



St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114495
Local Authority East Sussex
Inspection number 289937
Inspection date 14 November 2006
Reporting inspector David Curtis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	East Grinstead Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		North Chailey
Age range of pupils	4-11		Lewes BN8 4DB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01825 722939
Number on roll (school)	93	Fax number	01825 722631
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Kirstine Bowen
		Headteacher	Gillian Morrow
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small rural primary school which serves a diverse community. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils who are vulnerable. A high proportion of pupils join the school other than at the start of Reception and leave before the end of Year 6. Children start school with standards which are generally below expectations for four-year-olds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'We could not be happier with the school and how it meets the individual needs of our children.' The views of one parent describe succinctly this good school, which has many outstanding features. At the heart of its success is the desire of the headteacher and staff to provide a high quality education geared to the needs of the individual. This success is evident in outstanding personal development and well-being and in pupils' good achievement. Children make good progress from the day they start school because of very good provision in the Reception class. This good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6 and pupils achieve good standards in reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The school has addressed successfully the raising of standards in ICT which was an issue from the previous inspection. Standards in writing are broadly average, especially for boys. The school knows this and is aware that assessment of writing needs to be improved. It recognises and inspection evidence supports the fact that pupils do not write sufficiently at length.

Leadership and management are good and ensure that teaching and learning is effective. These are the key factors which enable pupils to succeed as they do. Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected in their very good attendance. They are proud that theirs is an anti-bullying school. Relationships are very good and a strong family atmosphere is very evident in the school and welcomed by parents. Older pupils take their responsibilities for looking after younger children most seriously. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well both socially and academically for the next stage of their schooling.

The school's recently revised good curriculum is clearly having a positive effect. Pupils say, 'We really like not having to sit listening to teachers for too long, we like being able to do lots of practical things which really make us learn.' Whilst teaching is good, there are times when teaching assistants could be used more effectively in lesson introductions. They do not help teachers enough in identifying pupils who are reluctant to ask or answer questions. Similarly, teachers' planning in writing does not always meet the differing learning needs of pupils.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are central to the strengths in pupils' personal and academic development. This is a school which really knows each pupil and supports them exceptionally well. This includes those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable.

The school rightly celebrates its successes but equally is accurate in its own identification for areas of improvement. It has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing, especially for boys, and improve the use of assessment to track pupils' progress in writing.
- Develop a sharper focus on the use of teaching assistants in lesson introductions to ensure all pupils contribute answers and questions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Because teaching and learning of the important skills of reading, writing and number are good, children make good progress in Reception. Their achievement is good and by the end of Reception, they meet the goals they are expected to achieve, with just over a half exceeding them.

Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6 and by the time they leave the school, pupils achieve good standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in writing are broadly average because pupils do not spend enough time on writing at greater length and in more detail. Boys in particular do not make the progress in writing that girls make. However, within the short pieces of writing they do, skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation are good.

There are significant strengths in pupils' speaking and listening skills. By Year 6, they are confident and articulate in answering questions and presenting arguments. They enjoy performing their plays to the rest of the school and have the audience enthralled. Pupils' progress in ICT is now good and their strengths in key skills are evident in the way pupils in Years 1 and 2 combine pictures and text.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable make good progress and achieve well. This is very much as the result of high quality support from class teachers and teaching assistants when working with individuals or small groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are very confident in expressing their feelings and emotions. They take great joy in celebrating their own successes as well as those of their schoolmates. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils value the role of the Year 6 ABAs (anti-bullying agents) as people to whom they can turn for help and guidance. Pupils' understanding of issues relating to Fair Trade and schooling in Gambia is excellent.

Pupils are very confident in explaining the reasons why we need to keep fit and healthy. They know the importance of being safe in classes and at playtimes. ABAs play an important part in looking after younger children. Year 6 pupils make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school in their capacity as librarians and through their lunchtime office duties.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching in Reception is good in all the areas of learning because of thorough and detailed planning. There are strengths in the teaching of phonics and in the development of writing, including handwriting. The use of the interactive whiteboard captures children's interest and attention when they are taught new skills.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their lessons and work hard because they know what is expected of them. Teaching assistants could be used more effectively to help teachers assess those boys who are occasionally reluctant to contribute to discussions. Pupils enjoy practical lessons and are motivated by these. As in Reception, teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to demonstrate and explain new learning. Pupils in Year 6 said, 'We like using the interactive whiteboards because we can use them to teach each other.' Through marking, pupils feel that they know how well they are doing and what they need to improve. Assessment of pupils' progress is mainly good, except in writing. Although it is planned for, pupils currently have no writing assessment books to show the progress they make as they move up through the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The revised curriculum, which is based on 'Learning Journeys' and emphasises developing skills, is proving very popular with pupils. They really appreciate being able to 'do things' rather than 'sit and listen'. A significant strength of the curriculum is the planning for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within each 'Learning Journey'. As a result, their development in these aspects is outstanding. Pupils' learning is enriched by an impressive range of visits and visitors. During the inspection, Reception had a visit from the fire brigade. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 visited a recycling centre and a landfill site. For a small school, it provides an excellent range of very well attended after-school clubs. The school knows that it needs to make writing more appealing to boys.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has an absolute commitment to supporting each and every individual. This commitment includes pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable. All statutory policies are fully in place, including arrangements to safeguard pupils. Pupils receive very good feedback on their work and value this. Pupils value their literacy and numeracy targets. Indeed, they say that they would like targets for all subjects to help them know what they are aiming for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A key factor in pupils' success in the school is that it places very high priority in seeking the views of its pupils. The school council plays a significant role in this process through regular consultation. Improvements to the improved range of playground equipment are the result of their involvement.

The headteacher is an effective leader who has built a staff team dedicated to giving the best to every child. The results of this are evident in pupils' outstanding personal development and in the good standards achieved. Through detailed and accurate self-evaluation, the school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Governors play an important role in monitoring the success of initiatives which arise from the school improvement plan. Currently, the school is in the process of developing the role of subject leaders. These leaders produce good action plans, but the means by which they measure the success of actions are far too vague. They are not linked always closely enough to raising standards and achievement, particularly in setting targets for improvement in writing.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I came to your school. I really appreciated the celebration assembly that you put on especially for me to see. I must say a big thank you to the school council and those of you from Year 6 who met with me. You go to a good school, with some outstanding features, and you are all very much part of your school's success. There are many things that you do well and these are some of them:

- You make good progress in your learning from your very first days in school. By Year 6, your work in reading, mathematics, science and ICT is of a good standard. This is because teaching is good.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you take great pride in being an anti-bullying school.
- You enjoy lessons where you do practical work and lessons where teachers use the interactive whiteboard to teach you new things.
- While I was with you, I know how much children in Reception learnt about the fire brigade and those of you in Years 4 and 5 learnt about recycling and refuse collection.
- You are cared for exceptionally well by your teachers and the ABAs.
- Your school is well led and staff are determined to make sure you all do well.

There are a few things that would make your school even better. I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you with these.

- You could still do better with your writing, especially the boys. I think you need to spend more time writing longer pieces of work. Teachers need to help you by making sure you use writing assessment books so that you can see your own progress.
- In a few lessons, teaching assistants could help your teachers by making sure that you all try and answer questions. In planning writing lessons, teachers need to make sure that the work set is not too easy or too hard for you.