

Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112848
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378579
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Down
Headteacher	Catherine Nicklin
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector observed five lessons taught by three teachers and a teaching assistant. She held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspector also talked informally to parents and carers. She observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures and governing body minutes. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' past and present work and scrutinised responses from 30 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 24 by pupils and 11 by staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do all groups of pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, achieve all they can, particularly in mathematics?
- Do staff make full use of assessment information to provide challenging activities that meet the needs of all pupils in mixed age and ability classes?
- Is the monitoring of the work of the school rigorous enough to accurately identify the next steps for improvement?

Information about the school

This is a very small primary school in a rural area of North Derbyshire. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the average. The pupils have a range of needs, including speech and language difficulties. The school has had a series of temporary leaders over the last three years and a new headteacher took up the post in September 2011. Mobility in and out of the school is high in some Key Stage 2 groups. The school holds an Activemark and National Healthy Schools 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Staff note that, 'We have had a difficult three years'. There has been uncertainty in staffing in Key Stage 2 and in temporary leadership. The new headteacher has made a significant and well-focused start in identifying what works well and where improvement is needed. Pupils say they like school, especially making friends and playing together. Their behaviour is good, as are the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities in and around the school. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their praise of the quality of care and education provided. One echoes the views of others that, 'The staff are very professional, caring and approachable and create a fun learning environment'.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching and learning. This is, occasionally, limited by the lack of a stimulating outdoor learning, which restricts the opportunities for them to make choices in their learning. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress. Data on pupils' progress and lesson observations show that in Key Stage 2 the rate of progress is more variable and, overall, satisfactory. With many fewer pupils in each year group than in most schools, it is not reliable to make direct comparisons of standards from year to year, especially when half the pupils in some years changed schools during Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average. While in some years pupils have not done as well in mathematics as in English, there is little current difference. Boys and girls make similar progress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. While progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, there are relatively few activities where pupils find things out for themselves and follow lines of enquiry. There are also limited opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner or in groups, which lead to many being passive in lessons.

Most aspects of educational provision are satisfactory. All staff have good relationships with pupils and praise their efforts. In Key Stage 1, the curriculum and clear expectations of the staff ensure that teaching and learning are more effective than in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 2, staff plan carefully for a very wide mix of age and ability but, at times, assessment information is not used well enough to ensure the highest level of challenge for all groups. The marking of work across the school is regularly completed, but often lacks detail and does not always indicate to pupils what they have done well and what they need to improve. However, the care, guidance and support of pupils are good. They are all valued and looked after well because their individual needs are recognised and met.

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Leadership and management are satisfactory, with considerable signs of recent improvement. Self-evaluation procedures are accurate and clearly identify where improvement is needed. Changes have been made to assessment routines and staff now carefully track the progress of each pupil. The governing body's challenge and support are satisfactory. Staff indicate that, 'At last we feel we are all working really well together and it has been a fantastic start to the year'. The capacity to sustain improvement is satisfactory, reflecting the quality of most provision and academic outcomes. Many changes are recent and there is not yet a track record to illustrate whether these are effective.

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?

- Ensure that all pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve all they are capable of, by:
 - improving their rate of progress
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and use what they already know to solve problems
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner or in groups.

- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good or better, by:
 - making full use of the range of assessment information to set tasks that fully challenge groups of pupils of different abilities
 - checking that the marking of pupils' work makes clear what they need to do to improve.

- Improve opportunities for outdoor learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by giving them more choices in the activities they take part in.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with widely varying skills that are around the expectations for their age. They make good progress in their reception year and grow in confidence. In Key Stage 1, they make good progress in all areas of their learning. This was illustrated well when they were making individual booklets about an animal in the rainforest. Because they chose what they wanted to find out about, they were interested in what they were doing and made good progress in their writing. They made effective use of computer resources, including the interactive whiteboard that they used confidently to access information. In Key Stage

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2, the progress made by all groups of pupils slows and is not above satisfactory. This was shown when they all wrote a postcard from the trenches following Remembrance Day. While some used a wide and descriptive vocabulary to evoke the conditions the soldiers endured, some pupils did not produce work in sufficient depth and detail because not enough was demanded of them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with speech and language difficulties, make similar progress to their classmates.

Pupils get on well together and indicate that bullying is rare. They say they feel safe. They understand what is dangerous and that they need to be aware of others in the small hard-surfaced play area. Pupils’ behaviour for learning in lessons is mostly good but, on occasion, some pupils are very passive in lessons and make limited effort to offer their ideas to class discussions. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Work on the Healthy School project is encouraging them to think about healthy eating and exercise. Packed lunch choices, however, indicate there is more work to be done in this area. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the school and local groups. For example, those chosen as ‘Ministers’ for Sport, Music, Eco-schools and Administration have responsibilities including getting out, checking and putting away equipment. This supports the smooth running of the school and helps them develop a satisfactory range of skills that equip them for their future. Attendance is above average. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall, and promoted well through reflective assemblies when pupils think and, subsequently, talk sensitively about what bullying is and the rights of others. Their cultural development is the least well-developed area.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2

¹ 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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The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

2

How effective is the provision?

Data on pupils’ attainment and progress, lesson observations and the sample of recent work confirm that teaching, learning and the curriculum are often more effective in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Staff recognise this and are working hard to improve provision for the older pupils, who have not always benefited from consistency in teaching. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were seen to enjoy working as a team and made good progress when using a large dice to find a starting number, multiplying, doubling or halving the total to reach 100.

The planning of lessons is satisfactory overall. However, planning and the aims of lessons do not always identify clearly enough how activities are to challenge those of different ages and abilities. Staff make good use of technology to introduce tasks but, at times, older pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to an adult with little active involvement in their own learning.

This is a caring school community where every pupil is valued as part of an extended ‘family’. Those with high levels of special educational needs and/or disability are well supported. Staff with specific responsibility for supporting these pupils, including those very new to the role, do a good job in helping pupils to access the curriculum at an appropriate level. Year 6 booster lessons have been introduced to help improve progress in English and mathematics but it is too soon to measure the impact of this initiative. The school works closely with the local pre-school group to enable children to settle well when entering school. Staff also liaise effectively with the several secondary schools that the pupils move on to. The school works successfully to encourage parents and carers not to take holidays in term time by stressing the importance of regular attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The recently appointed headteacher has made a good start in helping the school to move forward and build on its many pastoral strengths. The new system to track pupils’ achievement gives a clear picture of individual and group progress. There are now regular meetings which include the whole staff team and focus on how to

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improve provision in key areas. Responses to the inspection questionnaire show that staff are totally united in their determination to move forward. One member of staff notes the new headteacher 'is very supportive and is now carrying us forward to develop our working practices'. The governing body is supportive and developing greater awareness of what is happening in school through, for example, in-depth discussions about recent progress. The newly introduced rolling programme for policy review is focused upon updating procedures and not just rubber-stamping key documents. New risk assessments, fire-safety checks, staff and governor training and a review of first aid procedures ensure a tightening focus on what happens on a day-to-day basis. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. There are careful checks on those who work in school and staff act quickly to address minor concerns, including the storage of equipment.

The school has good links with parents and carers, illustrated by the highly valued contribution from the Parent and Teacher Association, which raises considerable funds for the school by arranging the Village Festival. The school has a satisfactory range of partnerships with external groups and clear plans to work closely with other small schools to share good practice. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and is improving the tracking of progress to ensure that all groups of pupils make better progress. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily with considerable strengths in the links with local groups. A start has been made in extending the links with communities in different social and economic circumstances to those of the school at both a national and international level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, as shown by their

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growing self-confidence and enjoyment of school. Children enter a mixed-age class and work alongside those in Years 1 and 2. They have wide-ranging skills which vary from year to year and are usually in line with the expectations for their age. They make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. They usually work with a teaching assistant on a range of activities that either link with the work undertaken by the older pupils or, sometimes, on separate activities. For example, they enjoyed practising their counting skills outside by trying to see if they could blow 10 bubbles in one go, and using number mats which they counted as they stepped from one to another. Staff offer lots of praise and encouragement including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching and learning, the curriculum and leadership and management are all good. The indoor learning environment is bright, lively and stimulating. Provision for learning outdoors is limited, difficult to observe by staff indoors and unhelpful to child-chosen activities.

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

A higher proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire than in most primary schools. Virtually all of those who responded were entirely happy with what the school provides for their children. Several note with warmth how happy and well looked after their children are, including one who stated, 'We feel Peak Forest Primary School is a wonderful environment for our children'. Very few responses indicated any concern. Of those who did, they noted the limited progress made by their children over the last few years. The inspection identified that progress is an area for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 inspector received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	26	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	90	2	7	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	97	1	3	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	80	6	20	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)	26	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	26	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	29	97	1	3	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).

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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Buxton, SK17 8EG

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. A special thank you goes to those I chatted to at lunchtimes and to the group of pupils who shared their views about the school. I really enjoyed watching the younger children counting bubbles and listening to you all singing. I found that your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. This means that it is doing some things well and there are things it could do better.

This is what I found out about your school.

- The staff look after you well and ensure you are happy at school.
- You get on well together and enjoy playing with those of different ages.
- You like taking on roles such as School Ministers, where you help the staff and other pupils.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress.
- Your spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are well supported.

To improve your school further, I have asked those in charge to make sure that:

- you make more progress, especially in Key Stage 2, and have opportunities to find things out for yourself and discuss your ideas with others
- staff make full use of assessment information to provide challenging work
- outdoor learning is improved so that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have more opportunity to make choices in what they do.

You all have a part to play in helping your school by always joining in discussions.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall
Lead inspector

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