

Peases West Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114058
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378789
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Lee Owston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carl Knotts
Headteacher	Alison Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lee Owston

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 12 lessons or part-lessons taught by five different teachers, including two joint observations with the headteacher. Short visits to a number of reading sessions were also conducted. The inspector spoke formally with one group of pupils and informally with others during work and play. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor, the headteacher and leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics. The inspector listened to children read and discussed the work they have been doing in class. He observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including that related to school improvement planning, safeguarding children, the recording of pupils' progress, pupils' work and the school's self-evaluation procedures. The inspector also scrutinised the 31 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff. Inspectors took account of the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and no pupil is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well-above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils being supported at School Action Plus (receiving help from outside school) or who have a statement of special educational needs is also well-above average. An increasing proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school during Key Stage 2. The school did not meet the government floor standard for pupils' progress and attainment in 2011. The school has achieved many awards, including Artsmark Gold, Investors in People and the International School Award. It is also part of the 'Get Set' network for the 2012 Olympics to promote physical activity in schools.

A new headteacher took up post in September 2011. Prior to this, the school was led by the senior assistant headteacher for two terms. Cohort sizes vary considerably from year to year and are typically small. As a result, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught in three mixed-age classes. The school runs a breakfast- and after-school club.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving quickly and securely through the drive and dedication of the new headteacher and the decisive action taken to improve the quality of teaching. Aspects of practice are already improving because morale is high and staff are keen to develop their skills further. The school is not yet good overall as the quality of teaching at present remains satisfactory and new initiatives have not had time for full effect on pupils' achievement, particularly in writing.
- Children start school with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. Progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Over time, progress has not been as rapid or consistent across the rest of the school so that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach broadly average levels of attainment. This represents satisfactory progress overall. However, as a direct result of the school's focused work, there is an increasing proportion of pupils now making good progress in their reading and mathematics, leading to increased levels of attainment across the school.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall but improving. Effective professional development opportunities have ensured that teachers are increasingly skilled at making assessments of pupils' learning. However, they do not always use information about individual pupils to focus teaching so that all reach their potential. Therefore, pupils' progress over time is uneven.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory in class, around the school and in the playground. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour appropriately and create a purposeful climate for learning. Pupils know the main risks they might face and understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Attendance is average and improving rapidly.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a common focus on improving the school. Staff are now being held to account more rigorously for the progress their pupils make. More frequent monitoring and evaluation of teaching is ensuring that correct priorities for development are identified. Subject leaders are becoming increasingly skilled at leading improvements in their subjects.

- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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?

- Raise attainment and improve rates of pupils' progress, especially in writing, across the school, by:
 - ensuring that structured reading sessions progress at an appropriate pace so that pupils can always apply their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to their spelling
 - implementing a whole-school policy for the development of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills
 - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their developing skills in a wider range of contexts across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - matching lesson activities more accurately to the needs of all pupils to support and challenge their learning
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently and make choices about the content or structure of their work
 - ensuring that marking consistently identifies the most important features to improve and pupils understand the importance of carrying out the suggested actions.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including that of the governing body, by:
 - further developing skills in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and its impact upon pupils' achievement
 - refining subject-specific action plans so that they focus on what will make the greatest impact and include clearly measurable steps towards improved achievement for pupils.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children arrive in Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, and often well below in language. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach levels increasingly nearer to national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. They develop into confident, independent young learners with a curiosity for the world around them and an enjoyment of learning.

Progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 has not been consistent since the previous inspection. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, while broadly average overall, has been variable. Progress overall from pupils' starting points has been satisfactory. A significant dip in pupils' achievement in 2011 placed the school below government floor standards. A higher than normal percentage of these pupils arrived during the latter part of Key Stage 2 and many were lower attainers from Key Stage 1. The decisive action of the new headteacher and the concerted efforts of all staff to improve pupils'

achievement through better teaching are now accelerating progress and pupils' attainment is rising quickly and securely, particularly in their reading and mathematics.

A progressive, whole-school approach to both mental and written calculation strategies has helped to secure pupils' basic number skills across the school. Younger pupils are now quicker in recalling their number facts and pupils in Key Stage 2 can use a range of efficient, written methods to help them solve problems. Reading shows similar improvement and is average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The careful grouping of pupils for more systematic teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is leading to more targeted teaching. As a result, pupils are learning their sounds and letters at a quicker rate and demonstrate increased confidence in tackling reading material. However, pupils do not always have time within phonics sessions to practise correct letter formation or apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to support their spelling. This hinders faster progress in pupils' writing skills. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation. Consequently, pupils do not always take enough pride in their work.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make satisfactory and improving progress across all aspects of their work so that their attainment is rising quickly. Although boys have not always done as well as girls, they are now catching up. This is due to the detailed analysis of their specific needs, the careful tracking of their achievements and the development of learning opportunities that appeal to their interests. While most parents and carers believe that their children make good progress, inspection evidence indicates that it is currently satisfactory, although improving strongly.

Quality of teaching

While most parents and carers feel that their children are taught well, teaching is satisfactory overall. High-quality professional development and the commitment of all staff to improve their practice are now leading to a greater proportion of teaching that is good. In the best lessons, teaching is engaging, planned carefully around the precise next steps of individuals and allows pupils to develop and apply their basic skills within creative contexts. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils decorated pancakes with a range of different toppings to investigate the number of different combinations that were possible. Timely intervention by the teacher to demonstrate how the problem could be recorded more formally ensured that the clear enjoyment of pupils also led to a depth of learning and good progress. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, provision and the quality of teaching are consistently good. Adults have embedded advice given through training so that planned and incidental interactions with children have improved. This has led to increasingly skilful questioning to extend and challenge children's thinking.

In the less effective lessons, the teacher often over directs the learning, limiting the opportunity for pupils to work independently and make choices over the content or structure of their work. This prevents the middle attainers and the more able from making better progress, particularly in writing. Work is not always well-matched to the abilities of individual pupils and does not always offer sufficient support or challenge. Marking of pupils' work is regular and supportive. It reassures pupils about what they have done well and what could be improved. However, it does not always identify the most important features to improve and some pupils are unaware of the need to respond to their teachers' comments.

The impact of the planned curriculum is satisfactory. Strengths lie in the creative approach the school has taken in recent years to develop pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm for

learning. However, over time, not all creative opportunities have been well-focused and too few have been provided across the curriculum for pupils to practise and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts. Where opportunities are thoughtfully exploited, the impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This happened when teachers referred to the learning goals pupils had written on their class 'Promise Trees', in writing to pen pals in other countries and when engaging in collaborative and competitive activities within lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite and courteous. They show respect for each other and their school surroundings. Attendance is broadly average. It is improving through a greater engagement with parents and carers. As a result, the number of term-time holidays has reduced and punctuality has improved. Most pupils say that they feel safe in school and are able to talk to an adult when they have any worries. Parents and carers are similarly positive. Pupils have a developing awareness of the risks they might face and how these can be reduced, including those relating to the internet. Pupils are less knowledgeable about the different forms of bullying, such as those relating to prejudice. Recent work for a class assembly is leading to a greater understanding of this in Years 5 and 6. School records and questionnaire responses indicate that incidents of bullying are infrequent. Despite a few parents, carers and pupils mentioning concerns about bullying, all were confident that the school would sort out any difficulties.

The school's behaviour management procedures are clear. There are effective systems to deal with instances of challenging behaviour. Those who have been excluded for fixed periods are re-integrated appropriately so that there is improvement in their attitudes. Major disruption to learning is uncommon although low-level disruption is sometimes evident. This is particularly so when teachers talk for too long, the pace of learning slows and activities are not completely matched to the needs of individuals. Pupils can become passive and low-level disruption slows the rate of progress.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher, well-supported by the senior leadership team, has established a culture of improvement within the school and raised the expectations of staff about what pupils can achieve. Action to improve pupils' achievement has clearly focused on improving teaching and embedding essential systems, such as more effective tracking of achievement. Appropriate and effective professional development has been secured quickly. This has led to improvements in achievement and aspects of teaching. These improvements demonstrate that school leadership has satisfactory capacity to improve the school further.

Self-evaluation is accurate. It is influenced by a more frequent programme of monitoring and evaluation including regular observation of lessons. At present, these focus more on what the teacher is doing rather than on the impact on the quality of pupils' learning. As a result, subject action plans are not always sharply focused on what will make the greatest impact on achievement. They sometimes lack clearly measurable criteria against which any improvements can be measured, making it difficult for the school to judge the effectiveness precisely. The governing body is supportive of the school. However, its effectiveness in

evaluating the impact of the school's actions to improve attainment and progress is not yet fully developed.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is an increasing focus on the development of pupils' basic skills. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply these across the curriculum. Strengths lie in the range of enrichment activities that are provided to develop pupils' sporting, musical and artistic talents, which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. It promotes equality of opportunities for success fully so that gaps in attainment between boys and girls and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and their peers are closing quickly and securely. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

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).

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 up 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.
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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peases West Primary School, Crook, DL15 9SZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you and particularly appreciate how helpful you were when you spoke with me, shared your work or explained what you were learning during lessons. What you wrote in the questionnaires and when we talked was very helpful.

You go to a satisfactory school. This means that there are some things that your school does well and others that need improvement. You told me that you feel very safe and enjoy coming to school. You have worked really hard at improving your attendance. Keep up the good work and see if you can make it even better! Your teachers are also working hard. They are always trying to make your learning fun by thinking of more exciting ways to help you develop your reading, writing and mathematics skills. This is helping you to make even better progress in your learning. All of the adults who work with your headteacher are determined to make sure that your school keeps getting better and better. To help your school to do this, I have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do the following things:

- ensure that your work is not too easy and not too hard so that you can all make better progress, especially in your writing
- give you enough time to work on your own and practise your reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects
- help you to develop your handwriting so that you can present your work more neatly
- give you lots of advice about your work so you know exactly what you have to do to make it even better.

You can help your school to improve further by continuing to work hard for your teachers so that you all achieve the very best that you can.

Yours sincerely

Lee Owston
Lead Inspector

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