

## St Peter and St Paul CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114564
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	289969
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	393
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Miles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard White
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Buckhurst Road Bexhill-on-Sea TN40 1QE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 211073
<b>Fax number</b>	01424 218081

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In this large school, an average number of pupils have learning difficulties. A small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The headteacher was appointed in January 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This school has come a long way since its last inspection when it was taken out of special measures. Parents recognise the impressive improvement. One explained that 'the school has improved and my child enjoys going'. Another declared that 'the new ideas that the school comes up with are wonderful'. One parent said, 'The school is good, but it can still do better'. This measured comment accurately sums up both the school and school leaders' own philosophy. This is indeed a good school, with some exceptional features. The headteacher and other school leaders have been very effective in eliminating previous underachievement and raising standards but there is no sense of complacency. This attitude, coupled with the success to date, shows the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Good leadership and management have resulted in good teaching and learning. When school leaders monitor lessons, however, they focus too much on the features of teaching rather than on pupils' learning. This sometimes means they think the lessons are more effective than they are. Nevertheless, pupils are now achieving well and catching up on previously lost ground. Children are of broadly average ability when they join the Reception Year. They make good progress and attain standards that are a little above those expected for their ages. The school set very ambitious targets for its 2007 Year 6 national test results and it is on track to achieve them. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average, although they are higher in English and science than in mathematics. Though standards in mathematics have risen throughout the school, this subject has not had as much attention focused on it as English. In mathematics, teachers do not always match work as closely as they could to pupils' different abilities and their marking does not always give pupils clear pointers on what they need to do to improve.

The school's mission statement describes its vision for pupils to 'have a happy, secure and caring school in which their social and emotional well-being and self-esteem are seen as vital to their progress, teachers have high expectations of their work and behaviour, they have their achievements celebrated and know how to evaluate and improve their own work'. This has been admirably achieved. Care, guidance and support are outstanding because of the emphasis placed on involving pupils from the start of their education in evaluating how well they are doing. All pupils refer to their individual targets and even the youngest children routinely assess their own and each other's work, using pink and green marker pens which signify that targets or lesson success criteria have been met ('tickled pink') or that there are points for improvement ('green for growth'). Pupils quickly adopt teachers' high expectations. A Year 2 boy explained that he had marked some sentences as 'green for growth' because, though they all correctly started with a capital letter, they all began with the word 'I' and so 'were not varied enough'.

An outstanding curriculum makes learning interesting and fun for the pupils. Subjects are linked together imaginatively, drawing exceptionally well on partnership arrangements with other local schools to extend opportunities, for example in art. This means that the school's success in raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has not been at the expense of other subjects. The stimulating curriculum has made pupils enthusiastic learners who want to do well. As one very satisfied parent explained, 'The school has allowed my daughter to gain in responsibility and experience. She has been inspired to try her best and enjoy her education.'

## What the school should do to improve further

- Match work more closely to pupils' ability in mathematics and ensure marking in the subject identifies clearly the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work.
- Ensure that monitoring of lessons focuses on the pupils' learning and the progress they are making.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Children make good progress in Reception, so that, from an average start, most attain and several exceed the early learning goals expected for this Foundation Stage of their education. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school. Standards in the Year 2 assessments in 2006 were a little below average. They have improved and parents recognise this, referring to 'considerable progress over the past year'. Standards in the Year 6 tests were average in 2006, having improved sharply on the previous year. This improvement has continued apace as more consistently good teaching has reversed the underachievement of previous years, particularly in English and mathematics. Current standards are significantly above average in English and science. Mathematics has not had the same focus this year as English. Though standards have risen in this subject, they are not as high as in the other core subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their classmates because they are supported well. This is also the case for pupils learning English as an additional language.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. They are increasingly keen to do well and they listen very carefully to their teachers. They do not always listen quite as well to each other when, for example, pupils are presenting their work to the class.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Behaviour is good and pupils work and play well together. There are very few instances of anti-social behaviour. Pupils have been trained as 'peer mediators' to resolve any minor conflicts that occur. Members of the school council keenly take on responsibility and make valuable contributions to improving the school's environment. Prefects take their role seriously and ensure that they are good role models for younger pupils. Pupils raise money for charities and school funds. The school has addressed weaknesses in multicultural provision from the last inspection and there is now much evidence of celebration of different cultures around the school.

Pupils are proud of their Healthy Schools Award and appreciate the importance of a healthy lifestyle through developing good eating habits and participating in the wide range of outdoor and sporting activities on offer. They understand how to keep safe, and all pupils have learnt to swim by the time they leave to go on to other schools. The good progress they make in their key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Attendance is satisfactory. The school works in effective partnership with the local authority to tackle unauthorised absence.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching has improved because there is now much more consistently good teaching throughout the school and so pupils make steadily good progress. Particularly good use is made of the interactive whiteboards in every class to help make learning interesting and fun. From the start of the Reception, the good relationships that staff have with the children get their learning off to a good start. However, children choosing their own activities are sometimes left for too long without direction or any adult questioning and so their attention wanes.

Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond to the challenge. Questioning is used well by teachers to check that pupils understand and to move their learning on. Teachers often target questions at specific pupils rather than just taking answers from volunteers. This keeps the pupils on their toes and makes sure all are involved. Work in most lessons is matched well to pupils' different abilities. This is especially the case in English. In some mathematics lessons, however, work is not always as well tailored to pupils' different abilities. There are examples of very good marking that gives a clear indication of how work could be improved, again particularly in English. Marking is not as good in mathematics.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is one of the main reasons why pupils' progress has improved so much since the last inspection. Senior leaders have revitalised planning to ensure that creative subjects, such as music, art and design and technology, are covered in depth. The links between subjects and with literacy, numeracy and ICT are cleverly planned, helping pupils to make good progress across many different subjects while boosting their key skills. In Years 1 and 2, the school has adopted the Foundation Stage approach of arranging a varied mix of activities in class, even during English and mathematics lessons. This helps to enliven the curriculum for pupils, and it has been done without compromising standards.

The vibrant outside learning environment is used well to extend learning opportunities outside the classroom, for example in science. Excellent links with other local schools give pupils many opportunities to take part in sporting and creative events. The curriculum is also enriched by the very good range of after-school activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Very effective induction procedures ensure that children in Reception make a confident start to school. Each new child is allocated a 'buddy' from Year 6 who supports them at playtime and visits them in class. Child protection arrangements are well established, including robust vetting procedures for adults. Vulnerable pupils are identified early. They are well supported and their progress is carefully tracked. The school makes very effective use of external agencies to help pupils with specific difficulties.

What really stands out in this school is the way in which every pupil is actively involved in assessing their own and each other's work. This, and the targets they each have, mean that throughout the school, pupils have a very good understanding of how well they are doing. This

has contributed significantly to the accelerated progress pupils are making because it results in even the youngest children striving all the time to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has been successful in building an energetic leadership team with a shared commitment to school improvement. Senior staff and subject leaders have worked exceptionally well together to introduce innovative systems so that all pupils now make good progress. These have resulted in a more stimulating curriculum and an impressive system for involving all pupils in evaluating their own achievement. The result is a school where staff, governors, pupils and parents share a pride in how far the school has come and an enthusiasm to make it even better.

Self-evaluation is accurate and has been used well to bring about improvements. School leaders' monitoring has contributed effectively but leaders overestimate the amount of outstanding teaching because they have mostly focused their observations on the features of teaching rather than on the progress pupils are making in lessons. Governors are well informed and are fully involved in school planning and in monitoring the school's effectiveness.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter and St Paul CofE Primary School, Bexhill-on-Sea TN40 1QE

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited you. You told us how proud you were of your school and how good you thought it was. We agree. Yours is a good school. It is very well run and the teaching is good. That is why you are now making such good progress and standards are rising. Standards for the oldest of you are high this year, although you are not doing as well in mathematics as you do in English and science. We think you would do better in mathematics if the teachers made sure that you had work that was neither too easy nor too difficult for each of you, and if the marking in mathematics told you how to do better.

We were impressed with how well behaved you are and how keen you are to do well, and we were pleased to hear how much you know about the need for a healthy diet and exercise. It is very good to see that you all learn to swim by the time you leave Year 6, as that is a particularly important safety skill when you are as close to the sea as you all are. It is good that you listen carefully to your teachers, but you also need to make sure you listen to each other in class.

One of the things that most stands out about your school is the way you are all so involved in assessing your own and each other's work with your 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth' markers. Along with the targets you all have, this is helping you to make such good progress. The other really outstanding feature of your school is the way the teachers have linked subjects together to make learning fun and to help you do well across lots of different subjects, not just literacy and numeracy. It was great to hear Year 6 rehearsing their singing and to see some of your impressive art and design and technology work, like Year 4's designer chairs.

The headteacher and all the staff work very hard to make the school as good as it is. We think they could help the school to even greater success by making sure that when they visit each other's lessons, they look particularly at the progress you are making, as that would help them spot how to make lessons even better.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully, Selwyn Ward Lead inspector