

Pelham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101410
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	354992
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Dunn

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Irene Holliss
Headteacher	Andrew Hogarth
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They saw 23 lessons taught by 17 staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and carers, staff and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning and monitoring information, a range of policy documents and records, minutes of meetings of the governing body and a range of pupils' work. They also analysed 126 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 42 from pupils and 20 from staff.

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

- How rapid progress is in writing and mathematics.
- How successfully the school meets the needs of girls and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How effectively provision for pupils with a hearing impairment secures their achievement and well-being, including through integration with mainstream lessons.
- How well leaders at different levels evaluate the impact of their actions in terms of improving outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils that speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average and rising. More pupils than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has the only specially-resourced provision in the local authority for pupils with a hearing impairment. It has places for 18 pupils with a hearing impairment, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs.

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

Pelham Primary is a good school. Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes, engage keenly in their learning and achieve well. The headteacher's relentless drive underpins the concerted and effective improvements secured since the previous inspection. As one parent/carer summed it up, 'I have been really impressed with the way the school has developed over the past three years.' This was typical of the overwhelmingly positive views expressed by most parents and carers. The effective specially resourced provision, including extensive and successful integration with mainstream lessons, ensures that pupils with a hearing impairment also achieve well. Their attainment varies significantly, mainly linked to their wide-ranging starting points and other areas of need, but is broadly average overall, in line with that of other pupils.

The bright, stimulating, well-resourced environment in Nursery and Reception gives children a very positive first experience of school and ensures they get off to a good start. Strong relationships at all levels throughout the school contribute well to pupils' outstanding feelings of safety. One pupil commented, 'Teachers are really nice and kind, and help us when things are difficult.' Despite this, although attendance over recent years has been broadly average, improvements in the rates of attendance since the previous inspection have recently stalled. The school already does much to promote better attendance, but leaders are rightly developing systems currently to allow them to identify absence patterns of particular groups more readily.

Teaching across the school is good and sometimes outstanding, resulting in pupils' good progress. Prominent displays of writing throughout the school celebrate pupils' achievements and effectively illustrate their good and accelerating progress in this area. Although pupils' progress in mathematics is also good, it is not as rapid as it is in English. Teachers do not always match the tasks given to different groups in mathematics precisely enough to their needs to secure the best possible achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall, though it is less consistent than for other pupils. The good quality work produced by pupils indicates that the attainment of current cohorts is rising. However, although there have been improvements, to date, proportionally fewer pupils attain the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 compared with national figures.

The effective leadership and management of the hearing-impaired provision have ensured staff are well deployed to secure the well-being of these pupils, while preventing them from becoming too dependent on additional support. Leaders at different levels, including the governing body, are increasingly involved in evaluating the impact of their actions on improving pupils' outcomes. Consequently, the school knows itself well and takes successful action to secure improvements, for example closing the previous gap between the progress of girls and boys. Recent refinements to the school's systems for tracking

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pupils' progress are beginning to enable leaders to compare the performance of different groups more readily. They have good plans to use this information to tackle remaining variations. Considering all this, and that achievement and the curriculum have improved from satisfactory to good, the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress further in order to raise attainment by:
 - implementing plans to use the school's recently improved analysis of the performance of different groups to identify, tackle and eradicate remaining variation in performance, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those capable of reaching the higher levels
 - customising teaching and tasks in mathematics more sharply to ensure they have the right levels of challenge for all groups of pupils
 - raising the overall quality of teaching so that much is outstanding through sharing and learning from best practice within and beyond the school.
- Improve attendance by continuing to develop systems to analyse attendance patterns for different groups and then using this information specifically to target, implement and evaluate strategies for tackling absence.

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

Children start school with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 6. A small group of boys in Year 2 exemplified the positive attitudes, enjoyment and engagement that contribute to pupils' good progress, as they eagerly explained the purpose of different aspects of their learning environment. During the lesson, pupils worked hard to develop effective vocabulary, using words they had learned from the studied text, to introduce suspense to their stories. Pupils from Years 3 and 4 in the hearing-impaired provision made good progress in a lesson about acrostic poems because of the teacher's clear and effective modelling of the task and the good opportunities to work with their peers. Adults' careful questioning deepened their understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always reliant on additional support because they have regular opportunities to work independently or collaboratively without direction from an adult. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, pupils were supportive of each other and consequently achieved well as they played games to reinforce their understanding of place value. However, at other times, the pace of learning for these pupils slows, for example where the adult supporting them does too much, such as writing for the whole group. As a result, pupils miss opportunities to practise their basic skills.

Pupils have an excellent perspective on what constitutes unsafe situations and say they feel safe at school at all times. Their behaviour is good, and sometimes outstanding. Although a few pupils require additional guidance from adults to keep on track, they respond quickly to this. Pupils willingly assume varied roles and responsibilities, such as recycling, and carry out their duties proudly and reliably. The school council influences some important decisions, such as refining the popular and effective 'diamond' system of

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rewards and sanctions. Participation in local events and fundraising activities broaden pupils' sense of community beyond the school. Pupils mix and work well together, both in and out of the classroom. Respectful of others' needs, pupils are reflective about the world around them. They engage enthusiastically in cultural and multicultural opportunities, including creativity weeks and visits to varied places of worship. Pupils have a good understanding of factors affecting their health and respond well to the school's health promotion strategies, such as regularly engaging in extra-curricular sports activities. Pupils' successful application of their basic skills and good personal qualities prepare them well for the next stage of their education and life beyond. However, although still broadly average, the number of pupils persistently absent has risen in the current year.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
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?

Significant improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection have helped to secure pupils' good enjoyment and achievement. The strong focus on developing pupils' skills and ensuring that, wherever possible, learning has a real-life context or purpose effectively motivates pupils. Good links between subjects contribute well to this, although while there are adequate opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematics skills, these links are less well developed. An effective partnership with students from a local secondary school has helped raise the aspirations of girls, particularly in mathematics. Training for staff to improve questioning techniques, especially aimed at promoting girls'

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higher-order thinking skills, has paid off, and teachers' questioning in lessons is good. For example, in a English lesson in Year 5, the teacher used her good subject knowledge well to develop pupils' use of technical vocabulary in response to her open questions. In the same lesson, pupils had good opportunities to review and suggest improvements to each other's sentences. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to do this more often, including giving pupils a chance to assess for themselves whether they have met their targets. That said, teachers regularly set and review targets in reading, writing, mathematics and science, ensuring pupils know their next steps in learning. Marking is effective because it celebrates pupils' success and regularly shows them how to improve their work.

Effective systems underpin the positive and caring ethos of the school, and pupils speak warmly about adults. The 'diamond' system encourages positive attitudes, behaviour and learning, and is effective because pupils understand it well and staff apply it consistently. A strong commitment to inclusion, enhanced by good links with other professionals and agencies, effectively protects pupils whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable, significantly improving their well-being. Staff have high expectations of pupils with a hearing impairment and rigorously monitor their progress and attainment. They use this information well to plan work for them, regularly integrate provision within mainstream lessons, and ensure pupils maintain and improve their levels of independence. Sign language is used effectively and appropriately for younger children and pupils with profound and severe hearing impairment. Teaching within the specially resourced provision is good.

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 governing body provides leaders with a good balance of support and challenge to sustain necessary improvements. Thorough interrogation of information provided by the school, together with sharply focused monitoring visits, gives it a detailed understanding of the school's performance, as well as an accurate perspective of its own effectiveness. Plans to secure further improvements are thorough and detailed, but too extensive. Leaders are currently prioritising and focusing the plans on the most important areas to promote more rapid improvement. There is effective distribution of responsibility to leaders at different levels. Senior leaders relate their own effectiveness to improving outcomes for pupils well, and other leaders are beginning to be more involved in evaluating and being accountable for their own impact. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and racist incidents are extremely rare. Successful action to accelerate the progress of girls, and proactive engagement in a pilot programme to

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provide additional support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, have meant that gaps in performance between different groups are closing. Staff understand well the school's clear and effective policies to safeguard and protect pupils. There are well-established and thorough systems to protect children, and staff regularly receive good quality safeguarding training relevant to their role. Relationships with most parents and carers are highly positive and the school is a strongly cohesive community. Pupils from different backgrounds mix notably well. A clear analysis and understanding of the school's context and contribution to community cohesion has ensured pupils have some opportunities to engage with those from communities not immediately represented, for example other religions. The school's action plan accurately identifies establishing international links as an area for development.

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

Strong relationships and the well-organised, stimulating and welcoming environment contribute well to children's enthusiastic engagement across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children respond positively to the varied opportunities for exploration and investigation. They mix well and develop good levels of independence, as seen when the children in Nursery helped themselves to the water required for the peas, carrots, potatoes, lettuce and broad beans they had planted. Through these sorts of activities, children get into good habits towards developing a healthy lifestyle. Children from the hearing-impaired provision are fully included when involved in mainstream sessions because of the skilled and unobtrusive support provided by teaching assistants. Adults interact well to support children's learning when they select their own activities, for example extending children's vocabulary and role play in Reception as they played in the puppet theatre. Careful planning maintains an effective balance between these opportunities and good quality adult-led sessions. Consequently, progress is good across

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all strands of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile, and the gap with age-appropriate expectations narrows significantly by the end of Reception. Leaders recognise that children do not always access opportunities independently across all six areas of learning regularly enough to eradicate the gaps completely, for example in creative development.

Rigorous assessment procedures ensure children's needs and interests are met well. Adults make good use of a range of opportunities to observe children's developing capabilities to plan their next steps in learning. Recently improved systems for establishing children's varying stages of development when they start school give leaders a firm basis from which to track their progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader rightly intends to use the resulting analysis to compare the performance of different groups and pinpoint areas of provision requiring further improvement. Good leadership and effective teamwork secure a coherent approach and smooth transition for children through Nursery, Reception and beyond into Year 1.

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 proportion of parents and carers that returned a questionnaire was just below average but well within the range typically seen. Those that answered each question were unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe, is led and managed effectively, that teaching is good and that their children are making enough progress. The overwhelming majority expressed positive views about most aspects of the school's provision. Written comments were mostly positive, echoed by parents and carers that spoke with inspectors during the inspection. Many were particularly positive about the significant improvements secured under the leadership of the headteacher. The biggest area of disagreement related to the few parents and carers that disagreed that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors discussed the very few areas of concern or suggestions for improvement with school leaders. Although inspection evidence indicates that parents and carers are well informed overall about their children's progress, a small number said they would like to receive information more regularly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pelham 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 411 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	70	36	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	95	75	31	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	62	49	59	47	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	52	59	47	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	63	47	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	51	54	43	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	52	59	47	1	1	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)	70	56	51	40	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	54	54	43	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	44	60	48	9	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	41	64	51	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	88	70	36	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	68	38	30	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	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.



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pelham Primary School, Bexleyheath DA7 4HL

Thank you so much for the warm, friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you. We are very grateful to you for helping us to find out all about your school, including those of you who answered our questionnaire. You told us you enjoy school and feel safe there at all times. We can see why - Pelham Primary is a good school.

Your achievement is good, including that of pupils who attend the specially resourced hearing-impaired provision. You develop good personal skills for the future. You behave well and have positive attitudes to your learning, which is helping you to make good progress. Children in Nursery and Reception also do well. Teaching is good and the adults in school care for you well. Your parents and carers were very positive about the school. Like you, many of them told us what a good job your headteacher has done, working with all the staff to make the school better for you over the last few years.

Those responsible for running the school have made good plans to make it even better for you. To help with this, we have asked them to do some important things.

- Help you to make even better progress by using information about how well different groups of you are doing, making sure your tasks in mathematics are never too easy or too hard, and making more teaching outstanding.
- Improve attendance by checking to see if there are any patterns in absence and then thinking of ways to make sure particular groups of you come to school more often.

You can all help by continuing to behave well and be positive about your learning, and by always trying to come to school as often as possible.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn Lead inspector

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