

St Peter and St Paul CofE Primary School

Buckhurst Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 1QE

Inspection dates 7–8 July 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and her deputy share a vision of excellence that permeates the school.
- The achievement of pupils is outstanding, with most making rapid progress from their different starting points. This is true for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Pupils behave in an exemplary manner because expectations from staff are high. They are kind and respectful to each other and welcoming to visitors, staff, and pupils who join from other schools.
- The school sees itself as a family where all are welcome. There is a strong feeling of community and pupils from all faiths and backgrounds work hard to support and encourage each other to do their best.
- Because of strong leadership and high quality teaching, children in the early years make outstanding progress. The vast majority are ready for their move into Year 1. Those that are not catch up rapidly when in Year 1.
- Governors are knowledgeable and experienced and share the headteacher's vision of excellence. They know the school well and understand the strengths and areas that need to be further developed.
- Middle leaders have had a big impact on improving the quality of teaching. They take their responsibilities seriously and are seen by senior leaders as future headteachers.
- Because of outstanding leadership, staff morale is high. Positive attitudes flourish and, as a result, pupils are confident and enthusiastic about coming to school.
- Leaders ensure that most teaching is outstanding and never less than very good. Staff are enthusiastic about the lessons they teach and are prepared to try a wide range of different approaches to support learning.
- Very occasionally, teachers move learning on without fully checking and deepening pupils' understanding, and miss opportunities to move more able pupils on more quickly.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are keen to be involved and support their children with their learning.
- Leaders take their responsibilities to keep pupils safe very seriously, so the school is a safe place in which they can learn and play.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, across all classes, two jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors observed Key Stage 1 and Reception classes at their sports day.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, heard pupils read, observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at break times, visited two assemblies and talked informally with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 49 responses on the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Responses to the 29 questionnaires returned by staff were also considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including those to do with safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of visits by the local authority, information about pupils' achievement supplied by the school, the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school's development plan.

Inspection team

Clive Close, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nick Rudman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, but is growing.
- Pupils in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher provides advice to other local primary schools about the effective spending of the pupil premium.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is always outstanding in identifying when pupils need more support in developing their understanding, but also when some are ready to move on faster.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She leads the school with total commitment and a deep sense of purpose. Because of this, leaders at every level share a clear vision of excellence which underpins every aspect of the school. They work as a highly effective team to improve the school and they have the support and total confidence of the staff in doing so.
- Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest. Leaders at all levels are open and reflective about how the school is performing. They are not afraid to make changes when they feel the pace of improvement needs to be quicker. The school's cycle of phased periods of monitoring and evaluation, followed by staff development, is highly effective, and ensures that staff are constantly looking at ways to improve their teaching.
- The school's improvement planning is very effective. All staff, including non-teaching support staff, and governors have direct input into it. Because of this, leaders are able to drive improvement at a fast pace, ensuring everybody is aware of what needs to improve, why, and how they are going to do it.
- The quality of middle leadership is a strength in the school. Middle leaders share the headteacher's vision of excellence and have been empowered to lead in their specific areas of responsibility, be that within age phases or across the whole school. They lead with energy and enthusiasm and have a very positive influence on the quality of teaching and its impact on all pupils' achievements.
- Teaching is monitored highly effectively by leaders, with robust structures and routines to review teachers' planning, the quality of pupils' work and the progress pupils make. This, linked to the priorities in the school development plan, forms a strong basis for managing staff performance. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders' challenge and support, and the opportunities and training to develop their teaching.
- The quality of the curriculum is exceptional, with rich opportunities for the arts and different activities to enthuse and inspire pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very well with opportunities woven into their experiences throughout the school day. Pupils' understanding of British values are highly developed. For example, their understanding of democracy benefits strongly from direct teaching about democratic principles, from electing the school council, and from visiting the Houses of Parliament. This understanding is put into useful action, as council members were happy to explain to inspectors how their ideas are used to improve the school.
- There are high levels of respect for different faiths within the school and pupils openly support and encourage each other to do their best, no matter what their background. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used very effectively. As a result, these pupils make excellent progress, often matching or bettering the attainment of other pupils. The school has provided support and advice to other local schools because of their success in this area.
- Sport funding is used very well to support the curriculum and further pupils' participation in team and competitive sports. A specialist coach works alongside teachers to help with planning and developing pupils' skills. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy the wide range of sporting activities available to them, including stoolball, thought to have originated in Sussex 'hundreds of years ago'.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are robust and fully meet statutory requirements. Staff are trained appropriately and policies and procedures are very sound.
- The local authority has supported the school, with an increasingly light touch over time. The support from a consultant brokered to review the school's leadership provided valuable analysis.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are a very effective force for school improvement and share the headteacher's vision for excellence. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and the areas that need developing. Their timetable of formal 'blink' visits enables them to monitor different aspects of the school in a very focused and efficient manner, including school and national data on pupil progress.
 - The structure and membership of the governing body ensure that school leaders are held fully to account. There is a wide range of skill and expertise available amongst its members, with individual governors able to utilise their knowledge to support and challenge the leadership of the school.
 - Governors understand how the school is performing and have a thorough knowledge of the quality of the teaching and the impact it has on the progress pupils are making. They ensure that teachers are only rewarded for good performance and would ensure that underperformance was tackled, if this were ever the case.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Teachers employ effective strategies to manage behaviour in the classroom. As a consequence, disruption to lessons is very rare; pupils told inspectors that behaviour is never allowed to interfere with their learning. Pupils in all year groups display a mature attitude to learning and are respectful of each other's right to learn. This was demonstrated fulsomely in an assembly when Year 2 recited their times tables out loud and retold the story of *Zog the Dragon*, following which other pupils congratulated them.
- Pupils' behaviour as pupils move around the school at break times and lunchtimes, at assemblies, and during special events such as sports day, is impeccable. Playgrounds and corridors are busy during these periods, but pupils manage well. During the inspection, one break time was interrupted by a sudden downpour, leading to a hurried but orderly move for cover. Pupils and staff managed this together with little fuss and a shared sense of humour, confirming the strong underlying ethos of respect in the school.
- Older pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved over the last few years. The school's own records confirm this. Pupils who do misbehave are dealt with effectively and served with 'disappointment' notes. These act as a reminder of what the school expects and are a powerful tool.
- Pupils display a strong sense of social justice and appreciate the responsibility of solving minor problems between themselves, without having to refer to adults. The use of trained peer mediators, pupils who act as neutral parties when disputes arise, has added an extra dimension to the way everyday problems are resolved.
- Pupils are very positive about their school. They are proud to belong to the 'family' and feel they are listened to by staff when they have good ideas. They enjoyed designing their new library and, as a result, there is a real sense that the library is theirs. One pupil told an inspector she felt coming to school was 'joyous' because her school is 'full of life'.
- Exclusions are rare, but the headteacher is prepared to use this sanction if the need arises, but always as a last resort.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils feel safe at school and all parents that offered a view on the online Parent View said their children were happy and felt safe at school.
- Pupils' understanding of risk is very well developed and the school works hard to keep staff and pupils aware of the everyday dangers they could face. An impressive range of visiting professionals from the emergency services and local community organisations, including neighbourhood watch who runs an after-school club, has regular contact with the school. The school's curriculum also provides up-to-date guidance to pupils about the safe use of the internet.
- Pupils think that bullying is virtually non-existent, although one Year 6 pupil expressed an opinion that all schools 'have bullying at one time or another'. Those who talked to inspectors were aware of the different forms that bullying could take and said they knew how to deal with it should the need arise. The school's use of peer mediators has also helped with this.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now in line with national averages. Because of the headteacher's determination to ensure all pupils attend school, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced to less than half the national average.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is generally outstanding and never less than very good because it ensures that pupils make very strong progress and achieve extremely well, including in basic mathematics and literacy skills.
- Expectations are high and teachers make their lessons both relevant and exciting, whilst ensuring that pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged to improve their work. Pupils are genuinely excited about their learning, because of the enthusiasm shown by teachers and support staff.
- Pupils in danger of falling behind benefit from extra help from qualified teachers outside of their normal classroom. This ensures that all pupils progress very well and are confident in their own ability to complete the tasks teachers set them.
- Lessons are always structured thoughtfully and teachers ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers are not afraid to explore new approaches in the way they deliver lessons, and pupils of all abilities benefit from teaching tailored to their specific needs.
- Frequent 'pit-stops' help teachers to assess how much progress pupils are making, and high quality

teaching assistants stretch pupils' learning with good questioning, supporting pupils well and adding further challenge when needed.

- Very occasionally teachers miss the opportunity to move able pupils' learning on at the quick pace seen in most classes. At other times, because of the pace and energy in classrooms, teachers move learning on without checking all pupils have fully understood all of the important ideas, missing opportunities to consolidate or deepen pupils' understanding.
- The teaching of mathematics and English is very effective; this is reflected in the outstanding progress pupils make in these subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and pupils' misconceptions are tackled head on. Because teachers are confident, they are not afraid to vary or adapt lessons if they feel pupils would benefit from a different approach or style of delivery.
- The school benefits from talented teachers with specialist subject knowledge. This is evident from the environment in classrooms and around the school. High quality displays and resources that inspire pupils all play a part in making the teaching in this school outstanding.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' achievements across the school are outstanding. Pupils make very rapid progress from their different starting points. Because of this, the standards pupils attain at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 compare very favourably with schools nationally. Their deep love of learning was typified by two Year 6 pupils during a writing task debating in a lesson whether 'pumping' or 'pounding' was the best way to describe a heart beating when its owner was 'excited, but scared' by a new experience.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above national averages, significantly so in mathematics. The school's own data show that this year's outcomes will again be very strong, especially with the number of pupils achieving at higher levels.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils attain significantly above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics because of high rates of progress. The school's data show that this year's results have improved further, especially for those pupils achieving at higher levels in reading.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing is strengthened by the delivery of high quality phonics (the sounds that letters make) teaching. The school has consistently achieved outcomes much higher than those seen nationally in the end of Year 1 phonic screening check, and this year's results have further improved.
- Throughout the school, disadvantaged pupils make very good progress, matching or exceeding that of other pupils within the school and nationally. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making more than expected progress is also very high, matching or exceeding that of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally.
- Gaps in achievement of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils nationally and other pupils in the school have closed rapidly over a sustained period of time. Last year, attainment gaps were less than the equivalent of a term in reading and there was no gap at all in writing when compared to other pupils nationally. The gaps within school were less than a term for reading and for writing. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils attained higher than other pupils nationally, and others within the school.
- Because of the high quality of teaching and the carefully targeted support, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. Expectation is high and staff ensure that the work they set matches these pupils' needs well.
- The most able pupils make outstanding progress. Because teaching across the school is of very high quality and expectation is high, they are constantly challenged to do their best. The school has been particularly successful this year in raising the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and the progress of the most able pupils is rising through the school.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Children in the Reception classes benefit from outstanding teaching and, as a result, make extremely good progress from their various starting points. Most join the school at levels that are typical for their age and, because of the quality of the provision, the great majority are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years provision is led by an outstanding teacher and leader. As a result, staff there work as a very cohesive and effective team, providing excellent support and guidance for the children in their care. Communication between team members is a strength and staff know the children very well. This ensures

that opportunities for children to make progress in learning are planned well and have maximum impact.

- Relationships between adults and children are strong and children's social skills are highly developed. They cooperate well with each other and concentrate for long periods when engaged in activities directed by adults, or when working independently. Language skills are strongly promoted by staff who provide excellent opportunities for discussion during sessions where children choose from a range of stimulating activities both inside and outside of the classroom.
- The environment is rich in resources which are used in an imaginative way by staff to stimulate children's learning. Inspectors saw children deeply engaged in activities based on their current theme of pirates. Some were working hard to create a pirate map; others chose to work with a teacher, writing sentences about buried treasure. At every stage, children were totally engrossed in their learning with staff assessing and challenging them to think deeply, make connections between ideas and, in the process, learn more.
- The early years team works very well in partnership with parents and other professionals. Transition arrangements prior to children starting in the Reception classes allow parents to visit the school to learn about the curriculum. Family Fridays are popular with parents, who are encouraged to stay for the first part of the morning session to see what their children are learning.
- Children in the early years feel safe and secure. They are happy to share work with visitors and show maturity and a great sense of pride when talking about the many activities they have undertaken throughout their year. Excellent behaviour is the norm and children play and learn happily side by side.

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	114564
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	453777

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Plim
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Hamill
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 July 2010
Telephone number	01424211073
Fax number	01424218081
Email address	office@stpeterstpaul.e-sussex.sch.uk

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