

Paddock Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118270
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	379579
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	568
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Clark
Headteacher	Michael Olley
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 July 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons taught by 21 staff. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including safeguarding, and pupils' workbooks; they held discussions with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and the senior staff. Questionnaires from 52 parents and carers, 18 staff and 107 from pupils were analysed to help inform the inspection process.

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

- How well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve, particularly in their communication, language and number abilities.
- The extent to which teaching fosters pupils' progress, particularly in their writing, mathematical, and information and communication technology skills.
- Whether the school's promotion of pupils' well-being has been maintained since the last inspection.
- How well senior leaders, including governors, use self-evaluation to judge the effectiveness of the school.

Information about the school

The school is much bigger than most primaries. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in three Reception classes. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has achieved awards reflecting its commitment in promoting pupils' healthy living and active lifestyles.

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

Paddock Wood Primary is a good school. Pupils say they enjoy attending and like the range of opportunities on offer, which includes developing their artistic and sporting abilities. Pupils' level of academic attainment has recently improved and, by the time they leave, their attainment is average. This reflects a rising trend since the last inspection.

There are a number of key strengths that make this an effective school. The school recognises that there are also a few areas for continuing improvement.

- In the Reception classes, children get off to a good start and make good progress in their basic writing, reading and language work. They enjoy school and their social skills are well developed.
- English and mathematics results rose last year. Pupils write confidently and use these skills within other subjects such as science, although their creative writing is often limited in length. Their speaking and listening skills are above average. While there have been improvements in pupils' numeracy skills in their day-to-day mathematical work, pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not always have enough opportunities to apply their good calculation skills in relevant 'real-life' investigations. Although pupils achieve well by the time they leave, there are small variations in progress between classes and year groups, often linked to the quality of teaching, such as extending the thinking of more-able pupils or by making science activities more demanding.
- Typically good teaching, alongside an improved curriculum, are positive factors in pupils' improving trend of attainment. Lessons are normally well planned and teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils sometimes make slower progress in Years 1 to 6 when their learning is not extended enough by teachers allowing pupils to learn independently or by using assessment information accurately to pitch lessons at the right level.
- Pupils are friendly, mature and their behaviour is good. Pupils willingly help others in school and the local community, and enjoy being members of the school council, acting as play leaders or as promoters of healthy eating in the lunchtime salad bar. Pupils' awareness and adoption of maintaining a healthy lifestyle are good and this is reflected in the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Attendance levels are high.

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- Good levels of care and support, aided by clear guidance policies, ensure pupils feel secure and safe. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities keep pace with classmates as their needs are identified clearly, so that good support can be provided to aid their learning.

Underpinning the school's improved effectiveness since the previous inspection is the combined determination of the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body. Improved routines for self-evaluation, monitoring of teaching and analysis of pupils' progress have helped staff and governors pinpoint key areas of weakness to remedy. Given the school has maintained the good aspects noted in its previous inspection and has promoted improvement in pupils' attainment, quality of teaching and the curriculum, the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment and learning of pupils in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - helping pupils to have the skills and confidence to write at greater length
 - ensuring that pupils apply their mathematical skills in solving relevant 'real-life'-based investigations
 - developing activities which develop pupils' scientific curiosity and problem-solving abilities.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and pupils' learning in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - ensuring that those who are more able are stretched fully in their learning
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their independent learning with more 'open-ended' activities
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to pitch activities and planning at the right level so that pupils' learning can accelerate still further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils work together well throughout the school and say they enjoy lessons. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. They achieve well given their starting points, and gain skills systematically, particularly in developing their social, language and number skills. A focus on developing pupils' writing and mathematical skills in Years 1 to 6 has remedied some, but not all, past weaknesses. For example, although pupils' creative writing shows some flair, it is often quite short in length. Pupils' speaking, listening, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are often better than those expected and they are on track to improve upon this year's English and mathematics results. New technology helps extend pupils' abilities. Many speak highly of their handheld

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wireless computer devices that enable them to test their reading and other basic skills, while enabling their teachers to keep an eye on individual progress. Pupils write well for a range of purposes, often using correct punctuation and grammar. In a well-taught Year 6 lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge of refining their thoughts into Haiku poems, and Year 3 really enjoyed inventing story maps to help their writing.

In mathematics, pupils’ past work indicates that they have accurate calculation skills, although they do not often apply these into meaningful investigations. Pupils from different ethnic minority groups also make good progress as their needs are catered for well. Pupils’ musical and sporting activities are strengths, with pupils learning to play instruments from the flute to the cello. The school orchestra is a highlight of the week for those involved. As one parent noted, ‘The school focuses on the talents of each individual child.’ The school council makes a good contribution in influencing decisions, such as choosing outside play equipment, and it is keen to extend its influence further into the local community. Pupils’ awareness of their own local culture is well developed through their involvement in the Paddock Wood ‘walking tableau’ or further afield when singing in a large London arena. The school is in the process of extending pupils’ awareness of others’ backgrounds and beliefs who reside in the United Kingdom. Given their high attendance, good progress and mature attitudes, pupils are prepared confidently for their next schools.

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	2
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	1
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

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How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved in Years 1 to 6 since the last inspection. There are, however, some small variations between year groups and classes as recent initiatives take shape and need time to settle in. Relationships between pupils and adults are good which results in a positive atmosphere for learning. Tasks set help pupils collaborate and share ideas, although sometimes pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not have enough open-ended activities or opportunities to work independently to stretch their thinking skills. In otherwise well-taught lessons, some activities are too predictable in fostering pupils' problem-solving skills. In science, for example, pupils enjoyed activities to design a small parachute, but did not really know the purpose behind investigating the problem. Teachers' day-to-day marking highlights strengths, weaknesses and errors in pupils' work, but not all pupils are equally clear what next steps are needed to improve their work further. Regular pupils' progress meetings help teachers keep a close eye on those who may need an extra boost in their learning or to spot any trends within subjects. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide good support, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Small group work, often in adjacent workspaces, gives pupils good support to aid their learning. A wide range of activities, including a high number of well-attended extra-curricular clubs, broadens the interests of pupils. Topics such as the Tudors, work with artists in residence, theme days and drama productions, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, all help to extend pupils' experiences effectively. Links with local secondary schools enhance well the range of activities that pupils undertake, particularly in using new technology to enliven their learning.

Close partnerships with outside agencies, as well as systems such as pupil mentoring, play therapy and buddy systems, help pupils to feel safe. Pupils and most parents and carers appreciate the school's efforts to provide good levels of care, although a very small minority feel that occasional dips in behaviour could be handled better. The school quickly identifies those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and provides regular support and guidance with help from outside professionals. The school's parent support adviser facilitates good links with parents and carers, including weekly coffee mornings in the community room. Links with parents and carers of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are typically good. Transition into and out of the school is aided by well-developed links with other schools, including local playgroups and secondary schools.

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	2

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governors have succeeded in improving the effectiveness of the school. Staff benefit from additional coaching and peer support to identify, then modify, teaching approaches. As a result of revised roles and responsibilities, staff at all levels monitor pupils’ progress more effectively. This is ensuring that pupils’ attainment is improving. Although staff contribute to the drive for improvement, a small number say they would welcome more involvement in the school’s otherwise good self-evaluation routines. Governors support the school effectively and the recently revised arrangements to oversee the work of the school, known as ‘monitoring pairs’, works well. They also ensure that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements, including good-quality systems to vet staff appointments and to ensure that day-to-day welfare arrangements for pupils are of good quality. The school’s good promotion of equal opportunities ensures that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the progress of different groups of pupils is monitored closely. Any gaps in attainment between boys and girls or different groups are reducing quickly. Links with parents and carers are generally good, with many speaking positively about their involvement, such as in the ‘parents and carers forum’. Effective partnerships with other schools locally have prompted the enhanced use of ICT, wider sports activities and more staff training opportunities. The school’s promotion of community cohesion is good. Following an audit to assess the promotion of this aspect of its work, the school is taking effective action to develop pupils’ understanding of people from differing backgrounds and beliefs in this country.

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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes as induction arrangements are good. Parents and carers commented positively in their questionnaires about their children’s good start at school. Children’s daily routines are well established and they become confident learners quickly. The good quality of teaching and the curriculum, maintained since the last inspection, ensures their basic skills of communication, language and literacy develop well. Activities dedicated to learning letter sounds or practising simple number skills enable them to develop their early writing and mathematical understanding. For example, children enjoyed learning number concepts when dividing chestnuts into equal portions for an imaginary squirrel. In developing their creative skills, other children looked forward to going on a picnic, complete with a suitcase full of goodies, despite it being very cold outside! Children’s personal qualities develop very well as all adults make this a high priority to foster, along with their welfare and safety. There is a little unevenness in their attainment across different areas of learning, particularly for boys, which the school recognises and is seeking to remedy.

Activities effectively cover all areas of learning both within the classroom and outside, although the outside area is not as enticing as the inside where the range of activities sparks children’s imagination and benefits from an additional workspace and well-resourced role-play and display areas. Children’s early reading skills develop well and in one activity, children really enjoyed learning rhyming words after listening to a poem with children confidently identifying different sounds within words. Good leadership has ensured that staff monitor children’s progress effectively to identify any weaker areas of their learning and planning is modified as a result. The leader has identified areas for development, particularly those improvements relating to the outside area, and these are supported by clear action plans to improve provision still further.

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 rate of return for the Ofsted questionnaire was below average. Around half contained comments and were roughly divided between those praising the school and those raising concerns. Those voicing praise often spoke about the happy start to the school, the good progress that their children make and the range of activities

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on offer. Several cited specific examples why they were very pleased. Those voicing concerns and areas for improvement were often of an individual nature. A common theme, however, was some concern over the amount of homework, the handling of behaviour and the progress that children make, especially those who are more able. Levels of homework appear to be typical of many schools. The pupils themselves felt that any dips in behaviour were usually handled fairly and inspection evidence supports this. Inspectors found that on occasions, progress is uneven and more-able pupils could be stretched more in their learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Paddock Wood 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 568 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	65	18	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	52	25	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	33	31	60	4	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	37	24	46	9	17	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	44	26	50	3	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	23	31	60	5	10	3	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	33	33	63	2	4	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)	18	35	27	52	5	10	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	22	42	22	42	8	15	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	17	30	58	10	19	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	25	28	54	4	8	4	8
The school is led and managed effectively	16	31	29	56	4	8	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	24	46	23	44	4	8	1	2

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.

30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Paddock Wood Primary School, Paddock Wood, TN12 6JE



Many thanks for your welcome when we visited your school. We think yours is a good school which wants to keep improving. Here are some particular things we found out.

- You make good progress in your learning most of the time and your attainment in many subjects, especially the important ones of English and mathematics, is at the level of most other pupils nationally.
- You behave well and you told us that many lessons have a 'twist' to them.
- Your new ICT handheld devices and new wireless keyboards are really helpful for your learning.
- You are good at keeping healthy and keeping fit with exercise. Well done for doing the salad bar at lunchtime!
- Your attendance levels are high – keep it up and well done!
- The school cares for you well, particularly those of you who find learning difficult.
- Those of you we spoke to, and your questionnaire responses, told us that you feel safe in school.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to improve the school and are looking at other ways of making it better where possible.

We have asked the school to improve two particular aspects to help it get even better by:

- helping everyone in Years 1 to 6 to make good progress by helping to develop your confidence to write at length, making maths work relevant to everyday life and helping you to become even better scientists.
- asking the teachers in Years 1 to 6 to think about stretching your thinking more, particularly those of you who like harder work, letting you work more independently and by using information about your progress more carefully to pitch lessons at the right level.

All of you can help, too, by trying to keep up your good behaviour and in giving your ideas about how the school can keep improving.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge
Lead inspector

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