

Pewley Down Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136755
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	385888
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Cotton
Headteacher	Richard Rowe
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
School address	Semaphore Road Guildford Surrey GU1 3PT
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Collins

Additional inspector

Helen Hutchings

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. During the inspection the school was involved in a curriculum week. This involved pupils from all years working together in house groups, and only taught as classes for a short time each day. Inspectors observed eight house group sessions in addition to eight class lessons involving six teachers. These included joint observations with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read, attended an assembly, and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, pupils' attainment and progress, and the curriculum. Inspectors analysed 140 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Pewley Down Infant School is smaller than the majority of primary schools and has a slightly higher proportion of girls than boys. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion that speaks English as an additional language is above average, with a few pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs that are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is below that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is high.

The school formed a federation with Holy Trinity Junior School in April 2010, with one governing body and an executive headteacher leading both schools. The school changed its status from community to voluntary aided in July 2011. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. The on-site breakfast and after-school clubs run by the governing body were inspected as part of the inspection. The school holds Eco School and International School awards.

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

- Pewley Down is an outstanding school. Under the astute leadership of the headteacher, the school has very effectively built on the strengths evident in its last inspection. Staff have further developed their practice, sharing expertise within the federation, to ensure that pupils have a broad, holistic education. This is highly effective in enabling pupils to develop a 'love of life and zest for learning' as set out in the school's stated values.
- Pupils' achievement throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is outstanding for all groups of pupils. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is significantly above average in all aspects of their learning. Parents and carers also feel that their children make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding as are attitudes to learning. Parents and carers are unanimous that their children are safe. Pupils get on very well together and are enthusiastic learners, being very motivated by the rich curriculum.
- Teaching is outstanding across the school. Teachers are highly skilled in ensuring that pupils learn and apply new skills and knowledge in contexts which are exciting and engaging. The weekly curriculum information shared with parents and carers ensures that there is a high level of parental involvement in pupils' learning.
- Members of the governing body, school leaders and staff share a common vision for academic excellence within a nurturing environment which recognises individual strengths and talents. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Self-evaluation is accurate and used very effectively to research new ideas and plan developments. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are very effective, with teachers accepting full accountability for their pupils' progress. Professional development for staff is very well considered and well managed.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Close the gap between pupils' writing and their reading and mathematics, particularly of boys, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write for real audiences
 - researching and implementing further approaches to engage boys in writing activities.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, and parents and carers are very pleased with the progress their children make. Many parents commented on how much they value the school's creative curriculum and the way in which this promotes pupils' social and spiritual development. Pupils learn within a strong community, where sharing ideas and helping one another are given a high priority. The success of this approach was observed during the inspection when pupils worked in house groups, including children from Reception to Year 2, on an Olympic Games topic. Small groups worked together seamlessly to develop their map skills by finding 'famous athletes' hidden around the school grounds and recording their positions on a chart. Pupils of all ages reflected on how they were developing resilience in their own lives, while understanding the feelings of others during these activities.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with a wide range of skills and experiences, which are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make excellent progress because of the attention given to assessing and meeting the needs of individuals. Because activities are closely planned to build on children's existing interests, they develop rapidly. Children become independent and keen learners, ready to share their knowledge and ideas about what they want to investigate further. Children's enthusiasm for learning was seen in imaginative play in an early morning activity when a small group of children took turns being 'the teacher', using their phonics skills (the sounds that letters and groups of letters make) to read a book to the 'whole class'.

Pupils' extremely positive attitudes make a significant contribution to their outstanding learning. Pupils continue to make excellent progress through Key Stage 1, and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently above average, particularly in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in the end of key stage assessments. Consequently, they are prepared very well for learning in Key Stage 2. Although above average, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed as reading and numeracy skills, particularly for boys. A series of focused strategies to narrow the gap this year, such as ensuring that pupils apply their writing skills in other subjects, is having a positive impact. Nevertheless, pupils sometimes still have too few opportunities to write for a real purpose. A range of excellent interventions ensures that pupils who find learning more difficult, including those who have

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disabilities or those with special educational needs, make similar progress to their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language attain in line with their peers because those who are at an early stage of learning English receive very good support.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is consistently effective across the school because of the commonly shared philosophy to support pupils' learning by actively involving them in exciting activities. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive that pupils are taught well and many made comments about adults' approachability and willingness to 'go the extra mile'. Teachers use their strong knowledge of how pupils learn to plan a highly effective balance of activities. In addition to sharply focused whole class teaching, teachers design a variety of group activities to develop and consolidate pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills while learning about other subjects. The Olympic Week and Dinosaur Museum are only two of many examples showing how pupils develop understanding across all subjects through a series of activities related to one theme. For example, pupils developed their historical knowledge of the origins of the Olympics while making laurel wreaths, and their drawing skills while drawing chalk fireworks pictures, eagerly anticipating the Olympic opening ceremony.

Lessons have a brisk pace because routines are clearly understood and used effectively to promote learning. For example, Reception children quickly showed their understanding of number bonds in find the number combinations for 29, the number in the class at the time. Adults are skilled in questioning techniques which deepen pupils' understanding and encourage pupils to think things out for themselves. This was seen in a session to broaden pupils' understanding of diversity and language, when it was realised that no-one knew how to say hello in Lithuanian. The internet was used as a source of information and pupils used their existing phonics knowledge to sound out the greeting. Reading is taught very effectively and their knowledge of phonics enables pupils to sound out unfamiliar words very effectively.

Teachers use their detailed knowledge of individual pupils to ensure that the tasks set for groups are challenging. In a mathematics lesson, pupils worked collaboratively to sort objects and identify for themselves how shapes can be classified in Venn diagrams. The emphasis on discovery promotes pupils' problem solving skills exceptionally well. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well monitored and supported, and external agencies are used when their needs fall beyond the expertise available in the school. Pupils benefit from the input of knowledgeable teaching assistants, who support the learning of small groups or of individual pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively through the regular visits and visitors to the school. The use of 'the wild area' is a key feature of the school's curriculum, promoting creativity and pupils' emotional and social development.

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Pupils' efforts are valued in the displays of their work around the school, in their 'special folders' and in their home-school books. These show how pupils are encouraged to consolidate their learning through additional tasks and discussion with their parents and carers.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection findings reflect parents', carers' and pupils' views that behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Strong relationships between pupils and adults, and between pupils themselves, mean that the classroom atmosphere is highly conducive to learning. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations for behaviour and the quality of the work they produce. They show respect for others so that the school functions as a cohesive and caring community. They have an excellent understanding of the meaning of bullying and the impact that their actions may have on others, such as the hurt it might cause others by calling them unpleasant names or not including everyone in lunchtime games. Consequently, bullying is extremely rare and pupils know that if they are worried or unhappy they have an adult to turn to for help. School councillors reflected maturely that, although they have a responsibility to ensure that no-one is left out at playtimes, they rarely have to take action to ensure that this is the case. Pupils feel very safe and know extremely well what it means to be safe and how to ensure their own safety, for example in the playground. Attendance is above average, indicating positive parental attitudes to the school's provision and pupils' excitement about their learning.

Leadership and management

The outstanding leadership, management and governance of the school are seen in the degree of consistency in all aspects of the school's work. Staff have a shared ambition that pupils should achieve at the highest possible level and morale is high. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve and that no pupil is discriminated against. For example, pupils' progress is tracked rigorously, and the information used very effectively to ensure that there are no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups. The school has used the links established through the federation to reflect on, and refresh, practice. Outstanding professional development and shared leadership roles across the two schools are a significant factor in using staff strengths to the full, and in establishing a common approach which aids pupils' transition into Key Stage 2. The executive headteacher guides the school with an exceptionally steady hand and facilitates improvement skilfully by enabling other staff to play a full role in school developments in the confidence that their views and efforts are valued. There is no sense of complacency, with staff striving to find further ways to improve the curriculum and their own teaching. For example, the existing systems for monitoring and improving teaching are being extended to involve all teachers in observing one another as a means of disseminating best practice more widely.

Pupils enjoy many memorable activities, shown in the vibrant displays around the school. The stimulating curriculum is complemented by a very wide range of extra-

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curricular activities to enrich pupils' experiences. The school's effective open door policy ensures that any complaints, of which there are few, are dealt with swiftly. As a result, parental support for the school is overwhelming. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained outstanding achievement and teaching, showing its capacity for sustained improvement. Arrangements for safeguarding fully meet statutory requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



13 July 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Pewley Down Infant School, Guildford, GU1 3PT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school during your special Olympic week. We really enjoyed talking to you, watching how well you learn in lessons and listening to some of you read. We hope that you continued to enjoy the activities planned for you after we left and that your parents and carers were pleased with your work at the end of the week. I would also like to thank them for returning our questionnaire. These are some of the best things we found out about your school.

- Pewley Down is an outstanding school.
- You make excellent progress in your reading, writing and mathematics.
- Your behaviour is outstanding which helps you to feel safe and thoroughly enjoy school.
- You learn very well because you are determined to do well and try to work things out for yourselves.
- You work together very well in groups, but also concentrate well on your own work when that is required.
- The teaching you receive is outstanding and teachers plan very exciting activities for you, including so many visits.
- The headteacher, staff and governors lead the school very well.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to find more ways to help you to improve your writing so that it is at the same high level as your reading and mathematics, particularly the boys. This will include finding more ways for you to practise your writing skills.

Thank you once again for helping us during the inspection. We know that you will continue to work hard and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings
Lead inspector

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