

Plaistow and Kirdford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125848
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359955
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Gavin Jones

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heidi Tucker
Headteacher	Steven Potter
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2008
School address	Plaistow Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 0PX
Telephone number	01403 871275
Fax number	01403 871470
Email address	office@plaistow.w-sussex.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 16 lessons, observing all class teachers at least once. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and some parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at various documents including the school's development plan, the school's monitoring of teaching and learning and the school's own data for attainment and progress. It looked at the school's safeguarding documentation and 109 questionnaires completed by parents and carers. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- The reasons for attainment being lower than the national average by the end of Year 2.
- The variations in year on year progress from Year 2 to Year 6, especially in English.
- The consistency of teaching through the school.
- The effectiveness of subject leaders in fulfilling their role.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average primary school, which continues to grow steadily in numbers. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, with no pupils having statements for their special needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, with almost all pupils being White British. Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in one Reception class. The vast majority of pupils join the school in Reception and leave at the end of Year 6. A small number of pupils attend the school's breakfast club. The school has several awards, including an International School Award and both Healthy and Active school awards.

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

Plaistow and Kirdford is an effective school that provides a good education for its pupils. The school has outstanding features in the ways in which pupils understand how to keep safe and healthy, their excellent behaviour in class and around the school. Their contribution to the local community and to their friends in a school in Kenya are strengths. This illustrates the good quality of the school's pastoral care and support for its pupils. Improvements such as these have been put into effect by the close working partnership of the school's leadership team and the governing body. There is a shared vision illustrated well around the school with watchwords such as 'responsibility, collaboration, creativity and success'. Many pupils are able to talk about these concepts with understanding. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has well-formed plans for further development. Teachers, in their questionnaires, comment about the good teamwork in the school ensuring improvements since the last inspection, the capacity to sustain them and to seek further improvements noted in the school's clear development plan.

Attainment has risen over the last year and is now firmly above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress from their start in Reception. However, in Years 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory rather than good, leading to average attainment in Key Stage 1. However, an invigorated curriculum, including initiatives and interventions for the improvement of both reading and writing, are beginning to have a positive effect. Teaching is good overall and the quality of relationships, planning, and the use made of interactive whiteboards are all positive features. That said, these are not yet a consistent feature found in all lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where lessons are not always taught to best effect. Teachers provide good opportunities for the personal development of their pupils and parents agree that their children flourish. Parents say, 'The headteacher has created an atmosphere where respect and understanding are foremost, yet children are still encouraged to be individuals.' Although this is the case, pupils still do not have enough understanding of the lives of children in other parts of the United Kingdom, where religion, ethnicity and social backgrounds may be very different.

The comparatively new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has made a good start in her role and has made improvements to the outdoor classroom and the planning and assessment of children's work, overseeing good progress for the vast majority of children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to consistently good levels in order to improve pupils' attainment and progress, especially in Years 1 and 2 by:
 - ? making monitoring focus more on pupils' learning and its impact on their progress

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- ? better use of assessment during lessons so that teachers check on pupils' progress more regularly
- ? using success criteria consistently so that pupils can tell more clearly whether they have reached their learning objectives
- ? making marking more consistently point pupils to how they can improve
- ? help subject leaders observe colleagues teaching to help identify, share and support good practice.
- Enhance the promotion and understanding of community cohesion by:
 - ? providing clearer opportunities for pupils to compare their lives with pupils in different parts of the United Kingdom, based on religion, ethnicity and social background
 - ? adapt curriculum themes so that pupils' experience of aspects of community cohesion are wider and more evenly spread across the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The quality of learning and progress in lessons is good. Pupils are overwhelmingly enthusiastic and enjoy learning. As a result, they achieve well. Exemplary behaviour does much to aid progress and support successful learning. Current data show that Year 6 pupils reach above average standards overall. These pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics and reading. Although writing still lags behind slightly, the new strategies to encourage writing throughout the school are already having a positive effect and pupils are more confident writers. Standards are gradually improving by the end of Year 2, with the most recent unvalidated assessments showing an increased proportion of pupils succeeding at levels higher than those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their classmates, due to the good support they get individually and during lessons. Any pupils likely to underachieve are now noted earlier than previously due to the school's improved tracking sheets and review meetings.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. They say they feel very safe in school and recorded incidents of bullying are very rare. Parents confirm the opinions of their children. Behaviour in lessons is often exemplary, as it is around the school. One pupil said, 'Children are much more respectful of each other and teachers encourage good behaviour.' Displays around the school confirm the promotion of mutual respect and good behaviour. Pupils readily describe a range of healthy foods and know what should not be part of a healthy diet. They have very clear concepts of the need to exercise and many participate in sporting activities both in and out of school time. Pupils are justly proud of their school and take their responsibilities extremely seriously. They contribute readily to school and local life. The school council has strong links to the parish council and each class holds a regular class council meeting. The school council has been active in establishing a better and more fulfilling playground and has even suggested light sensors in the toilets, illustrating not only a very common sense view but thought for the environment. Pupils' readiness for the next stage of their education and for their own economic well-being is good, as shown by their good basic skills and opportunities for the oldest pupils to take part in activities such as 'Apprentice..you're hired'. Their attendance is above average. Whilst pupils take on many of the good opportunities to reflect and

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consider how they might contribute to society, their understanding of the multicultural make-up of the United Kingdom is a weaker aspect of their understanding.

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	2
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	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	2
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?

The curriculum is well-planned and has been developed involving pupils, staff, parents and governors. There are now strong links between subjects and evidence of skills being developed through topics. A topic on Ancient Greece, for instance, involved drama, writing, physical education and the making of pots. The curriculum is enhanced well by a range of clubs, visits and visitors, including a residential trip.

Music has recently been enhanced by specialist violin teaching for all pupils in Year 3. Whilst information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in the ICT suite, there is less evidence of the skills already learnt being used by pupils in their day-to-day classwork.

Overall, teaching and learning are good, although there are some minor inconsistencies in quality. For the oldest pupils, teaching is of a consistently good quality. As a result, there is a considerable impact on learning and progress. All teachers make good use of their interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils and focus their attention, whilst at the same time, relationships are universally good. Interesting activities, such as pupils writing about a Victorian classroom, enthused pupils in their learning, while in another lesson, pupils

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were very engaged in their science work, because of its very practical nature. Where teaching is not as effective, teachers do not ensure that, through questioning, pupils are making significant gains in understanding throughout the lesson. Equally, they do not always ensure that pupils know when they have reached the learning objectives of the lesson. Pupils are well cared for by the school and this is confirmed by the very positive comments made by parents and carers. The school has a very welcoming environment and parents feel that transition from pre-school facilities to school is handled well. Transition to the local secondary school is equally successful. Additional staff include a learning mentor, a teacher experienced in a specialised reading programme and a teacher overseeing provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These help to ensure that all vulnerable groups are well supported and as a result they make good progress in their learning. The school's good, and sometimes outstanding, levels of care help pupils to feel extremely safe in school and able to talk to any adults about any problems they have.

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?

The headteacher is committed to providing the best outcomes for the pupils and, over the last 18 months, has established high expectations and made a number of changes in how the school works. The school is now reaping the rewards of higher standards and better progress promoted by the headteacher's drive for improvement. The headteacher, senior staff and governing body work well as a team and have shown their ambition and drive equally by improving the curriculum, assessment and partnerships with parents. They have continuing plans for further development and improvement and have created high morale in the staff team, giving them good capacity to sustain improvements made and seek more. Subject leaders are more active in overseeing their subject, checking standards and seeking improvements through action plans than at the last inspection. However, they do not spend enough time observing teaching and learning in their subjects, so that they might help improve both. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development, gained more recently from its own monitoring and an increasing understanding of the school's data. It has ensured that safeguarding is of good quality in all its aspects. Good links have been cemented with parents and carers, with their views being sought and acted upon, such as in the sending of text messages and e-mails. Similarly good links have been made with the local cluster of schools, including the secondary school, which provides many well-designed additions to the school such as an innovative 'wellie rack' and a playground tractor in Reception. Links with the local authority's music provision have seen the school

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receive violins for a class and excellent teaching to ensure pupils are learning well. The school has a strong commitment to ensure that every pupil has an equal chance of success and works hard to eradicate discrimination and minimise any differences in the achievement of individuals and groups, including the most vulnerable. Through good tracking, leaders guide colleagues, ensuring that equality of opportunity and inclusion are effective. The school has evaluated its contribution to community cohesion and has developed strong links within the local community and very well formed links with a school in Kenya. Currently, provision is good rather than outstanding because pupils' appreciation of what it means to be a citizen in a multi-cultural United Kingdom is not as well developed as their local and international awareness of others.

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage is successful in laying down secure foundations for future learning. Children's skills and understanding are slightly above those typically expected, when they enter school. However, with previous groups of children being smaller in number than at present, the balance of skills and understanding has been prone to change from year to year. Aspects of mathematical development are slightly weaker, whilst letter recognition and aspects of social development are considerably higher. Good induction arrangements ensure children settle quickly and parents feel well informed about progress. Learning journals are useful in gathering photographs and comments to share with parents. They also act as a place to store assessments and the tracking of progress during the year. Effective provision results in children making good progress in many aspects of their development. This is especially the case in their attitudes and in aspects of language and literacy and mathematical development, with the majority of children reaching above average levels by the end of their time in Reception in these areas. Relationships and teamwork are strong.

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Children are keen to do well and use the wide range of resources well. The outside area has been developed well since the last inspection and now much better meets the needs of children. Woodland walks, taken regularly, give children an insight into the environment and plenty to talk about. Teaching is good because staff have a good understanding of how children learn. They provide a broad range of well-considered activities which are carefully planned to meet the needs of individual children. Children have good opportunities to make choices, but occasionally do not have a clear idea of what they should be learning, especially outdoors. There is a very caring ethos here and the new leadership and management team has been successful in improving many aspects of provision to a good level.

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

From the large number of returned parents/carers questionnaires, it is clear that the school enjoys a significant amount of support from parents. Inspection evidence supports the very positive comments. A very small number of parents and carers did not think poor behaviour was dealt with effectively or that the school took account of suggestions. After examining these issues, inspectors found that behaviour in lessons and around the school was exemplary and that the school seeks the opinions of parents regularly and had acted on suggestions made where possible or practical.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Plaistow and Kirdford 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 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 192 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	73	27	25	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	72	30	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	35	66	61	3	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	44	55	50	6	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	51	47	56	51	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	44	55	50	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	54	46	42	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	46	49	45	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	47	51	47	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	43	49	45	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	39	54	50	8	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	75	69	32	39	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	67	35	32	0	0	1	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Plaistow and Kirdford Primary School, Billingshurst RH14 0PX

Thank you for your help when we visited your school for its recent inspection. You clearly enjoy being at school, as we saw from your questionnaires and when we talked to you.

Here are some of the highlights we noted in our visit:

- the above average standards you reach, especially in English by the end of Year 6
- your excellent understanding of safety and how to live a healthy lifestyle
- your excellent contribution to the school, your local community and the school you are linked with in Kenya
- your exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school.

The school must now work on:

- improving teaching so that you can make even better progress in your learning and reach higher standards by the end of Year 2 as well as the end of Year 6
- improve your understanding of what life is like in other parts of the United Kingdom.

I am sure that all of you will continue to do your best to help the school be even better.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones

Lead inspector

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