

# Peartree Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117172
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379366
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Shepherd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	160
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Brewis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sherie Hart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Peartree Lane Welwyn Garden City AL7 3XW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 13 lessons led by 8 different teachers. Meetings were held with the senior staff, a group of pupils and two members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documentation and the school's analysis of its data. Questionnaires from 53 parents and carers, 9 staff and 50 pupils were received and analysed.

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

- Why do boys appear not to perform as well as girls, according to data?
- How consistent are teaching and assessment throughout the school?
- What is the impact of the monitoring carried out by senior staff on pupils' progress and attainment?

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than most primary schools and serves a diverse community. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. A higher than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Higher than average proportions of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and the Hertfordshire Quality Standard in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Peartree Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. This is because pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. However, there are a number of strengths in the school. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Relationships between adults and pupils are good throughout the school and this promotes effectively the good behaviour seen and pupils' willingness to make positive contributions around the school. Pupils are looked after well and this helps them to feel safe. They are adopting healthy lifestyles because the school emphasises this aspect effectively throughout the curriculum. Children from a wide variety of backgrounds get on very well together and learn to respect each other's differences. This is appreciated by all those parents and carers who completed the questionnaire; a typical view was expressed by one parent who wrote, 'Peartree is an excellent school. Children are in a safe and friendly environment. My son loves coming to school.'

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is rising and is now broadly average in English and mathematics. Attainment in reading is higher than in writing and mathematics. Although boys make similar rates of progress to girls, their attainment is not currently as high as that of girls; however, this gap in attainment varies between different cohorts of pupils. There are no significant differences in achievement between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils, and between those who speak English as an additional language and monolingual pupils.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some teaching is outstanding and fully engages and motivates pupils in their learning. Good relationships successfully encourage pupils to try hard to please staff. Technology is used very well by staff as a valuable aid to make teaching very clear to pupils. Planning indicates the main focus of lessons but does not always show what pupils at different levels of ability are expected to learn in lessons. This slows the progress of different groups at different times. Marking is encouraging but does not always provide enough guidance for pupils about how to improve and not enough opportunities are given for them to respond to suggestions made. Occasionally, pupils who are working independently are not given the guidance they need to ensure they make the progress of which they are capable. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of additional activities after school and visits to places of interest. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in literacy and across the curriculum, nor to record their work in mathematics, and this slows down their

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progress in these subjects. Links with parents and carers are good.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. Monitoring and evaluation are mainly carried out by the headteacher. The recent reorganisation of the senior team provides an opportunity for the school to provide senior staff with further training and opportunities to carry out their monitoring and evaluation roles. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and key priorities for improvement are identified. This, along with the good relationships throughout the school and the school's success in raising attainment, demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By July 2012, raise attainment in writing and mathematics by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length in different subjects
  - providing them with more opportunities to record their learning in mathematics.
- By April 2012, ensure consistency in teaching and assessment by:
  - indicating in planning what pupils at different levels of ability are to learn in lessons
  - providing feedback in marking that indicates the next steps in pupils' learning and providing opportunities to respond to the suggestions made
  - checking on the progress of pupils who are working independently.
- Ensure the monitoring and evaluation carried out by senior staff lead to improved outcomes for pupils by:
  - training senior staff in the techniques of monitoring and evaluation
  - providing opportunities for them to monitor and evaluate outcomes in their areas of responsibility.

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

<b>3</b>
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Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given that they start in Year 1 with skills that are at expected levels, and progress to the point where test results, as well as standards seen in lessons and books by inspectors, are broadly average. Pupils from all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, are developing their basic skills satisfactorily and are well equipped with wider skills and personal qualities for their future lives. The progress made by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

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is satisfactory.

Pupils settle down quickly to their work. For example, in Year 6, pupils were fully engaged and responded eagerly and swiftly as they measured angles using a protractor. In Year 2, pupils greatly enjoyed and became engrossed in the activity of exchanging places with their teacher and giving instructions for the rest of the class to follow. This was followed by pupils responding excitedly to some tricky instructions when playing the game ‘Simon Says’.

Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding about healthy eating and the importance of regular exercise. They enjoy physical activities in lessons, at playtimes and after school which help promote their healthy lifestyles. The impact of the Healthy Schools status can be seen by pupils’ positive responses in their questionnaires. Pupils’ behaviour is good because high standards of conduct are promoted effectively by staff. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local communities. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 act as playground buddies for children in the Reception class. Year 6 pupils enjoy helping younger pupils eat their lunches in the dining room. Pupils collect for a variety of charities at home and abroad. Elected pupils represent their peers on the school council. Pupils reflect thoughtfully upon some of the broader issues in life, such as respect and peaceful problem solving.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

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

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Teachers’ planning and classroom organisation are effective in enabling lessons to flow smoothly. On occasions, subjects, such as English and religious education, are linked together well and this helps to reinforce learning in different lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language satisfactorily on an individual and/or group basis and this helps these pupils in their understanding of particular aspects of their work. Teachers ask probing questions that identify precisely what pupils already know and what they need to know next. In the best lessons, teachers provide clear guidance by showing pupils what is expected of them. Occasionally, the introductions in lessons are too long for some pupils to sustain their concentration, and the pace of learning in these lessons is not as rapid. This is particularly the case in mathematics where the mental starter and the main teaching for the lesson are on different topics. The impact of this is that pupils do not have enough time to consolidate their own learning on an individual basis.

The school provides a wide range of enjoyable experiences and opportunities for pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about visits out of school to places such as Knebworth House, St Albans Abbey and the British Museum. Out-of-school clubs are popular with pupils as indicated by the high take up and waiting lists for activities such as football, netball, speed stacking, kwik cricket and yoga. The early morning choir is well attended because pupils enjoy their singing. Provision to promote pupils’ personal development is included effectively throughout the curriculum. Pupils receive good opportunities to develop their skills in speaking, listening and thinking but the match of work to pupils’ different levels of ability is only satisfactory.

Good arrangements for pupils joining the school ensure that they settle quickly. In replies to their questionnaires, nearly all pupils responded that they were looked after very well by staff. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified effectively and suitable provision is allocated to meet their needs. One parent who was pleased with provision for her son wrote, ‘My son has had some problems and the school helped him and myself considerably.’ Procedures for promoting attendance are satisfactory. Transition arrangements are good from the Reception class into Year 1 and from Year 6 to secondary school. The school runs a breakfast club each day and this helps to give pupils a good start to their day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

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Morale is high because staff feel that their contributions are valued by the headteacher and senior leaders. There is a strong sense of pulling together to achieve goals because the headteacher, supported by senior staff, has satisfactorily instilled a sense of ambition and drive to improve the work of the school. The school identifies appropriately its strengths and weaknesses and incorporates the areas for development into plans of action. Monitoring and evaluating progress and attainment are systematic and are beginning to be successful in improving outcomes for pupils.

The school has good relationships with parents and carers. Initiatives such as induction procedures, weekly newsletters, daily ‘Meet and Greet’ opportunities at the beginning and end of the school day and family support workers all help to promote this positive relationship. Parents and carers are invited into school on a number of occasions, such as for consultation evenings, special assemblies and productions.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. It is supportive and enthusiastic for the school to do well. Some governors provide useful help in school during the school day. However, the governing body does not challenge the school sufficiently to ensure pupils make good progress. Safeguarding procedures are good. Staff are rigorously vetted and trained regularly in child protection procedures. The site is secure and this is reflected by one parent who wrote, ‘The safety of the school has dramatically improved.’ Links with medical services and social services help to promote effectively the personal development and well-being of pupils and links with the local authority are having a satisfactory impact on outcomes for pupils.

The school promotes equality satisfactorily for the different groups and tackles any racist behaviour and discrimination effectively. This enables all groups of pupils to achieve satisfactorily. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of their local, national and international communities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for</b>	<b>3</b>



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money

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills and abilities that are below those typically expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. They make good progress from these starting points in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress in line with their capabilities because they are supported effectively in small groups.

Children enjoy their learning and tackle their activities with relish and enthusiasm. They were excited and enjoyed listening to bedtime stories that were written and read to them by Year 6 pupils as they were all dressed in their pyjamas. The Reception children gained great comfort as the stories were being read to them because they each held a teddy during this delightful activity. A particular strength of children’s development is how well they tidy up and change into and from their clothes for lessons in physical education. Children are looked after well and are kept safe. They are given good opportunities to chat to adults about what they are doing. Children intently engage in activities that promote reading, writing, counting and creative play. They are challenged effectively at their different levels of skills and abilities. Behaviour is good and children get on very well with each other and with adults. The inside and outside learning environments are stimulating, child-friendly and well organised. They provide children with an enjoyable range of activities that help develop their understanding and skills in all areas of learning. The balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities is good. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and staff work well together as a team and have a good understanding about early years provision. The positive impact of the Hertfordshire Quality Standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage can be clearly seen. Children’s progress is monitored and recorded systematically and is used in planning further activities on an individual basis. Links with parents and carers are good as are induction procedures that enable children to settle quickly into school routines.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 views of parents and carers are very positive. Approximately one third of the questionnaires returned included written comments, most of which were positive.

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Written comments focused on the children's enjoyment of school, friendly and helpful staff, effective behaviour management, safety in school and the quality of teaching. The views of parents and carers have been included throughout the report but can be summarised by the one who wrote, 'My children love the school and the staff look after them very well.'

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Peartree 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 160 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	66	16	30	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	72	15	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	35	66	17	32	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	53	23	43	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	62	20	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	58	21	40	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	57	23	43	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)	29	55	20	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	31	58	21	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	58	20	38	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	53	25	47	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	64	19	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	70	16	30	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Peartree Primary School, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3XW**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Thank you to those of you who completed the questionnaire for us. We found your responses very helpful. You go to a satisfactory school where adults work hard to prepare you for the future. Here are some of the best things we found.

- You enjoy school very much and get on well with each other.
- You feel safe and understand the importance of eating healthy foods and taking exercise.
- You really like your teachers and teaching assistants and try your best to please them.
- You are well behaved and make a good contribution to the school.
- You enjoy visiting places of interest like Knebworth House and taking part in clubs after school.
- You are looked after well by the adults.

We have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to do three things to make your school better.

- Give you more time to practise your writing and carry out calculations in mathematics.
- Let all of you know what you are learning in lessons, check how well you are doing during lessons, and always let you know how well you have done and give you time to carry out the improvements suggested in marking.
- Make sure that the plans they have to help you do even better are working.

All of you can help by continuing to work very hard.

Yours sincerely

David Shepherd  
Lead inspector

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