

Potters Gate CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125161
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359854
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Julie Sackett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Haines
Headteacher	Jane Whittington
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. Discussions were held with senior staff, members of the governing body, pupils and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, policies, and records of pupils' attainment and progress. The inspection team considered 90 responses to questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The learning, progress and attainment of all pupils, particularly in mathematics
- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its impact on children's learning and progress.
- The effectiveness of developments in the curriculum in supporting progress and learning.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

Information about the school

Potters Gate is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. A smaller than average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The after-school club, which is managed by the governing body, was included in this inspection. There is also a children's centre on site which was inspected separately at the time of this inspection. The school has Artsmark Silver award and Sing Up Gold award.

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

This is a good school with a number of notable strengths. High-quality care and support are central to the school's ethos. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school, they are mature and thoughtful young people who make a very good contribution to the school and the local community. The strength of the school community is underpinned by its religious ethos and a commitment to inclusion. This is reflected in one pupil's comment, 'Everyone is equal and no one judges us.' Together with the headteacher, all staff and governors have the welfare of the pupils very much at heart and strive to ensure that all pupils make the most of their talents.

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is excellent and the school uses a wide range of strategies to seek their views, including regular questionnaires and governors' presence at events. It also works actively and positively with the children's centre. The homeschool link worker plays a key role in supporting pupils and their families, including those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and very appreciative of the dedication of the headteacher and staff. One parent summed up the views of many parents and carers by writing, 'Our children delight in going to school, their enthusiasm and love of learning is totally down to the teachers, teaching methods and positive atmosphere at Potters Gate School, championed by the headteacher.'

Children get off to a flying start in their Reception Year and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, continue to make good progress until they leave in Year 6, reaching levels of attainment which are broadly in line with national averages. This demonstrates a good improvement in standards achieved since the last inspection. However, attainment has been higher in English than in mathematics in recent years. The school has responded rigorously with several carefully planned initiatives to address this difference. For example, gaps in some pupils' mathematical knowledge have been identified and high-quality, intensive individual support, which is closely focused on pupils' needs, has been provided. Inspection activities confirm that these initiatives are successfully accelerating the progress made by these pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1.

The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Positive relationships and good subject knowledge are key strengths of teaching. Pupils are typically fully engaged and interested except, on occasions, when the pace of the lesson slows, for example during the transition between one part of the lesson and the next. In the large majority of lessons, there is good use of assessment information to plan work that meets individual pupils' needs well and provides appropriate challenge. In a small minority of lessons, however, opportunities are missed to enhance the progress of more-able pupils because activities to challenge and extend these pupils are not introduced early enough in the lesson.

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Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and out at play. Pupils demonstrate an excellent knowledge about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They jump at the chance to participate in sport and eat well-balanced meals. Pupils feel extremely safe and understand how to take sensible steps to contribute to their own safety, for example when using the internet.

Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, and the school has been successful in making improvements in key areas such as the curriculum since the last inspection. There is rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. Teachers meet each term to use data to monitor pupils' progress, plan future learning and set challenging targets. Strong senior leadership, a very clear vision and joint team effort throughout the school demonstrate a good capacity for sustaining the improvement already made. The high morale of the staff is reflected in one comment made by a member of staff, 'I am very proud to be a member of Potters Gate staff and very much enjoy working here.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further enhance the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teaching always provides challenging tasks that are pitched at the right level for all pupils, including the more able, throughout the lesson
 - ensuring that the pace of lessons is consistently challenging.

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

One pupil said, 'I like the atmosphere in school. Everyone helps one another as it is a small school.' She spoke for the many who come to school enthusiastically each morning, looking forward to all that school has to offer. For example, Year 4 pupils made the most of a mobile climbing wall during sports week with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. One pupil, when asked what he had learnt on the climbing wall, said 'to be brave and go for your targets,' reflecting the strong contribution such activities make to pupils' confidence and achievement. Pupils express complete confidence in adults to sort out any concerns or worries. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging in their excellent behaviour. They take on a good range of jobs and responsibilities around the school very maturely and responsibly, and are proud of their school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, evident in pupils' respect for each other and in their zest for life and learning. In music, pupils sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with confidence, a factor recognised by the school's recent achievement of the Sing Up Gold award.

Children enter school with levels of knowledge and understanding which are below those expected for their age, although this picture varies from year to year. All groups of pupils make similarly good progress over time, including those who speak English as an additional language, and achieve well. However, more-able pupils on occasion make slower progress than they might, particularly in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of careful attention from teaching assistants in lessons and very well-directed support.

Pupils have good relationships with teachers and teaching assistants. They achieve well and enjoy their learning because they listen carefully to instructions, respond promptly to expected routines and quickly get down to work. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils sensibly explored a range of seaside objects and then suggested some thoughtful

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adjectives to describe a starfish, including 'spiky', 'sharp' and 'stripy'. These strengths, combined with very positive attitudes to learning, make a good contribution to the next steps in their education.

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	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	2
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?

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide logical links to real-life situations. This, together with good questioning, ensures pupils achieve well. They carefully check individual understanding as they move around the classrooms and put pupils back on track should they be struggling. Pupils' work is marked regularly and in the best lessons they are given opportunities to actively consider and respond to the teacher's recommendations. For example, 'a tunnel, carved in the rock by time, sea and man, lay before Cherry' and 'a dripping wall, cold as ice, crumbled onto the cave floor' were two pupils' responses. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that teaching assistants have a clear understanding of their role in the lesson. As a result, they provide very effective support for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In a small minority of the teaching, planning does not take full account of individual needs, especially more-able pupils and, on occasion, the pace of learning is not sufficiently challenging.

The curriculum is well organised and imaginatively planned, with meaningful links between subjects. The school acknowledges the need to further enhance pupils' knowledge and

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awareness of different communities and beliefs through its curriculum provision. Curriculum developments since the last inspection mean that pupils are now more actively involved in their learning, for example through looking at aspects of the class topic which particularly interest them and presenting research completed at home in a format of their choice. For instance, pupils' responses to a Year 4 topic about India included a well-presented comparison of European and Indian wedding dresses and a review of traditional Indian food. The school's achievement of the Artsmark Silver award is reflected in the above average quality of the artwork and the successful emphasis given to the development of artistic skills and techniques. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning across a range of subjects and contributes to the good development of workplace skills. A wide range of enrichment activities, including the Year 5 visit to Wintershall and events such as sports week, provide rich and memorable experiences and contribute very well to pupils' learning and personal development.

The care, guidance and support of pupils is outstanding. There are many examples of extremely successful work with pupils, their families and outside agencies to help remove barriers to learning and well-being. There are very well established links with partner secondary school which successfully aid transition. The well-organised after-school club provides a calm, enjoyable and positive end to the day for those pupils who attend. Staff do all they can to ensure pupils come to school regularly and their efforts have resulted in above average levels of attendance for several years.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has very successfully built a shared ethos of high expectations for all pupils, coupled with strong levels of care. Through regular monitoring, including teaching and learning, leaders and managers at all levels have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and make an active and valuable contribution to school improvement. This has ensured that the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Rigorous use of pupil assessment data enables the school to identify very promptly those pupils slipping behind and successfully provide ways for them to catch up.

The governing body is very knowledgeable about the context of the school and gives thoughtful and perceptive strategic direction to the school. Governors and the headteacher regularly gauge pupils', parents' and carers' views, ensuring these inform future planning. The school has developed very effective ways of working with those parents and carers who are less likely to engage with the school, including close liaison with the children's

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centre, to encourage parents and carers to share in their children's learning with the school. The school maintains good links with outside organisations, including other schools and agencies, which make a good contribution to pupils' good achievement and well-being. The promotion of equal opportunities is good and well managed through careful monitoring which is used well to identify and address any unevenness in pupils' achievement. Leaders do not tolerate any kind of discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective and monitoring procedures are well established to ensure pupils are safe. The school promotes community cohesion well. It is justly proud of the strength of its school community and its links with the local community, and has plans in place to extend pupils' understanding of different contexts within the United Kingdom and beyond.

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	1
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 quickly settle and are eager to learn because adults have very successfully created a happy, welcoming and calm environment in which children are nurtured from the start. The learning environment is well organised and attractive, with many pictures, letters and words to promote interest in and love of language. Children listen attentively, move between different activities safely and responsibly, and behave exceptionally well. Well-planned themed topics ensure that all areas of learning are covered and plenty of stimulating activities capture children's imagination. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed examining mini-beasts with magnifiers, while others who were involved in a spider-web board game happily chatted about who was winning and how many more spaces their toy spider needed to move to win. As a result of activities such as these, children make good progress, particularly in reading, calculating and creative development, from starting points which are generally below typical expectations.

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Relationships between the adults and the children are warm and trusting. Parents and carers know their children are in safe hands. Adults know the individual children very well and take great care to maintain good assessment records. These are then used successfully to identify the next steps in children's learning. Children's needs are identified early and support is good for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. Questioning by teachers and adults is used well to probe children's understanding and capture their interest. For example, the teacher very successfully explored a child's understanding of number while he used modelling clay and straws to make a spider. As a result, he made good progress in number and calculating skills.

The provision is well managed, and well-established procedures ensure that adults have accurate and reliable information about children's progress. Detailed planning takes good account of the wide ability range. Arrangements to support children's arrival at the beginning of the year, as well as their transition to Year 1, are good and include visits to a range of pre-school settings as well as home visits.

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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and those who inspectors spoke to personally were extremely supportive of the school. Of the very small number of concerns raised, most were individual cases. A very few parents and carers raised concerns about the extent to which the school helps pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles; the extent to which parents and carers are helped to support their child's needs; and how well the school meets individual pupils' needs. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found the school's engagement with parents and carers to be exemplary and the effectiveness with which the school meets individual pupils' needs to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Potters Gate CofE 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	86	13	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	94	5	6	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	61	35	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	58	38	42	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	64	32	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	53	40	44	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	72	23	26	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)	49	54	38	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	57	36	40	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	62	33	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	48	47	52	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	71	79	19	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	81	17	19	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



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10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Potters Gate CofE Primary School, Farnham GU9 7BB.

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently and for spending time talking to us. We really enjoyed meeting you. We found Potters Gate to be a good school. These are some of the things we found.

- You enjoy coming to school and you are polite and extremely well behaved. This is helping you to do well.
- You are making good progress in lessons and reach attainment levels that are similar to those found in other schools.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and are very committed to living healthy lifestyles.
- You enjoy helping in school and get on really well together.
- Teaching in your school is good. Your teachers teach you well and make learning fun. You like learning and find your lessons interesting.
- You are extremely well cared for and you told us that you feel very happy and safe in school.
- All the adults in your school want you to do your best and Mrs Whittington and the staff and governors know what needs to be done to improve the school.

We have asked the headteacher and staff to help you to do even better, especially in mathematics, by:

- making sure that teaching always challenges you throughout the lesson
- ensuring that the pace of lessons is always good so that you can make the best progress that you can.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now. All of you can help the school by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett

Lead inspector

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