

St Peter's C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	126005
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381168
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	David Marshall

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	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Wilson
Headteacher	Catherine Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2006
School address	Holmans Street Lane Ardingly RH17 6UQ
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Marshall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent five hours observing teaching, which included visiting 13 class lessons, and a number of smaller teaching groups. In all, seven teachers were observed. In addition, discussions were held with different groups of pupils, three governors, the headteacher, all staff members and a number of parents and carers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance and progress, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies and curriculum planning documents. In addition, questionnaires from 72 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils, were analysed.

Information about the school

St Peter's is a smaller than average primary school that serves the immediate community and the surrounding rural area. The number on roll has increased steadily for the last three years. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is also around the national average. Government floor standards (the minimum expectation for pupils' standards and the progress they make) have been exceeded.

The school has achieved a number of awards. These include Travel Plan Level 1, National Healthy Schools Award, the Green Flag Award, Active Mark, and the Full International School 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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school where pupils' achievement is outstanding and their efforts are consistently recognised and rewarded.
- Pupils make outstanding progress, and are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' attainment is consistently well above average by the time they leave the school.
- The overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Throughout the school the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is thorough and consistent. The careful planning observed showed how well the pupils' confidence and skills in reading are enhanced as they move up the school.
- The outstanding curriculum enables the pupils to enjoy a very extensive range of activities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are outstanding and the school is zealous in ensuring that pupils are safe and secure.
- Pupils enjoy their whole time in the school and their attendance is consistently high.
- The school enjoys very strong and supportive relationships with the parents and carers.
- The school plays a very important part in the life of the village and has good links with schools and communities in other areas, including abroad. Leaders have rightly identified that there is room for improvement in the way pupils are prepared for living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom.
- The determined and rigorous leadership of the headteacher and governors has secured significant improvements in the school and raised its effectiveness from 'good' at the time of the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom by:

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- acting upon the findings of the school's recent audit and analysis
- implementing plans to link with schools in other localities.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge that are similar to those typical for their age, but there are many variations within the small cohorts. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well and they are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education. As the school records show, and inspection evidence confirms, all pupils, regardless of their ability, make outstanding progress. Effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make excellent progress very quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This exceptional start is built upon extremely well so that, by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is well above average. Pupils' standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. This year's national assessments for pupils in Year 6 showed them achieving high standards in English, especially in reading and in mathematics, and making exceptional progress since their above average results in Year 2. The higher-attaining pupils were enabled to achieve exceptionally high standards.

In mathematics, pupils' past work and work within lessons illustrates their growing confidence in basic and more advanced number calculations and problem solving. Throughout the school, the pupils' work on display and in their books clearly shows the outstanding progress they make in their written work and art. The fact that a pupil won the poetry prize in last year's Brighton Festival with a poem that included the line 'a soul bursting with knowledge and expectations' was no great surprise to the staff.

Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. This stems from the high priority the school gives to meeting their needs. By ensuring outstanding help from very well-qualified teaching assistants wherever it is needed, the lower-attaining pupils, and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, make excellent progress. Any gaps between them and their peers are closed effectively.

Parents and carers expressed a high level of satisfaction in the progress their children make and are appreciative of the efforts the school makes to involve them in their children's learning. Inspection evidence fully concurs with the parents' positive views.

Quality of teaching

The teaching observed was almost always outstanding, and never less than good. Pupils' work and the school's assessment records show that this is a typical picture. All adults build positive relationships with pupils and there is strong emphasis on

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pupils being enabled to try as many activities as possible without worrying if they fail. The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed extremely well with an excellent range of independent activities. Very clear priorities are set for improvement and as a result children make outstanding progress.

Assessment procedures are thorough and systematic. All staff members know the pupils' needs and expectations. The teachers' use of this information on a day-to-day basis is rigorous. This enables all lessons to be challenging and leads to excellent progress. Throughout the school, pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work, and enjoy the challenges that the extremely well-prepared lessons offer them. In all lessons, pupils are well motivated by the ideas and resources presented through an exceptionally well-thought-out curriculum and are keen to please their teachers and other adults. This was evident in a mathematics lesson in the Year 5/6 class, where the teacher's provision of different levels of challenge and probing questions inspired unrelenting cooperation and effort from every pupil. As in most lessons, the pupils could hardly wait to share their thoughts and ideas. The impact of the school's highly effective planning, guidance and care, and teachers' knowledge of each individual pupil, is reflected in the outstanding quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and spiritual development.

The use of the individual pupil targets is excellent. In all lessons observed, the careful planning was implemented with enthusiasm and care and these targets were used effectively. This was clear in a Year 1/2 lesson, where the teacher had asked pupils to decide for themselves how they learn best. The pupils were enthusiastic and spoke confidently about why they had made their decision. The teacher's good use of praise and attention to detail was a reflection of the way in which teachers take all learning opportunities that arise.

The teaching of phonics (sounds and letters) is outstanding. The focus on group work with an exceptional higher-level teaching assistant has ensured that all pupils make excellent progress in reading and thoroughly enjoy their books. In a phonics session, pupils showed how well they had learned the different sounds by using them in a range of words, and, as they said, in their 'much better handwriting'.

Inspection evidence fully supports the views of the parents and carers who are unreservedly pleased with the quality of teaching in the school. As one wrote, 'The teachers understand their (pupils') needs and are extremely informative and supportive towards the children.'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is outstanding and all evidence shows that this is typical over time. As one older pupil observed in discussion, and all others agreed with him, 'There isn't really any sort of bullying in the school. We are all too busy and sharing what we are doing.' Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic learners. Attendance is well above average, as pupils enjoy all their time at school.

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The school has devised an extremely broad curriculum that also focuses on pupils working with others. This strategy was demonstrated particularly effectively in a session where the Year 5/6 pupils were responsible for organising and demonstrating different games skills to pupils in the Year 2/3 class. The enthusiasm and ability they showed in doing this was impressive.

Pupils show very caring attitudes to each other and the environment as the excellent Eco council work shows. Pupils know there is always someone they can turn to in moments of difficulty. They acquire an outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils were keen to show how much they enjoy the responsibility of the school council or being buddies with pupils in other classes. The school council is justifiably proud of the input it has made to influence changes.

If there is one aspect of the school's outstanding care for individual pupils that is particularly notable, it is the work of the learning mentor and teaching assistants. The zeal, patience and understanding they show break down any barriers to learning and are an inspiration to all others in the school.

Almost all parents and carers report that standards of behaviour in the school are high and, without exception, they agree that their children are kept safe at all times.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior staff and governors know the school's strengths and what needs to be refined further very well. Their rigorous monitoring sharply focused self-evaluation, and a track record of employing initiatives to enthuse pupils and treat them all as individuals, have also contributed to pupils' excellent progress. These factors, and the many developments since the last inspection, illustrate the school's excellent capacity for continuing its improvement. Leaders are strongly committed to the continuing professional development of all staff and ensure that it is closely related to the school's development planning. Documentation is impressive and the evaluation of contributions to the school's work is honest and accurate. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging, but supportive, manner.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, contributing to their exceptional behaviour. The school's curriculum is outstanding. The Early Years classroom area is very well resourced and organised, and the outdoor area is excellent and used very effectively to support learning. Children thoroughly enjoy learning in this outside area. Activities are carefully enhanced by the use of rich language, such as signs and questions, and by linking the tasks carefully to those taking place indoors. This exemplary practice continues right through the school. As one parent observed, reflecting the views of many, 'St Peter's has a truly caring staff team who work hard to develop each child and give as many opportunities for different learning experiences as possible.'

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Excellent attention is paid by managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safeguarding for the pupils. This includes excellent procedures for ensuring the care of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school. Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The senior managers, supported well by all staff, are particularly effective in tackling discrimination should it occur and in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils and across all aspects of the school's work.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's C of E Primary School, Ardingly RH17 6UQ

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school when I visited you recently. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and would now like to tell you what I found out about your school. I agree with what you told me – St Peter's is an outstanding school. These are the main reasons why I thought the school was so good:

- You make outstanding progress and really try hard at all times. I was very impressed that you knew what to do to make your work even better.
- I saw that you know you are especially lucky to have so many different activities both during and after school. The school garden is particularly impressive.
- Your headteacher and staff do a super job in organising the school.
- You all really enjoy being in school. Many of you try very hard to help others. For instance, the school council and Buddies do a fabulous job.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen very carefully to your teachers – all of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very conscientiously. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

I have agreed with your teachers that even in an outstanding school there are a few things that will help it to become even better. I have asked the staff to make sure that they find further ways to help you to find out more about how other people live in the United Kingdom.

All of you can help by continuing to listen carefully and taking note of what the teachers say so that you can carry on making the best possible progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Lead inspector

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