

St Peter's Community Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114411
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	357531
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona McKinnon
Headteacher	Michele Lawrie
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed and all but one teacher was seen teaching. Inspectors visited all classrooms to sample displays, behaviour and resources, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of school documentation including teachers' planning, pupils' work, the school improvement and curriculum plans, monitoring and evaluation records, assessment information, individual education plans, minutes of meetings, safety records, assessment information and the reports of the School Improvement Partner. They analysed 98 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those from 17 staff.

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

- Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and the relative
- What pupils know about different cultures, and how well the school promotes this aspect of their learning.
- The school's capacity to sustain its 'outstanding' achievements.

Information about the school

St Peter's is a smaller than average sized infant school with single-age-group classes. The nursery takes children on a part-time basis. The large majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, with the rest representing a range of other ethnic groups. A few pupils start school at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average and includes pupils with specific medical and speech and language needs. The proportion known to be eligible for free schools meals is below average. A daily breakfast club is operated by the school. The school has achieved a number of awards including Eco (silver) and Healthy Schools (silver).

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The whole school community is rightly proud of this outstanding school. One parent summed up the views of many: 'I feel proud my child has the opportunity to go to such a fantastic school.' Parents and carers value the school's efforts to provide high quality pastoral care which is enhanced by the outstanding range of partnerships forged by the school.

Children enter the school with skill levels that are below those that would be expected of typical three- and four-year-olds, and well below in speech and language. Outstanding provision for children throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage means that they have a very happy start to school life.

The school has not stood still. Improvements in the way in which staff track progress and analyse the impact of improvement initiatives have led to a continuing rise in attainment which is now above average in all key subjects, most significantly in mathematics. The school has excellent capacity to continue such improvement because self-evaluation is accurate; no stone is left unturned, and no weakness is too small to be tackled in the school's relentless drive for excellence in all it does.

Across the school, teaching is consistently good, and sometimes outstanding. The difference between the good and outstanding teaching is in the pace of lessons and the extent to which they maintain exciting and challenging experiences. Much is done to help pupils consider how well they have worked and what they most enjoyed. However, the otherwise well-constructed self-assessment opportunities focus heavily on the pupils' enjoyment of learning, occasionally missing opportunities to encourage pupils to evaluate how they could improve. Teachers, supported by skilful teaching assistants, have embraced the school's exemplary, creative curriculum, making learning meaningful and providing captivating topics that excite pupils. Interesting, colourful and stimulating classrooms foster purposeful environments where pupils love learning and achieve extremely well. Pupils' excellent behaviour and above average attendance reflect their desire to be at school.

The headteacher's inspirational leadership enthuses others and encourages them to have the highest possible aspirations for themselves and the pupils. She has developed a strong staff team that is totally committed to school improvement and strives constantly for excellence. The headteacher's ambitious vision and total rejection of complacency are manifest in the stimulating learning environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning, building on the excellent practice that already exists in the school so that it is consistently outstanding by:

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- ensuring that all lessons are pitched at an appropriate pace to ensure the engagement of pupils at all times
- encouraging pupils to comment on their progress as well as their enjoyment of learning when they evaluate the outcomes of their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' excellent behaviour and their enthusiasm in lessons contribute particularly well to their outstanding learning and progress. Pupils very much enjoy the practical approach to learning adopted throughout the school. A strength in many lessons is the way pupils support each other, for example as talk partners, a regular feature of lessons observed.

Pupils' considerable achievement and obvious enjoyment are evident in their engagement and self-motivation, as seen in an outstanding Year 1 literacy lesson as pupils set about solving the mystery of how 'The Naughty Bus' came to leave its yellow paint tyre tracks all over the classroom. Pupils demonstrated well-developed questioning skills as they prepared a range of pertinent questions to help the community police officer solve the brain-teasing mystery. It is such enjoyment of learning that contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding progress. The exceptional support that pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive ensures that they too learn and progress equally well throughout the school. By the time pupils leave Year 2, the attainment of the vast majority is above average in all key subjects, most significantly in mathematics.

Pupils feel extremely safe and secure and say they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. They have an exceptionally clear understanding of the need for regular exercise and a healthy balanced diet to keep fit and well. Pupils' outstanding academic progress, positive attitudes and personal qualities prepare them exceptionally well for later learning. Representing their classmates as a school councillor or playground buddy or being involved in the appointment of the new headteacher are just some of the excellent responsibilities which pupils enjoy. Multicultural activities are encouraged and celebrated. However, pupils' knowledge of other children's lives in different parts of the United Kingdom and abroad is an area for further development. The school has ensured that there are appropriate plans in place to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding in this area and these are already underway and proving effective. Pupils appreciate opportunities provided by the school to be involved in a wide range of community events such as the annual dance and arts festivals, which enhance both the school's curriculum and pupils' personal development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Most teachers plan lessons exceptionally well and use information on pupils' progress to match tasks closely to capabilities. As a result, the large majority of lessons provide high levels of challenge, enabling pupils to make outstanding progress. Pupils are enthusiastic in their learning and enjoy the challenge provided. Every second of the day provides unique opportunities for pupils' personal development. There is little that separates learning from play. Investigative play and further exploratory activities extend learning even at playtime. As one pupil said, 'We are never bored ♦ you can always find something magic to do even at break time.' In most lessons, pupils have a clear understanding of the learning intentions and what they have to do to be successful. However, just occasionally in a small minority of lessons, teachers talk for too long and keep pupils sitting without being sufficiently engaged. On these occasions, pupils find it more difficult to evaluate their own progress and this slows their progress.

Teaching assistants play an invaluable role, often recording pupils' comments in class discussions and effectively supporting pupils. They are particularly good at rephrasing questions and at developing pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. As a result of this excellent support, most pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, make equally outstanding progress in their learning. A number of parents and carers who have children with particular medical or learning needs spoke or wrote in praise of the school for the

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extremely caring way in which their needs have been dealt with. Most notable was the effective use of visual timetables and signing to help pupils, particularly those with significant communication problems, to have equal access to learning.

The headteacher and staff have worked hard and successfully to devise an innovative curriculum. This is manifest in the outstanding way pupils are involved in planning their own learning through the creation of class 'mind maps', exploring their personal interests and making meaningful links between subjects. An outstanding range of enrichment activities enhance an already exemplary curriculum.

◆ Pupils receive excellent care throughout the school day, including the well-organised breakfast club, because each pupil is known and valued. Induction and transition arrangements are excellent, which enables Nursery and Reception children to settle very quickly and for Year 2 pupils to feel very quickly part of their new junior school.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Consistency is the key to the school's success. The headteacher's dynamic leadership has forged the staff into an exceptionally strong team, all of whom look to improve their practice wherever they can. Recently appointed senior staff are rapidly developing key roles in school improvement, contributing effectively to whole-school improvement initiatives.

The school successfully carries out detailed and reflective evaluations to improve all areas of learning. Detailed monitoring of the performance of individuals and groups of pupils ensures that all groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well and that there is no discrimination. Everyone is accountable for the success of the school.

Governors are constantly developing their capacity to hold the school to account and are united in their commitment to help the school improve. They share the headteacher's determination to maintain the school's exceptional qualities and provide good support and monitor the school's performance. They have further work to do on community cohesion to make pupils fully aware of different cultures in the United Kingdom and globally, but overall, they fulfil their roles well. The school has excellent policies, strategies and procedures to ensure the welfare of all pupils. The school's meticulous systems and procedures in child protection ensure that safeguarding is exemplary.

Links with parents and carers are strong. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the way the school reaches out to them by providing informative curriculum workshops and by regular invitations to visit their child's class and celebration events to share in their child's

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successes. Overall, this is a school that is being driven forward by the exceptional leadership skills of the headteacher well supported by her staff and one that ensures the way staff and resources are deployed provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is an exciting place to be. Displays and activities welcome children into a friendly learning environment. It is no wonder that children make such outstanding progress in almost all areas of their learning and development, particularly in mathematics, despite their relatively low starting points.

An outstanding partnership is quickly formed with parents and carers, who feel their children have a 'wonderful start'. As one parent commented: 'What more could our children wish for...my child is so happy to come to school every day.' Outstanding leadership and management, an excellent curriculum, consistently good and often outstanding teaching and high quality care ensure that most children meet and some exceed the expected levels for their age on entry to Year 1.

Staff make learning fun, challenging children to think and work together as seen when Nursery children worked collaboratively to 'bake' and 'sell' their play-doh cakes to waiting customers in their 'cafe'. Sheer delight beamed from these youngest faces as they entered the imaginary world of 'Ben the Baker' and explored the ingredients of gingerbread. This focus on personal development and language and literacy skills continues throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Reception children exhibited their developing linguistics skills as they re-told the story of 'Billy Goats Gruff'.

There is a consistent and very skilled approach to the teaching of letters and sounds, commonly known as 'phonics', and excellent use is made of interactive whiteboards to

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motivate children in their learning. Regular assessments enable staff to keep track of children's progress and plan the next steps in their learning. Despite the challenges of the limited outdoor space, staff are creative in their use of space and resources so that no child is denied high quality, purposeful learning enhanced by dedicated exploratory environmental, music and water areas. This ensures an appropriate balance of both child-initiated and adult-directed activities complemented by an excellent free-flow of both indoor and outdoor activities.

Children have an excellent understanding of the need to keep themselves healthy and safe and checked that the inspector had her badge to show it was safe to talk to her. They play well together and make an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the day by registering themselves when they arrive, sharing resources amicably and tidying away after their activities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. Comments such as: 'the school is caring and welcoming' and 'staff really help our children to do their best' typify their responses. Parents and carers appreciate many things. The outstanding pastoral care, the curriculum workshop sessions and opportunities to come in to see and celebrate what their children have been learning are just a few. A very few parents expressed individual concerns about aspects of the school, but there was no pattern or trend. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate any individual concerns during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Community Infant and Nursery 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 129 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	76	21	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	81	19	19	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	67	28	29	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	71	24	24	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	78	80	17	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	75	77	20	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	70	25	26	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)	53	54	36	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	62	63	31	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	62	30	31	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	59	34	35	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	71	72	24	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	82	17	17	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	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.



4 October, 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Community Infant and Nursery School, Portslade BN41 1LS

I want to say thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed visiting your school and it was a real delight to talk to you and find out about all the exciting things you do and how well you learn. Yours is an outstanding school.

All the adults in your school look after you really well and want to do their best for you. Your behaviour is excellent and you care a lot about each other. You make excellent progress in all of your learning because, as many of you said, your teachers let you do 'some really fun things'. You do really well in reading, writing and mathematics ♦ and you are very well prepared for your work in the junior school. Everybody in your ♦ school is always trying to find ways to make it even better. You have made a really good start in understanding how you can improve your own learning but there are a couple of things we have asked your school to do to help you understand this even more. They are:

- Make all your lessons the best they can be by:
- making sure you don't spend too long sitting on the carpet at the start of each lesson ♦
- asking teachers to regularly check you know how well you are doing in your learning.

Thank you very much once again. Keep up the good work and we are sure that if you do this, you will continue to enjoy learning for a long time to come.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Forbes

Lead inspector

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