard 12 pupils of different ages reading. The behaviour and safety of pupils were checked at breaks and lunchtimes through observation, informal discussion with pupils and a formal meeting with a group of pupils. Discussions were held with parents and carers at drop-off time in the morning. A wide range of documentation was seen including school development plans, pupils' assessment records and records of care for pupils. Samples of pupils' work were seen and discussed with pupils and staff. Meetings were held with staff in positions of responsibility, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the executive headteacher and a local authority representative. Twenty eight responses to the parent and carer questionnaire were received and analysed, alongside questionnaires from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, or speak first languages other than English. More pupils than in most schools join or leave other than at the normal times. A nursery shares the site but is not managed by the school. The school's performance against the government's floor targets has been mixed. Pupils' attainment was above the expected minimum standards up to a year ago when results in mathematics fell below, while those in English remained just above. Pupils' progress was at the expected rate three years ago but has been below since then.

When last inspected the school was placed in special measures because it was not providing an acceptable standard of education and leaders and managers were not demonstrating the capacity to improve it. The headteacher joined the school just before the last inspection, since when there have been many staff changes. A new deputy headteacher, who teaches in the Early Years Foundation Stage, joined a year and a half ago at the same time as a new Key Stage 1 teacher. A series of temporary teaching arrangements existed in Key Stage 2 until the start of this academic year, when permanent staff were appointed. The coordinator for special educational needs took up this role a year and a half ago. Support is provided by an executive headteacher who also leads another local school. Her time in school has progressively reduced from three days a week to one. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, together with a significant number of other governors, have taken up their posts since the last inspection. The school has received termly monitoring visits since its last inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school is improving after an initial period following the last inspection when too little progress was made, and leaders and managers are now demonstrating the capacity to improve it further. Nevertheless, pupils are still not achieving enough by the end of Year 6 and its overall effectiveness remains inadequate. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising the attainment of older pupils by ensuring that the teaching provided for them is consistently good or better.
- Teaching has improved sharply in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is outstanding. Children get off to a very strong start and begin reversing the very low attainment of many on entry. Good improvement in teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures these pupils now build well on their first year in the school.
- Between Years 3 and 6 more stable and effective staffing has strengthened teaching so pupils' progress is now satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is not yet good enough to redress their past underachievement or ensure new arrivals, a high proportion of whom have special educational needs, make at least good progress. Notably, lessons do not always meet pupils' varied needs, ensure they know how to improve their own work or involve enough checking by teachers as to how much progress is being made. As a result, pupils' attainment by Year 6 is low, including in the key areas of English and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of extra interventions for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and for others with significant gaps in learning is improving and is satisfactory. Here too teaching, for example in small groups, is not always tailored well enough to pupils' differing needs.
- Support for reading makes a good impact among younger pupils, including through effective engagement of parents and carers in hearing their children

**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

- read at home. This is not yet true for older pupils so their progress is slower.
- Most pupils behave well, enjoy school and feel safe. Occasional disruption to learning is caused by a small number of pupils, whom the school is working effectively to support. There are also occasional incidents of inconsiderate behaviour in the playground. These often stem from boisterous play because there are too few calm or thought-provoking activities. Attendance is below average but improving. The school has made a positive impact on attendance by working with families where there are concerns, but has yet to ensure all respond so that their children attend regularly.
- The leadership team has raised the staff's expectations of what pupils should achieve. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvements made in areas such as provision for younger pupils, testify to their ability to make further progress. The monitoring of teaching is helping improve it. However, when checking teaching for the older pupils, and in extra intervention sessions, monitoring does not always identify clearly enough for teachers the areas needing improvement or share the excellent practice within in the school.

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

- Improve the achievement of older pupils so their attainment rises to at least the national average when they leave by ensuring that lessons always:
  - provide well for pupils of differing ability
  - help pupils understand the purpose of their work and how to check their own progress towards their targets
  - involve teachers in checking that pupils are making rapid progress in lessons and that they intervene when this is not the case.
- Improve the monitoring and development of the teaching for older pupils and also in the additional intervention sessions to ensure the areas requiring improvement are securely identified and tackled, including by sharing the effective practice already in the school.
- Work even more closely with families where pupils are still regularly absent from school so the proportion involved reduces significantly.
- Provide more opportunities for structured activity at breaks and lunchtimes to reduce the number of incidents arising from boisterous play.
- Enable parents and carers of older pupils to support their children's reading more consistently so that progress in reading increases faster.

**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

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. They quickly develop a love of learning and settle well into good routines. Many join with significant deficits in key areas such as language and social development. Boys and girls make rapid gains in these areas and in their overall development so most attain the expected levels of development on entering Year 1.

Pupils' strong enjoyment of learning is sustained into Years 1 and 2 so they continue to approach lessons with enthusiasm. Good progress means their attainment is broadly average, including in reading, by the end of Year 2. These younger pupils achieve well in lessons because of the practical experiences offered and links to basic areas like speaking and writing. For example, in the Reception/Year 1 class pupils loved putting numbers into a 'calculation machine' (a box constructed by the teacher) and checking that what came out at the other end matched their ideas. In the Years 1/2 class they responded well to feeling, smelling and tasting tests as part of a science investigation. Parents and carers of pupils at this age are rightly impressed with the rate of progress made by their children.

Between Years 3 and 6 boys and girls now make satisfactory progress in lessons but are hindered by gaps in their past learning and low levels of confidence in their own abilities. For example, in mathematics Year 6 pupils' uncertain grasp of place value undermines their work with decimal numbers less than one. As a result, their attainment is below average overall, and while progress is improving, questionnaire responses from parents and carers are less positive than those from parents and carers of younger pupils. In some lessons pupils are not always clear enough about what they are trying to achieve so as to learn purposefully. As a result, their knowledge and understanding are not always built securely. As with their younger peers these older pupils are starting to enjoy reading more and are making better progress, although here too their attainment is below that expected.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities make satisfactory and improving progress. Their attainment is below that seen nationally and among pupils in the school generally. However, the gap is closing, most notably among younger pupils.

### Quality of teaching

Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is highly imaginative with outstanding teamwork between staff. The environment fully reflects the required learning areas. From the start of every day, children learn to behave well, share equipment and celebrate each other's success. Staff monitor their progress skilfully in lessons and over time to plan the next steps in learning. No opportunity for learning is missed.

**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

For example, in a registration session the children counted, spoke, listened, learnt about time and made decisions about lunch; all in ten minutes! Any with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and additional support is accurately targeted.

Teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and to work towards high academic goals. Activities are well paced with much discussion to build communication skills. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their work and to learn together. Their progress in lessons is rigorously checked and staff intervene swiftly if it is too slow. Feedback and guidance to pupils about their work are good. Occasionally, pupils get too much information in lesson introductions and are not clear about the key points relating to their learning.

Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and based on challenging goals for their achievement and a focus on raising pupils' aspirations. Most lessons are calm and tasks build logically on pupils' prior knowledge. Teachers understand pupils' varying needs and attainment. This information is sometimes used well to plan activities but some opportunities are also missed, for example, to adjust questions for pupils depending on their attainment. Introductions to lessons ensure pupils know what to do and involve a good amount of discussion. However, discussions do not always develop fully enough pupils' understanding of how to achieve high standards. As lessons develop, progress is often good when teachers or other adults work with individuals or small groups, but slows and is satisfactory overall when pupils work independently. Pupils know their overall targets in mathematics and English, but do not always see how these relate to their work in lessons. The marking of their work is detailed but does not always refer closely enough to pupils' targets. Teachers' checking of progress in lessons is satisfactory overall. Misconceptions are sometimes identified quickly, for example through questioning. However, this is not true of all lessons and pupils' uncertainties are not always noticed as quickly as they could be.

Tracking pupils' progress over time has improved and is satisfactory. The tracking information gathered is used well to identify those not achieving enough, including in six-weekly meetings to discuss pupils' progress. Staff's understanding of how to assess pupils' attainment is broadly accurate after training, including work with other schools. Additional support for those underachieving or vulnerable, including with special educational needs and disabilities, has been reorganised and is now satisfactory and improving. In-class support makes a growing impact, as do small-group intervention sessions. However, teaching in these circumstances is not always skilled enough to move pupils on at a fast pace, for example by identifying when work is too easy.

Curriculum planning is satisfactory and meeting pupils' needs increasingly well. Accelerating progress in key areas such as reading is evident, for example, in the reorganisation of guided reading sessions. Support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Projects such as those on Judaism and India

**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

broaden their experiences of the world around them. There are satisfactory and growing opportunities for spiritual reflection, with more regular links with the local church and prayer in assembly. Pupils receive regular guidance on how to behave well towards each other, as both part of the personal, social and health education programme, and regularly in lessons where they are encouraged to work well together.

Parents and carers feel that teaching is improving but want the strengths of provision for younger pupils to be reflected in that for the older ones.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour is improving over time due to the school's appropriate and consistently applied expectations. Pupils feel they can turn to staff if they have concerns and that bullying is generally dealt with effectively. Their social and moral development is satisfactory with most showing they understand the difference between right and wrong. Staff ensure pupils understand how to stay safe, for example, when walking to school or using the internet. Parents, carers and pupils are generally positive about behaviour and safety and say that there is an improving picture, especially among younger pupils. A minority have concerns about disruptions to learning for older pupils caused by the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils. This is reducing because of action by staff, such as appointing a learning mentor last term, extensive work with outside agencies like social services, and work with families. There are significant levels of need among some pupils and families, including new arrivals, and staff make a good impact where they focus their support.

In lessons and around the school pupils usually demonstrate that they understand the staff's expectations for behaviour by responding appropriately to instructions. Older pupils have had inconsistent messages in the past about how to behave but say that this has changed since the last inspection. Not all find it easy to follow the rules but the great majority try to do so. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions system and feel it encourages good behaviour. At breaks and lunchtimes most pupils play well together with older ones taking on roles such as play leaders. Pupils enjoy active games at these times and know that these are a good form of exercise. Adults are always on duty to supervise pupils but do not always ensure there are enough quieter activities to foster a calmer atmosphere for those pupils who want it.

Attendance has been below average for some years. As a result of the school's work since the last inspection there has been an improvement over time, notably among pupils who have been continually on roll. For example, the proportion missing school regularly has fallen, although it remains above the national average. The school puts good efforts into securing regular attendance, building contacts with families where there are concerns, working closely with education welfare staff and rewarding pupils who attend well. Nevertheless, it is not always as successful as it needs to be in overcoming the barriers to regular attendance for some pupils, including some joining at other than standard times.



**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

## Leadership and management

The headteacher, other senior leaders and the governing body provide clear direction for the school and are supported by the staff. It has taken some time to get to this stage, notably to stabilise teaching in Years 3 to 6 and build a leadership team. The executive headteacher was central to developing leaders' skills but now has only a monitoring role because the headteacher and senior staff demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to move the school on. This is evident in the leadership of areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage, the assessment system and provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is a high priority for leaders. The focus on underachieving and vulnerable groups, such as those whose behaviour is poor, is bearing fruit. Governors maintain a close watch on pupils' progress and have developed their skills in understanding assessment data.

The leadership of teaching is satisfactory but has yet to ensure it is consistently good or better in all years. Lesson monitoring is regular with broadly accurate identification of strengths and weaknesses. However, key issues are not always pulled together to clarify matters for the teacher concerned, and some opportunities to share strong practice are missed. Nevertheless, some useful areas have been tackled through professional development, such as the accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

The school works hard to liaise with parents and carers and most say communication with them is effective. Relationships are productive among younger year groups and the school rightly plans to sustain this picture as these pupils progress through the school. Among older pupils, parents and carers are not always involved enough in supporting their children's progress in vital areas like reading.

Curriculum development makes a satisfactory impact on pupils' attainment and is being adjusted sensibly to boost their academic progress and support their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school rightly values a broad curriculum where arts activities are well represented, for example in large-scale pieces made for a local parade. Cross-curricular 'learning journeys' are very much enjoyed by pupils. They are proud of their work which is well planned to support their skills such as in writing.

Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. They are reviewed regularly and overseen by a member of the governing body.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning; pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**

15 January 2012

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Pells Church of England Primary School, Lewes, BN7 2SU**

This letter is to thank you for your help in the school's recent inspection and to tell you what I found. When last inspected the school was not helping you learn. It has improved but still has further to go, so it is being given a notice to improve. This means inspectors will come back in the future to check that it is making progress.

- The youngest pupils are now making a very good start. Older pupils are making better progress but not enough to make up for slow progress in the past. Pupils who need extra help with learning now receive it and are catching up.
- You told me you were happy to come to school and that most pupils behave well, but that not all do. Some lessons are disrupted and behaviour in the playground is sometimes a bit too rough. You told me things were getting better in lessons because of the help given by staff but the playground would improve if there were some calmer things to do.
- Teaching is very good for younger pupils and is improving for older ones. Older pupils told me it is better because you have had the same teachers for at least a term rather than them changing, as has happened in the past. However, the teaching in older classes does not always help pupils move on fast enough.
- You told me you enjoy what you learn about, especially in the learning journeys. You also said you enjoy reading more, particularly in the younger classes, and that you often read at home. Older pupils are not reading so much at home and do not always have someone to hear them read.
- Most of you come to school regularly but too many of you miss too much time.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to improve the school. They check lessons and improve them but should do this more quickly for older pupils.

I have asked the headteacher to add the following to her development plans:

- raise the attainment of older pupils by making sure teaching is as good as that for the younger ones
- improve the attendance of some pupils, and you can help by coming in as much as you can
- provide quieter activities at break times
- help the parents and carers of older pupils to support their children's learning in areas like reading.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long  
Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**