

Penshurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Street, Penshurst, Tonbridge, TN11 8BX

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is a welcoming place where pupils are keen to learn and this helps them to make good progress. Their positive attitudes to learning prepare them well for their next schools.
- Children have a happy and secure start in Reception and they make strong gains in their learning as they progress through Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is strong and as a result, pupils are polite, caring and behave well around the school and in lessons.
- Pupils feel very safe; they like their teachers and are confident that adults will be quick to respond to their needs.
- The quality of teaching is typically good throughout the school and pupils say that teachers make 'learning fun' in many lessons.
- The drive and vision of the headteacher and governors are succeeding in raising the expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in Key Stage 2. Governors support and challenge the school well.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school and speak highly of the specific support their children receive.
- The school has strong relationships with the local community and values its place at the heart of village life.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding. The work in lessons is not always matched accurately enough to the abilities of all pupils.
- In 2012 the progress of some Year 6 pupils had not been checked systematically enough and their progress slowed as a result.
- The variable quality of marking means that it does not always give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to move their learning on.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all four classes. He visited significant parts of six lessons involving all teachers, most jointly with the headteacher and another senior leader. The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read. He also attended a whole-school assembly.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a range of staff, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work and checked pupils' work, progress information, evaluation and development documents, safeguarding information, records relating to behaviour and attendance and governing body minutes.
- The inspector took account of 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parental views were sought at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Steven Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average-sized primary school serving its local community.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Around one sixth are from minority ethnic heritages, which is below that of schools nationally. No pupils are known to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding made available by the government for pupils eligible for free school meals, or who are in local authority care or from service families) is well below average. Currently, there are no pupils in the latter two categories.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in order to speed up pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - the work set is more carefully matched to the needs of the pupils to make sure pupils achieve as well as they are capable of doing
 - marking always gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to move their learning on and pupils are given the opportunity to respond to the guidance.
- Check pupils' progress accurately and regularly to ensure that:
 - pupils are making at least good progress
 - additional support is implemented rapidly to address any gaps in pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The vast majority of parents and carers responding to Parent View say their children make good progress. Pupils' achievement is good and improving across the school. However, some pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are capable of more rapid progress in order for achievement to be outstanding.
- Children have the knowledge and skills typical for their age when they join the school and reach levels above those expected nationally by the time they move into Year 1. In Reception they learn in a well-resourced environment. The children are able to make independent choices and practical activities help to engage them in their learning for extended periods of time. This enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 2 has shown consistent improvement over time and is now well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Phonics (letters and sounds) is taught well and is having a positive impact on pupils' early reading and writing skills. Results in the 2012 Year 1 national phonics screening check were much higher than average. Pupils develop confidence at a young age because they understand how to attempt unfamiliar words. Pupils read regularly at home and say that they enjoy reading.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in the 2012 national tests is average in English and mathematics. The dip since 2011, when attainment was well above average, occurred because some pupils did not make enough progress during Key Stage 2 compared with the progress made by children nationally. Opportunities were missed to check the progress of this group more systematically and act upon this information quickly when pupils fell behind.
- Good levels of adult support, using materials suited to their needs, is enabling specific pupils and groups of pupils, such as those with disabilities or with special educational needs, to make good progress within lessons.
- Gaps in performance between different groups of pupils are wide. In the national assessments and tests in 2012, some Year 6 pupils supported by pupil premium were two years behind their classmates in both English and mathematics. School information shows that actions now being taken to narrow this gap are effective.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good overall, with some that is outstanding, and parents and carers agree. Teaching is not outstanding because teachers sometimes set work that is too easy or too hard.
- When teachers mark work they do not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve. When they do, pupils have not always been given the opportunity to respond in a way that moves their learning forward.
- The school's focus on checking on the quality of teaching has helped to move it to good levels. This is confirmed by the local authority school improvement partner's own checks. However, there is still some variation in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils are given opportunities to learn independently and take control of their own learning. They also do pair and small-group work, where pupils can discuss their work to help increase their understanding. Pupils spoken to say they prefer learning in these ways to learning which is led by the teacher.
- In an outstanding Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher's accurate assessment of pupils' progress identified gaps in their understanding of how to calculate the perimeter and area of a rectangle. Using probing questions and giving pupils opportunities to share and discuss their ideas, the teacher corrected misconceptions and strengthened pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Information on pupils' progress is used increasingly well in regular pupil progress meetings to

spot those pupils in need of extra help, particularly if they are in danger of falling behind. This ensures all pupils have the same opportunities to achieve well and there is no discrimination. The impact is evident in school information but not yet in achievement at the end of Key Stage 2.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has high expectations for behaviour and the pupils respond positively. Pupils know how they should behave but recognise that some do not always meet the school's high standards. Nevertheless, they are very confident that the school will deal with such matters using the stars and stripes system. Pupils are clear how this works, with stars rewarding good behaviour and stripes leading to sanctions, such as missing playtime.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because in lessons where learning is not matched accurately enough to the needs of some pupils, they have insufficient work to do. For example, in a mathematics lesson, higher-attaining pupils were insufficiently challenged and completed work more quickly than the teacher expected. This gave them time to chat quietly to their partner or stare out of the window.
- Pupils say that they like school and that it is a happy and friendly place to be. Incidents of any form of bullying are very rare and pupils themselves confirm that, should they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Years 5 and 6 pupils have had a series of lessons on bullying and created a Citizens Against Bullying (CAB) team. Pupils say they have confidence in the CAB team. When a bullying incident did occur it was referred to CAB and it stopped. Pupils are very aware of the different forms of bullying and that the school teaches them how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Pupils value the opportunities the school provides to make and develop friendships, for example the Buddy Bench and the Friendship House. Pupils know they are listened to as their school council has brought about improvements in facilities, such as the development of the Trim Trail for pupils to play on.

The leadership and management are good

- The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the leadership of the headteacher and hold her in high regard.
- The school has an accurate view of its work which is used to inform school improvement planning. Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. The headteacher and staff benefit from the Rural Heads Group, a partnership which is developing and strengthening opportunities for schools to learn from and support each other. For example, teachers visiting other schools share and develop their practice. This approach is strengthening the school's capacity to improve.
- The reasons for the decline in achievement in 2012 have been identified accurately. As a result school systems to check pupils' learning and progress have been strengthened and additional support put in place to help those pupils making slower progress, such as those supported by pupil premium. School information shows that the actions taken are having a positive impact but the school rightly recognises that there is more to do to secure improved achievement, especially by the end of Year 6.
- The school's own observations over time reflect the inspection evidence that teaching is good. While the school's coaching and mentoring arrangements have brought about improvements, leaders know that there is more to do to move it to outstanding. Management of teachers' performance is linked to improving teachers' practice.
- The local authority has evaluated the school correctly. It rightly treats Penshurst as 'fairly light touch' and has provided appropriate, useful, support in view of this assessment.

■ The governance of the school:

- The Chair of the Governing Body provides strong leadership for the newly formed governing body and is encouraging all governors to become fully engaged in the life of the school. The governors are strategic thinkers and undertake appropriate training to enable them to challenge school leaders more effectively. A number of significant changes have been made, for example an induction programme for governors of smaller schools is being developed in collaboration with a group of other small schools. An audit of governors' skills has been undertaken to align their strengths to the needs of the school. Governors are increasing their challenge based on their accurate view of the school. They are clear about the school's strengths and the areas which need to be developed. Governors are very proactive and come into school for planned classroom visits on a regular basis. They are aware of how well pupils achieve and of the quality of teaching and how teachers' performance links to pay progression. Governors manage the budget effectively and are clear about how the pupil premium is being spent. They are less clear about its impact on pupils' progress, for example, the impact of an online mathematics program purchased to support pupils' school and home learning. However, pupils who have used it say that it has helped them with their learning. Governors ensure that statutory obligations are met, including those relating to safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118720
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	412401

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Middleton
Headteacher	Julia Armstrong
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2009
Telephone number	01892 870446
Fax number	01892 870446
Email address	office@penshurst.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

