

Peaslake School

Colmans Hill, Peaslake, Guildford, GU5 9ST

Inspection dates

16–17 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is a safe and caring place. Learning activities are interesting and sometimes exciting. As a result, the pupils thrive and do well. They want to come to school and attendance is above average.
- Good teaching helps all groups of pupils to achieve well and make good progress from their starting points, including in the early years.
- By the time they leave Peaslake, the pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills are generally above or well above the national average.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about different subjects, including physical education, music and French. As a result, pupils are interested in the world around them and eager to learn all about it.
- A strong focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that pupils behave well. They cooperate, care for and take responsibility for themselves and for others.
- The headteacher has a strong vision for the school and a clear sense of purpose. She has an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve further.
- The governors have established effective systems to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including for safeguarding. They have a valuable range of skills and, now that the future of the school is more secure, are increasingly turning their attention to improving the quality of education.
- There are excellent partnerships with parents and carers and the local community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Adults do not always provide sufficient opportunity or challenge to really extend learning, particularly of the most able pupils.
- Sometimes adults do not model, or expect from the pupils, the highest standards of handwriting and presentation.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous nor are they focused sharply enough on how well the pupils are learning.
- Targets in the school's improvement plans and those used in the management of staff performance are not precise enough or sufficiently focused on pupils' achievements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in six lessons and also made short visits to reading groups. The headteacher joined the inspector in these observations.
- The inspector looked at the pupils' workbooks and evidence of pupils' work in different subjects. She heard pupils read, met with pupils, and observed playtime, lunchtimes and assembly.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and four members of the governing body, and had telephone discussions with the special educational needs coordinator and the Free Schools Advisor.
- She took into account 23 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Responses to the staff questionnaire were also reviewed.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including those related to the tracking of pupils' progress, the school's records of checks on the quality of teaching, risk assessments, records of attendance, improvement plans, the school's self-assessment, documents relating to performance management and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. The inspectors scrutinised checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school opened as a free school in September 2013. Previously, the school operated as a non-selective independent school, founded in 1994. Parents and local residents formed the Peaslake School Trust in response to the closure of the Surrey local authority maintained school.
- The school is much smaller than the average size primary school and currently, 30 pupils from Reception to Year 2 are taught in two mixed-age classes. Reception children attend full time.
- The Trust also operates a nursery which takes children from the age of two and a half. The nursery was inspected by Ofsted in May 2014 under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The nursery was not inspected as part of this inspection.
- There are no pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies considerably from year to year due to the small numbers but is generally below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are from Other White backgrounds.
- The school is developing partnerships with neighbouring schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise the achievement of pupils, particularly the most able, by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to use their initiative, make decisions about their learning and work independently at length and in depth
 - ensuring that all adults model and expect from the pupils the highest quality of handwriting and presentation
 - providing more planned and varied opportunities for pupils of all ages to write at length.
- Improve the quality and rigour of leaders' monitoring and evaluation by:
 - making sure that pupils' achievement is central to target setting, improvement planning and performance management.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher has built an effective school team with clear purpose, vision and an explicit understanding of the distinct and special educational experience this little school can offer. Morale is high and all staff are fully signed up to the vision.
- Staff are keen to develop their skills and leaders have enabled them to undertake training so that they make a more effective contribution to learning and the wider life of the school. For example, staff have been trained in the teaching of early reading and more effective use of technology. The impact of this can be seen in pupils' improving reading skills and in the ease with which they use their iPads during lessons.
- There is close team-working among the staff. Despite pupils' achieving well, there is no sense of complacency. The headteacher and staff have accurately identified aspects for further improvement such as the need to encourage greater independence when pupils are learning and more challenge for the most able.
- Leaders' judgements on how well the school is performing are accurate. However, plans for improvement and the checks on the quality of teaching and subsequent follow-up actions are not rigorous or sharply enough focused on pupils' learning. This means that leaders' guidance about how adults can improve their effectiveness is not precise enough to bring about rapid improvement.
- Systems to check regularly on pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills are used effectively to target support where necessary. The school collaborates with colleagues in other schools to ensure that their judgements on how well pupils' are achieving are accurate. The revised curriculum is in place and staff are rigorously researching the most effective methods of assessing pupils' achievements, particularly the achievements of the most able.
- The identification of, and provision for, pupils who have special educational needs have been revised and this work is enhanced by the increasing knowledge and understanding of the special educational needs coordinator.
- The curriculum is well planned to include rich learning experiences. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the world they live in, the wider community and preparing them well to understand and accept differences between people and their beliefs. All pupils take part in the full range of activities and achieve well together without fear of discrimination.
- There are consistently positive and successful approaches to encouraging good behaviour, care and consideration of others.
- Parents play an important part in the ethos of the school and are actively involved in much of the school's work. They are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school, including its leadership and management.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors share the vision of a nurturing school which promotes strong personal as well as academic success. They bring a wealth of experience and skills and have successfully recruited new governors who add complementary skills and knowledge.
- Since opening as a free school, governors have revised and reviewed all of the key policies, structures and systems to ensure that they are fully in line with statutory requirements and good practice elsewhere. They constantly review their practices to make them more effective and efficient. Health, safety and safeguarding checks are rigorous.
- They have undertaken training to enable them to support and challenge the school more effectively. Individual governors have particular responsibility for different aspects such as health and safety, curriculum, safeguarding and performance management and several have made focused visits during the school day.
- Additional government funding, such as the sports premium, is carefully managed to make best use of it and as a result, the participation of pupils in physical activities has increased.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There are performance management arrangements for all staff; however, although the minutes of governors' meetings show an increasing focus on the quality of education, their evaluation of the quality of teaching is not sharply focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are confident, friendly and inquisitive. They like coming to school and attendance is good. One told me that I was lucky to be able to come to the school because he felt lucky to be a pupil there.
- All of the pupils play and work happily together regardless of age or gender. They socialise well and, although they do not always manage to do the right thing, such as sharing, they know what the right thing is. There is very little thoughtless or inappropriate behaviour and as a result the pupils feel secure and confident. They listen to the views and ideas of others and cooperate well.
- Playtimes are very lively and enjoyable for all. Parent volunteers help the pupils at lunchtimes and remind them about good eating habits, the importance of drinking plenty of water and remembering their manners.
- Adults and pupils regularly remind each other to think about the feelings of others and to be kind. In the assembly, they could suggest times when they or others showed kindness. They understood the message underpinning the game they played constructing a web of kindness.
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to take on responsibilities, such as older pupils working with and supporting younger children. They accept these responsibilities enthusiastically and see them as a normal part of school life.
- Pupils are keen to learn although sometimes, as the headteacher commented, they are keen to talk about learning rather than doing it. Occasionally, they lack the confidence to take the next step without reassurance and this is exacerbated because adults sometimes intervene too quickly. This limits some of the pupils' ability to persist even when the task is difficult.
- Relationships are very positive and these are evident in the breakfast and after-school clubs which provide calm and positive beginnings and ends to each day.
- Pupils are well prepared to take the next steps in their education.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire said that their children are well looked after, safe and happy in school. The pupils agree and say that adults and children are kind and look out for each other.
- Systems for ensuring the safety and protection of pupils are rigorous. The security of the school site has been improved and there are good arrangements for making sure that pupils are well supervised at all times.
- The play spaces are interesting with opportunities to climb and make dens. Pupils, although enthusiastic, are careful not to take unnecessary risks.
- Pupils readily speak up if they have any concerns and they are confident that the adults will sort out any problems. There is occasional unkindness but no bullying. During the visit, pupils were outraged and astonished that some of the younger children were being unkind to their friend. They took immediate steps to solve the problem and sought the support of the headteacher in doing so.
- The strong focus on personal and social development means that regular opportunities are taken to help pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe, healthy and happy. This includes more recent activities to help the pupils understand the possible dangers when using the internet.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers plan activities which are interesting, practical and build the skills and knowledge that the pupils need. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- The activities and support provided are adapted to match the different abilities of pupils. Those pupils who need to catch up or cover particular skills again are given targeted support and this helps them to achieve well.
- Teachers make sure that learning covers different subjects and plan good opportunities for the pupils to work together, investigate and learn out of doors. They make good use of the surrounding locality. A good example of this was the recent visit to a nearby stream. Pupils in mixed-age teams designed and made boats or barges from recycled materials, then walked a fair distance to test their craft out. The visit also gave them a chance for some pond dipping and mapping.
- There are lots of opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning with adults and with each other. As a result, most are articulate and eager to share ideas. The teaching of reading is organised effectively so that pupils' skills and confidence in reading develop well. They are less willing to record or write and there

are too few planned or varied opportunities for them to write at length.

- Teachers make good use of appropriate resources to support pupils' learning, for example in mathematics. This includes the use of technology and the adults are working hard to develop their own skills.
- Sometimes the adults give too much help so that some pupils seek reassurance before moving on to the next challenge. Consequently, the pace of learning slows as either the pupils wait for an adult to help them or adults intervene too often.
- Opportunities are missed for the pupils to work things out on their own, to raise the level of challenge and really extend the learning of the most able.
- The classrooms are full of interesting displays and celebrations of pupils' work which support the learning. However, some of the key vocabulary being used in mathematics was not on display and this might explain partly why pupils often misspell important words.
- Adults do not always model the school's agreed handwriting system either in the pupils' books or on display. Adults mark the pupils' books carefully to let pupils know how they can improve their work. There is little evidence that the pupils act or have the opportunity to act on this advice.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Care needs to be taken when comparing attainment and progress with previous years and with national data due to the very small numbers involved. Nonetheless, all of the pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well.
- Children arrive with skills at or above those typical for their ages. They make good progress and move into Year 1 with well-rounded knowledge and skills.
- The results of the Year 1 phonics screening, which checks how well pupils use their understanding of letters and the sounds they make, were above average last year and improved further this year. The school uses the information from this check to review the teaching of letters and sounds and to make sure the teaching of phonics is adapted to address any weaker aspects. As a result, pupils read with enjoyment and confidence. They are able to use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words. Occasionally, they are so keen to get on and show how well they can read that they forget to use their skills and guess words incorrectly.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills are consistently above average, with the majority achieving the higher levels in reading and mathematics.
- In mathematics, pupils build valuable skills and knowledge. Year 2 pupils resolve problems using their knowledge of addition, tens and units, and convert large numbers into appropriate coins.
- Pupils achieve well across a variety of different subjects. During the inspection, they confidently and knowledgeably discussed their science investigations. Their singing in assembly was both enthusiastic and tuneful. In the playground they are physically confident, adapting easily to different levels and surfaces. They make good use of the space available and use wheeled toys adeptly while being mindful of others.
- There is good evidence on display and in their books, such as those linked to the chocolate topic, which shows they are developing a good understanding of the wider world. There is less evidence of work that is really challenging and enabling pupils, particularly the most able, to work at length and in depth.
- Their workbooks show that not all pupils pay sufficient attention to presenting their work neatly or to spelling key words accurately. Also, there are fewer examples of sustained high-quality writing than might be expected.

The early years provision

is good

- Reception children are confident, independent learners who socialise happily and usually get on well together. High levels of care and welfare ensure that children become caring, cooperative, thoughtful and confident.
- They achieve well and make good progress both personally and academically during their time in Reception. Almost all achieve the early learning goals and are well prepared for Year 1. Some children achieve the expected goals at a good level. However, the most able are capable of more and this is an area for further improvement as in the rest of the school.
- The early years provision is led and managed well. Although reception children spend their time in the same class as some of the Year 1 pupils, the staff plan carefully to make sure that the learning activities are well matched to meet the needs of both age groups. Children's achievements are carefully assessed and tracked. The teacher's planning and targeted support for children are then amended to build on their

abilities and interests.

- The children are keen to learn because the adults make learning interesting and enjoyable. The space immediately outside the classroom is rather restricted and far from an ideal learning environment. As a result, there are fewer and less well-developed opportunities for children to learn outside. The staff try to make the best of the space they have and provide regular opportunities for the children to explore learning in the varied and interesting extended playground.
- The children's communication skills are well developed and they are eager to talk about what they know and what they are doing and learning. Most have a good understanding of letters and sounds and are developing good reading skills. Their writing is less secure and they need more planned opportunities to practise writing skills.

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	140203
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	450135

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Free school
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Foster
Headteacher	Sara Dangerfield
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01306 730411
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