



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
East Peckham Primary School

Kent Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 26-27 May 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Contents

Section	Page
Basic information about the school	iv
Introduction	1
Main findings	1
Key issues	2
Inspection findings	3
Standards achieved by the pupils	3
The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	5
The quality of education	5
Leadership and management	6
Implementation of the action plan	7
Appendix – Information about the inspection	8

Basic information about the school

Name of school:	East Peckham Primary School
Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs L Iannidinardo
Address of school:	130 Pound Road East Peckham Kent TN12 5LH
Telephone:	01622 871268
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr G Bishop
Local education authority area:	Kent
Unique reference number:	118290
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr R Ellis HMI
Dates of inspection:	26-27 May 2004

Introduction

1. East Peckham Primary School is situated in East Peckham, near Tonbridge, and is an average-sized primary school. Most of the 231 pupils on roll live close to the school. The percentage of the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are no pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of the pupils who have special educational needs has risen since the inspection in September 2003 but is below the national average. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is broadly average.

2. The school was inspected in September 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and it was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of September 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on four occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In May 2004, two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of September 2002.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- standards have risen since the inspection in September 2002 but at Key Stage 2 remain below the average for all schools;
 - pupils make a strong start in the reception year; they make sound gains within the six nationally prescribed areas of learning;
 - standards of attainment have gradually improved and are generally at expected levels in the core subjects by the end of Key Stage 1;
 - standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen but for many pupils are still below the expectation for their age. The introduction of a unit of work to develop the pupils' skills in modelling and control technology has had a positive impact on their overall capability in ICT;
 - most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment but some underachieve;
 - the pupils who have special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and receive appropriate support;
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- the quality of the teaching is now at least satisfactory and often better than this throughout the school; over half the lessons observed were good;
- the pupils are increasingly engaged in their learning and the teachers are encouraging this interest effectively. The classrooms are well organised to support learning with good and very good displays of pupils' work;
- attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory. The pupils respond well to challenging teaching;
- relationships are good and the teachers and support staff are encouraging and positive in their management of the pupils. This represents considerable improvement in strengthening the ethos throughout the school since the inspection in September 2002;
- the pupils are generally punctual and their attendance is satisfactory;
- behaviour around the school and in lessons is satisfactory, and often good;
- provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies contribute positively to the pupils' personal development; they also include opportunities for reflection, prayer and music;
- the school provides a wide range of valuable extracurricular activities. The pupils spoke positively about the many choices they could make in selecting clubs and in the games and playground equipment available for them to enjoy;
- the leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher sets high expectations of the staff and the pupils and has a clear focus on whole-school improvement;
- there is a systematic programme for monitoring the quality of teaching. The observations clearly identify strengths and aspects that require development;
- the work of the subject co-ordinators is beginning to bring about improvement in teaching and learning;
- the governors have monitored the work of the school and are holding the senior managers to account for the quality of educational provision and the standards achieved by the pupils;
- the local education authority (LEA) has provided a considerable range of effective guidance and support.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- eliminate underachievement;
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- raise attainment in ICT;
 - increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. Standards have risen since the inspection in September 2002.
8. Pupils make a strong start in the reception year; they make sound gains within the six nationally prescribed areas of learning. Attainment on entry varies from year to year; the pupils in the present reception year are working at average levels for their age. The planned activities all include a major focus on spoken language. The staff interact well with the pupils as they work on their tasks; for example, the pupils modelled masks and built shelters for a tropical island and the staff encouraged them to discuss how they were approaching the tasks. Most pupils are able to sequence and retell stories accurately, and recall and explain their work to the class. All the tasks were planned to encompass a range of areas of learning, but included opportunities to develop and extend the pupils' vocabulary and spoken language. The skills the pupils develop in mathematics are sound; most can sort, order and sequence numbers and groups of objects. The pupils have a good range of creative experiences. The quality of the work produced is of a good standard. They are developing their fine motor skills well. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, most pupils listen well and speak clearly; they understand the need to share, co-operate and follow agreed codes of classroom practice. This gives a solid foundation for later learning.
9. In the Key Stage 1 national tests in English in 2003 the proportion of the pupils achieving at least the expected Level 2 was above the national figure in writing and in line with it in reading. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of the pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above was 74 per cent, which was below the average for all schools.
10. In mathematics, the tests in 2003 confirmed that all pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieved the expected Level 2 and a broadly average proportion achieved the higher Level 3. At the end of Key Stage 2, three quarters of the pupils achieved the expected Level 4, including 12 per cent who achieved the higher Level 5. These results are similar to those of the previous year.
11. In the national tests in science, the Key Stage 1 results in 2003 were better than those of the previous year, with one third of the pupils achieving the higher Level 3. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 were similar to those in 2002. The overall result in science was lower than the national figure, although the proportion of the pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was broadly average.
12. Standards of attainment in English have gradually improved and are generally at expected levels in the core subjects by the end of Key Stage 1. Considerable emphasis is placed on improving the pupils' literacy skills and a higher proportion than previously can read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts with confidence, fluency and accuracy. There remain some weaknesses in the pupils' competence when writing answers to questions about text. Major reasons for this are their weak comprehension skills and overall

underachievement in writing. The teachers have introduced a wider range of tasks involving dictionary work to improve these skills; for example, researching the definition of words, linked to fiction and non-fiction texts. The pupils in each class make books which include their poetry, their stories, and their responses to the stories they have heard. The standard of handwriting has improved slightly; more pupils are using a joined style.

13. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is at the expected levels in English, but too few pupils reach above-average standards. With stronger teaching throughout Key Stage 2, the pupils are making faster and more secure progress. Most of the present staff have high expectations of the pupils and are working effectively to make up lost ground. The standards in English have improved in Years 5 and 6, especially in the range and breadth of material the pupils can now read. Most pupils can make sound attempts to read a text and note down key points. Some good work was observed when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were planning and writing play scripts. Pupils were able to compare styles of writing; they had sensible reasons for their choices. The standards of writing at the end of the key stage are rising, but slowly. The pupils have written in response to a range of stimuli, for example, after studying imaginative literature and poetry. However, the attainment over the whole of Key Stage 2 is variable and there remains some underachievement. Intensive group teaching has taken place at Key Stage 2 as part of booster class arrangements and the additional literacy strategy, and this work is being supported well by the learning assistants.

14. In mathematics the pupils in Key Stage 1 cover a suitable range of topics, including number, shape, measures, time and money. They develop strategies to solve problems and to check their answers. Year 1 pupils explored reflection symmetry and created their own patterns. Many pupils in Year 2 performed rapid and accurate mental calculations to solve money problems. Most pupils record their written calculations neatly and accurately and are increasingly using the correct mathematical symbols and terms. In Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment in mathematics lessons is in line with and sometimes above national expectations for their age. The pupils develop their own strategies for solving practical problems and identify which mathematical skills or knowledge need to be applied to achieve a particular result.

15. Standards are generally sound in science. The pupils use equipment appropriately, make sensible predictions, and record their experimental results systematically. Most pupils at Key Stage 2 have an understanding of the need for a fair test, but some do not always test their hypotheses in a logical and rigorous manner. Planning for science lessons now places greater emphasis on scientific enquiry and the pupils have better opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding through direct experience. For example Year 4 pupils were designing an experiment to investigate the heat loss from a baked potato, predicted what they expected to happen, and drew labelled diagrams to show how the experiment would be set up.

16. Standards in ICT have improved but for many pupils are still below the expectation for their age. The introduction of a unit of work to develop the pupils' ICT skills in modelling and control technology has contributed well to their overall ICT skills. Most pupils use ICT confidently but there are gaps in their knowledge. They rarely took advantage of the more advanced features of the software that they used. Resources for teaching ICT have improved and are now satisfactory. Improvements in planning and in the teachers' skills and knowledge mean that pupils are making better progress. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and suitable plans for further improvement.

17. Analysis of attainment data demonstrates that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment, but that some underachieve.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. The pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory. They respond well to challenging teaching. They apply themselves to their individual tasks and persevere with them. They generally work well with partners and co-operate in small groups.

19. Relationships are good and the teachers and the support staff are encouraging and positive in their management of the pupils. This represents considerable improvement in strengthening the ethos throughout the school since the inspection in September 2002; the headteacher has very effectively led the staff and pupils in establishing a happy school with a common aim. The school has developed a stronger work ethic. There have been steady improvements in the quality of the environment, which is now stimulating and lively, and in the work in the pupils' books. The pupils are enthusiastic members of the school council and feel they have an important role to play in the life of the school. The ethos of the school is becoming a strength.

20. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is satisfactory, and often good. At break times the pupils play well together and share the equipment provided for them. A few find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, but the school has worked effectively with the LEA's behavioural support service to meet their needs. Overall, the pupils' challenging or inappropriate behaviour rarely interferes with the learning of others because there are effective strategies in place to deal with it.

21. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies contribute positively to the pupils' personal development; they also include opportunities for reflection, prayer and music. The staff use these occasions well to draw together shared aims, fully involving the pupils.

22. The parents are consulted on many issues. They are provided with detailed information about the curriculum content for each term and about their children's attainment and progress. Groups of parents become involved in many aspects of the school's life, including helping to improve the environment. Good use is made of the contact books to communicate between school and home.

23. The school provides a wide range of valuable extracurricular activities. The pupils spoke positively about the many choices they could make in selecting clubs and the games and playground equipment available for them to enjoy.

24. The pupils are generally punctual and their attendance is satisfactory. The school has well-honed procedures to follow up all absences.

The quality of education

25. The quality of the teaching is now at least satisfactory throughout the school; over half the lessons observed were good. However, in a few of the lessons that were judged satisfactory overall the strengths only just outweighed the weaknesses. The quality of the teachers' planning has improved and the best lessons are briskly paced. The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of the pupils. Links are being developed between different

subjects to enhance learning and there are the use of ICT in a range of subjects is increasingly frequent and appropriate. Many teachers use day-to-day assessment and evaluation effectively; however this practice is not consistent throughout the school. The pace of learning in the majority of classes is sound, and sometimes good.

26. The pupils are increasingly engaged in their learning and the teachers are encouraging this interest effectively. The classrooms are well organised to support learning, with good and very good displays of pupils' work. The teachers work effectively with learning assistants and support staff; teamwork is good, with a common purpose and determination to improve the learning for all. The pupils respond well to this positive, focused approach, as have their parents in supporting the setting of homework.

27. However, in some classes the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching have been finely balanced over the year. Although lessons are invariably planned satisfactorily, in some the teacher's knowledge of the content is relatively weak and the work is not developed to the full. Some teachers do not fully evaluate the success of the lesson in achieving the intended learning for the pupils, and do not plan appropriately matched tasks based on these assessments.

28. The pupils' work is thoroughly marked in most classes in English and mathematics. Marking is focused on the learning intentions identified in the lesson planning. However, it is not always as helpful as it could be in indicating to the pupils the areas for improvement.

29. The pupils who have special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and receive appropriate support. Much of the support for the pupils is provided in class by teaching assistants or in groups withdrawn at appropriate times for specific work on their literacy or social skills. These forms of support are broadly effective. However, not all of the teachers are providing well-matched work for all pupils in the class in order to give stronger support to these pupils and to help others whose difficulties are being monitored.

Leadership and management

30. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher sets high expectations of the staff and the pupils and has a clear focus on whole-school improvement.

31. The work of subject co-ordinators is beginning to bring about improvement in teaching and learning. Established subject leaders have a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in the areas that they manage. Some co-ordinators work together effectively to develop links between their subjects. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have completed an analysis of test data to identify gaps in the pupils' knowledge and have modified schemes of work accordingly. The co-ordinators monitor teaching and learning through classroom observation and scrutiny of the teachers' planning and the pupils' work. However, some less-experienced co-ordinators are only beginning to develop their monitoring role.

32. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and focuses appropriately on measuring effectiveness. The school is committed to staff development and performance management is well established.

33. There is a systematic programme for monitoring the quality of teaching. The observations clearly identify strengths and aspects that require development. The monitoring has led to appropriate professional development which has improved aspects of teaching.

34. A well-established, computerised system for recording assessment data is being used to provide information for setting targets for the pupils and for tracking the progress that they are making in relation to them. The teachers are more confident in setting targets and, in some subjects, are moving from setting targets for the whole group to setting them for individual pupils.

35. The governing body is committed to school improvement and recognises the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors are supportive of the headteacher. Individual governors play an active part in the daily life of the school.

36. The governors have monitored the work of the school and are holding the senior managers to account for the quality of educational provision and the standards achieved by the pupils.

37. A three-year recovery plan is helping the school to eliminate a financial deficit.

38. The LEA has provided a considerable range of effective guidance and support. Help has been given in the monitoring of teaching and learning and the LEA's advisers have provided skilled curricular advice which has helped teachers develop aspects of their teaching. The school has valued the support given by the LEA.

Implementation of the action plan

39. The inspection report of 2002 required the school to address three key issues. These principally related to: improving the quality of teaching; improving the curriculum and assessment; and securing effective leadership and management. Reasonable progress has been made in addressing the first two of these issues and good progress has been made in respect of the third.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in September 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in March, June and December 2003 and in March 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of September 2002.

In May 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Seventeen lessons or parts of lessons, three assemblies and four registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, a representative from the LEA and a group of pupils. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of September 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.