

# St Peter's CofE Primary School

Holmans, Street Lane, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6UQ

## Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards have fallen since the last inspection. Leaders have been slow to tackle weaknesses in teaching. Recent and frequent changes in teaching have disjointed pupils' learning.
- The governing body recognises that there is room for improvement. However, it does not hold school leaders fully to account. For example, they have not analysed precisely how well disadvantaged pupils are supported.
- Some leaders are developing their roles. However, subject leaders are not having enough impact on improving learning.
- Some parents lack confidence in leadership. They are not sufficiently informed about improvements being made.
- The teaching of mathematics is not as strong as it needs to be. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to apply their learning or to use their reasoning skills.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low. In particular, the most able, including those who are also disadvantaged, are not challenged consistently.
- Provision in the early years is not yet good. Planning and provision do not link well enough to the assessments made about children, particularly when they are learning outside.
- At times, other adults in the class support pupils' learning effectively, but often this is not the case.
- Pupils' progress varies in different subjects and across year groups. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same variable progress as their peers. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to write at length and without support.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has halted the decline in standards. His clear vision for the future is shared among all staff and governors.
- The curriculum has a number of strengths. British values are promoted well. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, as are their behaviour and attendance.
- Systems for checking and monitoring teaching focus appropriately on learning. Performance management challenges weak teaching effectively.
- Rigorous safeguarding arrangements help to ensure that pupils are well looked after. Pupils are right to say that they feel safe.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, by:
  - securing greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across classes and subjects
  - making sure the teaching of mathematics encourages pupils to apply their skills in a range of contexts, including through investigation
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able
  - ensuring that teaching assistants and other adults are deployed consistently well to support pupils' progress.
- Raise pupils' achievement further by ensuring that:
  - pupils are more confident to use their mathematical skills to solve problems for themselves
  - pupils' writing continues to improve, particularly when writing at length and without support
  - pupils make consistent progress across year groups and subjects.
- Improve the early years foundation stage, by:
  - making sure that pupils benefit from an equally stimulating environment when learning through play outside, as they do inside
  - making better use of assessment to adapt the environment to meet children's needs.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
  - making better use of assessment information to plan and deliver school improvement so that funds such as the pupil premium are used effectively
  - embedding the recent work to improve the effectiveness of governors so that they can hold leaders robustly to account for the impact of their actions to improve the school
  - strengthening the effectiveness of subject leaders so that they have more impact on the quality of pupils' learning in their areas of responsibility
  - improving communication with parents.

A review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement because leaders have not secured good teaching or strong enough outcomes for pupils over time. Following the last inspection, standards declined and there have been wide fluctuations in results. Historical weaknesses in teaching and learning took too long to be resolved. Consequently, despite rapid improvements in teaching over the last 12 months, pupils' outcomes remain too variable because of a legacy of underachievement and some remaining inconsistencies in teaching.
- Although some disadvantaged pupils do well at the school, this is not consistently the case. Leaders have neither ensured that the pupil premium grant is used effectively nor that all of this funding is used to support eligible pupils. Furthermore, the impact of money allocated is not clear and not robustly monitored by leaders or governors.
- Subject leadership remains too varied. Recent turbulence in staffing means that many teachers with leadership responsibility are very new to their careers or to the school. Consequently, their roles as subject leaders remain underdeveloped and they have not had enough time to have an impact on the quality of learning in their areas of responsibility. This means that currently the school relies too much on the leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher to improve.
- Leadership and management have grown significantly in their effectiveness over the last 12 months. The arrival of the deputy headteacher in September 2015, along with rigorous monitoring systems, has ensured that leaders are clear about what is going well and where improvements are needed. Both leaders have made effective use of external support to improve the quality of writing across the school. School staff are pulling together behind the leadership team and so the school is now moving in the right direction.
- Leaders' checks on teachers' performance are well organised and effective. Performance management targets focus appropriately on pupils' outcomes. Leaders evaluate the progress staff make against their targets regularly. This cycle of evaluation links well with other monitoring activities, such as lesson observations and book scrutiny. As a result, teachers and other staff are clear about what they need to do to improve and are held rigorously to account for the progress of their pupils. The headteacher has challenged robustly where teaching has not led to strong enough progress.
- The headteacher has rightly introduced new assessment systems. These effective systems help some teachers to plan work for pupils that is at the right level. Due to the number of staff changes, leaders are only beginning to get useful information about how well pupils are doing across the school. Therefore, although the information is used well to support learning, it is not yet effective for helping leaders to evaluate the impact of their actions. This is particularly the case in the use of the pupil premium.
- Much of the curriculum is taught through topics, which pupils particularly enjoy. Enrichment activities, such as visits to Brighton or guests who enact historical scenes, are used to make learning more accessible. There are strong links with other schools within the local area, through which pupils experience competitive sport, and staff

benefit from joint ventures. Well-planned experiences and assemblies help pupils to explore and appreciate different faiths and cultures, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders have made good use of the primary sport fund. Pupils have access to high-quality physical education lessons. Teachers receive useful training opportunities to develop their own practice. Senior leaders analyse the use of the fund diligently. The school has been awarded the Gold Mark in the Sainsbury's School Games scheme. Plans for using the funding in the future are secure and appropriately focused on further developing the quality of pupils' experience of sports.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. The special educational needs coordinator has a very good understanding of the needs of pupils on the register. Together with senior leaders, she works hard to ensure that the school is inclusive and delivers the reforms of the new code of practice for these children. Leaders analyse carefully the difference that interventions have on progress and change the support these pupils receive if necessary. However, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities typically do better where teaching is more effective, and so inconsistencies remain in their progress. Additional funding is used well.
- The local authority has provided useful and timely support for the school. Advisers rightly identified the rapid decline in standards following the last inspection. Since that time, they have worked with the headteacher to support him in improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, leaders have not always found all the support helpful. For example, leaders were unclear of what was expected of them when assessing pupils' writing against the new higher expectations in 2016.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance varies in its effectiveness. Although there have been recent improvements to the quality of challenge and support for the headteacher, this was slow to materialise when standards fell after the last inspection. Recent improvements mean that governors are beginning to widen their own understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since September 2016, this improved understanding has led to better challenge around teaching and learning. However, governors have not done enough to challenge leaders over the use of the pupil premium grant.
- Minutes of meetings, including those following committee meetings, show that governors ask for information about teachers' performance and use it to make sound decisions about their pay progression. Governors have started to challenge leaders more rigorously this year. This is evident in minutes of meetings and in the improvements seen at the school.
- Governors are increasingly committed to bringing about the improvements that are needed. They share in the leadership's vision for achieving the best standards possible for pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and managed very well. There are

clear lines of responsibility at the school so all staff know who to go to if they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil. Leaders deliver useful training for staff so that they know their responsibilities, as well as specific training on current issues such as the 'Prevent' duty agenda. All staff are carefully checked for their suitability to work at the school and records are kept in a way that meets statutory requirements.

- The school's safeguarding policy is compliant and meets the expectations as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2016. Leaders work very effectively with the local authority and other agencies. When necessary, they are willing to take tough decisions and tenaciously follow them up with child support professional colleagues if they have concerns.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is variable and not yet consistently good. It requires improvement because some teachers' expectations of what pupils will achieve, particularly the most able, are too low. This means that some pupils are not sufficiently challenged to do their best and so do not learn as quickly as they could over time.
- Some teachers do not make good enough use of assessment to ensure that work meets the differing needs of pupils. Sometimes pupils find the work they are asked to do too easy and others are not supported well enough.
- Teachers' deployment of teaching assistants and other adults is not always as effective as it could be. For example, teaching assistants' time is not used well enough and so they do not make as much of a difference to pupils' progress as they could. When they are deployed effectively, they make good use of their skills and experience and help pupils to learn successfully.
- The teaching of mathematics is too variable. Where it is less effective, teachers lack the subject knowledge needed to plan lessons that help pupils apply skills and use their reasoning when investigating mathematical concepts. Where it is stronger, teachers use questioning effectively to help pupils solve problems for themselves. There is also good use made of modelling to help pupils learn new concepts and to build on what they already know. However, many pupils lack the foundations in their learning to understand some of the most challenging concepts. This means that, despite lessons improving, pupils' ability to make use of what they are being taught remains limited.
- Leaders have introduced an effective number of new strategies to improve the teaching of writing. Teachers ensure that there are links between what pupils are learning about in their topic work and what they are asked to write about. As a result, pupils' enjoyment of writing has increased and they are achieving more success. Teachers consistently apply the school's feedback policy. Consequently, pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are now clearer about what they need to do to write effectively. Leaders have rightly identified that expectations in writing remain too low for the most able, particularly in key stage 1.
- The teaching of reading has some strengths, but it is not consistent. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. Texts studied in class engage pupils and are helping to develop their love of reading. The teaching of phonics is effective. However, particularly in key stage 2, those who are not struggling with their reading skills need

greater challenge to deepen their inference and deduction skills when reading by themselves.

- When expectations are higher, pupils make much better progress. For example, in an upper key stage 2 lesson about the use of figurative language in poetry, pupils were expected to discuss and share their ideas in small groups and then as a class. The high expectations and engagement elicited by the teacher ensured that pupils' ideas and word choices improved as a result.
- Some teaching is particularly effective. Where this is the case, expectations are higher, planning is more precise and staff make much better use of time. In an upper key stage 2 mathematics lesson, where pupils were learning to multiply fractions, the teacher used questioning to good effect to challenge pupils' thinking. The strong use of assessment meant that tasks were adapted to help all pupils to make better progress with the teaching assistant supporting some learners at the level best for them. Pupils responded well to the challenges they were given and were beginning to use their reasoning to solve more complex concepts.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Leaders have established an open culture where pupils feel able to share concerns if they have them. This helps to ensure that everyone looks out for and after each other.
- Pupils speak very positively about the school. They believe teachers really care about them. Pupils report that bullying is exceptionally rare, as reflected in the school's well-recorded logs. Pupils rightly feel safe. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe at the school.
- Pupils learn about responsibility by becoming 'assembly monitors', members of the school council, part of the 'sports crew' or as 'peer mediators'. All pupils talk with genuine respect and trust about the 'peer mediators' and what happens when there are issues on the playground. They also talked with confidence about when they would go directly to an adult.
- The promotion of healthy lifestyles is very strong. School sport is promoted well. Good use is made of the school environment in which pupils learn and play well together. Leaders ensure that pupils are given extra opportunities to develop gross and fine motor control through physical development by using the range of resources they have to offer.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils demonstrate appropriate attitudes to their learning and listen well to teachers and to each other. Relationships are positive and pupils show respect for the views of others during discussions and in their play.
- Pupils do not, however, always show the same level of commitment to learning when

working independently. They are sometimes too casual in their approach to their work and so time can be wasted and they do not achieve as much as they could.

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is also good. Adults supervise pupils well at break and lunchtimes. The school's behaviour logs demonstrate that this is typical of their behaviour over time. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions in the last three years.
- Parents, carers and pupils are rightly positive about standards of behaviour at the school. The strong sense of community means that pupils often enjoy coming to school and participate well. For example, on World Book Day pupils' costumes were of a very high standard. Staff made excellent use of a whole-school assembly to celebrate pupils' efforts and pupils were proud to be a part of the day.
- Pupils attend well. Overall attendance has been above the national average for the last three years. Persistent absence is rare. The school works effectively with external agencies to promote good attendance.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable from their different starting points. After the previous inspection, pupils' achievement declined sharply because of weaknesses in teaching. Leaders have now taken effective action to reverse this declining trend so that pupils are beginning to make much stronger progress.
- Pupils have attained levels that have been below average in the past, particularly in 2016. Small cohorts and high mobility mean that results can fluctuate widely for different year groups. For example, in 2014 key stage 2 results dropped to below average in reading and writing compared to above average results the year before. In 2015, pupils in key stage 2 attained results that were above the national average, before the sharp drop in results in 2016. Despite these variances, leaders have rightly identified that too few pupils make the progress they should from their starting points.
- Pupils are currently achieving better in reading and writing than in mathematics. This is because work to improve achievement in English has been effective. For example, the new approach to teaching phonics led to a sharp improvement in results in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016. However, pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics remain underdeveloped because of a legacy of weak teaching. In some classes, this gap is being successfully addressed but overall this is not consistently the case.
- Work seen in pupils' books shows that pupils are now making strong gains in their literacy skills and improving gains in their numeracy skills overall. The standard of work is better in some classes where teachers' expectations of pupils are higher than in others. Pupils are given useful opportunities to apply their skills in writing across other parts of the curriculum. However, they do not apply their mathematics skills often enough.
- The majority of different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make similar progress. Where teaching is stronger, all groups make better progress; conversely, where expectations remain low, all groups do not do as well. However, the challenge for the most able pupils, including those who are



disadvantaged, remains underdeveloped across the school. Leaders have rightly identified this as a next step, but have yet to take notable action to address it.

- The achievement of the small number of disadvantaged pupils varies. However, the use of the pupil premium is not consistently helping them to make good progress from their starting points, particularly for those who are most able.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Provision in the early years is not as effective as it could be. Assessments of children's learning are not used well enough. As a result, the outdoor environment and lessons when children choose activities do not build on what children know and can do.
- Activities led by adults are more effective and help children to make strong progress. For example, a whole-class phonics session led by the teacher helped children to develop their reading skills well.
- Lessons where children chose what they do are not planned with the same level of sharpness. The activities on offer to the children in these sessions do not link well enough to what children have been learning in class. Furthermore, the environment is not tailored in response to assessments about the children, particularly for the most able. This means that learning in these sessions is not precise and other adults are much less clear about how to help children make rapid progress.
- Due to the very small size of cohorts, the proportion of children who enter their Reception Year with skills expected for their age can vary widely. As a result, outcomes by the end of Reception can also vary widely. However, leaders have rightly looked to tighten the quality of assessment so that work better meets the needs of children overall. This has led to strong improvements to the quality of adult-led lessons. Overall, over the last three years, children have made reasonable progress from their starting points and are, therefore, sufficiently well prepared to move into Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years requires improvement. This is because although leaders know the children exceptionally well, they have not yet used what they know to ensure that the learning environment meets the needs of children sufficiently well. In particular, the outdoor learning environment does not reflect the quality of learning that can be accessed by children indoors. Staff work hard to ensure that children are safe and feel safe. Children interact well with each other and enjoy playing together.



## School details

Unique reference number	126005
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10025515

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lynn Wilson
Headteacher	Mr Jamie Savage
Telephone number	01444 892314
Website	<a href="http://www.st-peters-sch.uk">www.st-peters-sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@st-peters.school">office@st-peters.school</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 January 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Peter’s Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. There are five classes from Reception to Year 6. Small cohorts and high mobility mean that results can fluctuate widely for different year groups.
- The majority of pupils are White British and approximately one in 10 pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is less than half the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above the national average.

- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2013. The deputy headteacher joined in September 2015. Since the time of the last inspection, there is a completely new team of teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons across the school, all jointly with the headteacher. He observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. He analysed records of pupils' achievement, talked with a group of pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6 and scrutinised information about pupils' attendance.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, leaders responsible for special educational needs and the early years, as well as with a group of governors. The inspector met the chair of the governing body separately. He also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and assessment information about pupils' achievement.
- The inspector took account of 43 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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