



Penhale Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116210
LEA Portsmouth LEA
Inspection number 279771
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector George Rayner AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Penhale Road
School category	Community		Fratton
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Portsmouth PO1 5EF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392821016
Number on roll	218	Fax number	02392828738
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs A Larcombe

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors.

Description of the school

Penhale is located in an inner-city setting within Portsmouth. The area is one of relative socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is a little higher than average. Numbers whose first language is not English are slightly above average. Numbers of pupils with learning difficulties are higher than average. The accommodation is in two Victorian blocks. Although this presents challenges for maintenance, the school has the advantage of offering some large teaching rooms which are appreciated by staff and pupils. The buildings are decorated in a bright, welcoming, style and although it does not benefit from natural green areas, the school has succeeded well in creating some in its playgrounds. The school has a Hearing Impaired Resource that provides for children from all parts of the city.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's view is that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The view of the inspectors is that this does not do the school full justice, because its overall effectiveness is good. Provision is good in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the school with below average standards, but make good progress in all areas of learning. Good achievement continues in Years 1 and 2. It is best in reading and mathematics, but not so strong in writing. Good teaching provides interesting and enjoyable lessons, so that pupils work hard. This makes a good contribution to their achievement. Teachers mark pupils' work well. The school acknowledges that they could be even better in using what they learn from this to plan effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. The good curriculum ensures that pupils make good progress in literacy, numeracy and most other subjects. However, it does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides an extremely caring environment for all of its pupils. Leadership and management are good at all levels and governors make an effective contribution to this. The school has a clear capacity for further improvement and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve achievement in writing so that it matches that in reading and mathematics.* Ensure that assessment is used more effectively to plan work that promotes the best achievement for all in all lessons.* Increase opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good in all years. Children enter the Foundation Stage with below average standards, particularly in literacy. They make good progress towards their learning goals in all areas. They quickly learn how to co-operate with other children and adults, for example in waiting their turn to speak. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully improved reading by concentrating on helping children's understanding of the way words are formed. Consequently, reading skills reach expected levels by the end of Year 2. Effective strategies for helping pupils to improve their numeracy skills have led to improvements in standards in mathematics. These are now slightly above average in Year 2. Achievement in writing, good at the time of the last inspection, is now weaker than in the other two areas. Writing standards are a little below average in Year 2. The school is aware of this and has put strategies in place to improve standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They like their school and co-operate well. They benefit well from opportunities to build good relationships. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils learn in a happy atmosphere. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In an assembly taken by the local vicar, pupils were still and reflective as they considered those who make the world a better place. The school knows the importance of developing pupils' ability to live harmoniously in a multi-cultural society and has successfully introduced activities to support this. The level of attendance is slightly below average but the school has good systems in place for promoting and monitoring this. It is effective in promoting healthy life styles and has gained 'Healthy Schools' status. There are good opportunities for regular exercise in physical education lessons and through playground activities and an after school club. The school's links with local groups and the pupils' willingness to support fund-raising events, enable them to contribute to the community and prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Although pupils have opportunities to express their views, the school recognises that a school council is the next step to ensure their full involvement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding teaching seen in Year 2. Teachers begin lessons by sharing their aims, so that all pupils know what is to be learnt and why. Teachers and support staff use questions well to assess pupils' understanding. They value pupils' answers and comments. In a literacy lesson a pupil described fireworks as gradulated. This was used very well by the teacher to develop a discussion about other words that could be used. Time is generally used well, though in a minority of lessons, some activities are too long, so that some pupils lose concentration. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. These, alongside clear explanations and engaging activities, ensure that pupils enjoy lessons and make good progress. All teachers and support staff manage their pupils very well and have caring attitudes. A particular strength is the very good support given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including the hearing-impaired pupils. Individual learning needs are identified well, so that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Marking is good but the school recognises that pupils need to be more involved in assessing their own work. It is also working to improve the way in which teachers make use of assessment to plan work that matches the needs of all pupils. Recently installed interactive whiteboards are used satisfactorily by teachers to demonstrate ideas. However, they are not yet using them with full effectiveness to actively involve pupils in their learning. Opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their learning are not always utilised. The school recognises that this is an area for further development

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum makes an effective contribution to the good progress that children make in their learning and social development. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 meets statutory requirements and ensures that pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. The school is aware that it is not yet providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers in all subjects and is working to improve this. Most other subjects are also covered well. During the inspection, children were particularly enthusiastic about their history lessons. Specialist teaching in music and physical education helps pupils to gain in-depth knowledge in these subjects. A well planned programme of social and personal education ensures that pupils learn about healthy and safe living. The pupils in the Hearing Impaired Resource are very well integrated into the school, doing most of their learning in normal classes, but also benefiting from specialist provision for key activities. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially in Year 2. During the inspection they particularly enjoyed a visit from a travelling theatre company.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Staff know the pupils very well and parents appreciate the outstanding personal care and support that their children receive. There is a very positive and respectful atmosphere and pupils take great care of each other as well as of the school environment. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully integrated and included in all of the school's work. Those in the Hearing Impaired Resource benefit greatly from this and also the very effective specialised support that they receive. Although the considerable investment that has been made in enhancing the acoustics in all rooms was specifically directed towards those with hearing impairment, all pupils benefit from this. Individual plans for those with learning difficulties and disabilities are regularly reviewed and clear targets are set to help them make good progress. Arrangements for safeguarding pupil's welfare are very good. Child protection procedures are fully in place and known by all staff. Good use is made of external agencies to support pupils and their families. The school tracks pupils' progress well but recognises the need to involve pupils more fully in the assessment of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very clear leadership and is well supported by colleagues at all levels. Leadership ensures effective self evaluation. This underpins a strong motivation to seek improvement and a good awareness of where this is needed. It has had a significant impact on the improvements in standards in reading and mathematics. These demonstrate the school's clear capacity

for further improvement. The school's strategic planning provides clear guidance to those leading improvements about how these should be implemented and evaluated. Financial planning and management are effective. The school is strongly committed to being an important contributor to the quality of life in the local community. It fulfils this through its Hearing Impaired Resource, links with a neighbouring pupil referral unit and its determination to provide a warm, welcoming and stable environment to all children who go there. Its success is reflected in the highly positive opinions of the school's work that parents expressed during the inspection. The school is endeavouring to encourage parents to play a greater part in its life, although not yet with great success. The last inspection found that governors were not well enough organised and did not challenge the school sufficiently. Governors have improved significantly in these areas. They now have an effective system of committees to scrutinise the school's work. They receive regular and informative reports from the school and ensure that its policies and performance are explained and justified.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit. It was good to see that you are so happy and like your school so much. A lot of you told us that you like coming to school because it is such fun. We saw during our visit that you really enjoy what you do and work hard. This is one of the reasons why you do so well.

Our visit showed us that you are doing well in reading and using numbers, but not quite so well in writing. Children do better than they used to in reading and maths because of the hard work of the teachers to improve the way in which these are taught. Teachers are now working hard to make your writing as good. They think carefully about what will be the best work for you all. They are working hard to give you more chances to mark your own work and know that you should use computers in more lessons.

You help your teachers very much by behaving very well. You all get on well and often help each other. All of the grown-ups in the school work hard together to make sure that you are happy and safe and that the school and playground are lovely places to be in. Your parents and other grown-ups who look after you told us that they like the school very much. Well done to you all and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

George Rayner, Lead Inspector