

Polegate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114435
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338360
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	paul jenkins
Headteacher	Clive Hale
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 14 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, information on pupils' progress, safeguarding policies and other documents. Questionnaires from 101 parents and carers, 83 pupils and 32 members of staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 and 2 and boys' in reading.
- How effectively pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported.
- How well leaders are using assessment information to raise attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How well the creative curriculum and information and communication technology are motivating pupils to learn.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has an average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have a wide range of needs, including moderate learning, speech and language, and specific learning difficulties. The school has received several awards including the ICT Mark and the Healthy School Silver Award.

The Children's Centre with after-school club situated in the school's grounds is run separately and was not part of this inspection. The school has formed an association working with other schools in the area.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

An interesting curriculum and the good use of information and communication technology (ICT) ensure pupils are keen to learn at this good school. Two parents spoke for others by saying, 'Learning with topics makes school more fun and interesting' and 'The deep learning experience lights up the whole school.' Above average rates of attendance and pupils' smiling faces show how much they enjoy learning.

Children make a good start to their education in the Reception classes. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported well and make good progress between Years 1 and 6. There are a few lessons when progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. On these occasions teachers do not expect enough of the pupils, particularly in listening carefully or by writing quickly with a clear purpose. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6 and is rising swiftly because the more-able pupils are now performing better and enjoying the improved challenge of the revised curriculum. Boys do as well as girls in most subjects. Leaders have recognised the need to improve the range of reading books to engage the interest of boys and improve their reading. They aim to involve parents and carers and visitors more in inspiring and supporting boys in this subject.

Pupils keep extremely healthy and their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their willingness and excellent involvement in helping others in school and the local community. For example, pupils appreciate the opportunity to communicate with their peers using the 'Polegate Pulse' school radio station. School councillors are proud of the way they work with the town council and class councils to improve provision at the school.

There are good procedures for self-evaluation that enable the experienced and enthusiastic senior leaders to have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done next to improve the school further. Leaders, including the governing body, have been successful in improving several aspects of the school's work, including the progress of more-able pupils, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure provision and progress are consistently good in Years 1 and 2, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils, especially for good listening and writing
 - making sure tasks are always purposeful, clearly explained and move learning forward swiftly.
- Improve the rate of progress of boys in reading by:

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- ensuring that books match boys' interest and levels of maturity
- increasing the involvement of parents and carers and other role models in supporting reading at home and in school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The majority of children are working within the expected levels when they join the Reception classes. Pupils enjoy the recently revised curriculum very much, cooperate with each other well and learn quickly. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 4, pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking part in a treasure hunt around the school that required them to use their knowledge of co-ordinates. In another good lesson in Year 2, pupils enjoyed solving word problems by using strategies such as counting each other in twos.

Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment is broadly average and rising. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress, but progress is not quite as strong in Years 1 and 2, particularly in developing pupils' listening and writing skills. The school is aware that boys across the school could learn to read faster and boys tell us that they learn more quickly when they are also helped at home.

Behaviour is good, with examples of exemplary behaviour during whole-school events such as times of collective worship. Pupils behave sensibly around school and are polite and friendly. Occasionally, a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 are inattentive and do not work as quickly or as well as they could. Pupils' good attendance, good personal development and rapid progress in developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepare them well for the next stage of education and later life.

Most pupils say that they feel safe at school. They have a clear understanding about how to stay safe and healthy. For example, they know not to play in coned off areas of the playground during icy weather and they appreciate the Tutti Fruity tuck shop. Pupils' ability to take responsibility is excellent and they are very proud of the part they play in improving their school by being buddies or play leaders. They have a clear understanding of the importance of good personal values and show sensitivity towards cultural diversity. For example, in one assembly for Years 1 and 2, pupils read blessings with great feeling and showed great respect for the cultural differences discussed.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers form good relationships with the pupils and make good use of ICT and a range of activities to support learning. As a result, pupils enjoy taking part in lessons and nearly always learn quickly. For example, pupils in Year 3 were enthusiastic about acting out some verbs for other pupils to guess and more-able pupils in Year 2 enjoyed writing letters pretending to be Inuit children. Marking has been a recent whole-school focus and is being used well to involve pupils and help them to know what to do next. Lesson planning shows what various groups of pupils are expected to do and in most lessons, pupils learn quickly and try their best. However, in a few lessons in Years 1 and 2, teachers do not explain clearly what they expect pupils to learn, or make sure that they listen carefully or do their very best when writing. When this happens, learning is not as fast as it is in the rest of the school. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that targets in individual education plans are being supported by the work provided to ensure pupils' progress is constant.

The curriculum is taught through interesting topics, and literacy and ICT are used well to support learning in other subjects. Some opportunities are missed to extend numeracy fully and reading books do not inspire all the boys to learn quickly. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities, including clubs, visits and visitors. There are very good

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opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles, demonstrating why the school has the Healthy School award.

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well, including in the breakfast club, enabling them to feel safe and to stay safe. They know that any worries will be dealt with quickly. The school has innovative arrangements to ease the pupils' transfer to secondary school, with a shared coordinator working between the schools. Leaders are aware that transition from the Reception classes to Year 1 requires further attention to ensure that good progress continues when children change classes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and the governing body embed ambition and drive improvement well because they have a thorough knowledge about what the school does well and are ensuring that it continues to develop rapidly. Consequently, attainment is rising, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and progress for more-able pupils in mathematics and science, have improved in the past year. Provision and progress are monitored rigorously by senior leaders and new subject leaders are developing their involvement in this process. The governing body supports the school well and asks challenging questions. More governors are becoming involved in checking up on how well the school is doing. Leaders promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination well. Any inequalities between girls and boys, and in progress in Years 1 and 2, have been identified and are being tackled swiftly.

At the time of the inspection, the school's safeguarding arrangements were found to be good and parents and carers are happy with the way their children are kept safe at school. Pupils with emotional difficulties are supported well. The partnerships between the school, parents and carers, and external agencies are good, enabling leaders and pupils to benefit from sharing ideas, particularly with other schools in the area. The school has good activities for pupils to learn about life in other countries and the local area, and community cohesion is being strengthened further by recent links with a contrasting school in the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and most now enter Year 1 with skills and abilities at or above the levels expected for their age. Members of staff make good use of information from the children's learning journals to assess how well they are doing and to plan work that builds on what they already know. Children make particularly good progress in personal development because members of staff have close relationships with parents and carers, are welcoming and enable children to settle quickly. Recent improvements in the curriculum provide good opportunities for children to make choices in their learning and to extend their basic literacy and numeracy skills through a variety of interesting topics. Leaders are aware that there is currently better choice indoors than outside. Children behave well and listen carefully because members of staff are good role models in taking turns and helping and respecting others. Children develop good levels of independence and are kept safe and happy.

Leaders ensure that there is good teamwork and are working to strengthen the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1. Communication, language and literacy have been correctly identified for development and children are receiving greater opportunities to develop this area of learning. For example, during the inspection, a small group of children enjoyed using masks to act out and record their version of the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' and other children wrote letters to the wolf.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Most parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire are pleased with the school, especially that their children are kept safe, healthy and happy, and that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. The inspection team also found this to be the case. A few parents and carers expressed concerns over the way behaviour is dealt with and the way the school takes account of suggestions. During the inspection behaviour was good at the school, and evidence during the inspection showed that the school seeks the views of parents and carers and responds well to their concerns and suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Polegate 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 389 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	73	26	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	69	31	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	67	33	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	62	38	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	69	68	31	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	63	37	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	67	33	33	0	0	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)	67	66	33	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	56	39	39	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	41	52	51	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	52	43	43	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	66	65	34	34	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	70	29	29	1	1	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



2 December 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Polegate Primary School, Polegate BN26 6PT

We enjoyed coming to see your good school. Thank you for being so welcoming during our visit.

These are the best things about your school

- You make a good start to your education in the Reception classes and learn quickly during your time at the school.
- You are excellent at taking responsibility and enjoy the interesting activities provided.
- Well done for keeping exceptionally healthy and for being thoughtful, polite and respectful.
- We agree with you when you say that teachers look after you well.
- The headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make the school better.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next to make it better.

- Help the teachers in Years 1 and 2 to always expect you to do your best listening and writing, explain clearly what they want you to do and to give you work that will help you learn quickly.
- Increase the progress of boys in reading by providing books that interest them and involve their parents, carers and other adults in helping them to want to read more.

Thank you once again for telling us about your school and letting us see your work. You could all help your teachers by always listening carefully in class and doing your best writing.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge
Lead inspector

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