



St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 126005
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293432
Inspection date 21 September 2006
Reporting inspector David Collard

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Holmans
School category	Community		Street Lane, Ardingly
Age range of pupils	4-11		Haywards Heath RH17 6UQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01444 892314
Number on roll (school)	114	Fax number	01444 892907
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Nigel Cheater
		Headteacher	Catherine Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001		

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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter's is a smaller than average primary school which predominantly serves the local village. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly below the national average although the number with statements of special educational need is over twice the national average. The number entitled to free school meals is very low. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

At the time of the inspection the school was being led by an acting headteacher who was the former senior teacher. She had only been in post for two weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school that has made good improvement following the last inspection in 2001. Standards have risen and are above average by Year 6. This confirms that pupils have achieved well during their time at the school.

There are a number of significant reasons why the school has made this good level of progress. The strength of the teamwork amongst the staff is evident through the school. This has enabled it to function efficiently during periods of turbulence. The right developments have been realistically tackled following stringent analysis and have made a difference. The quality of teaching, particularly in Years 4 to 6 has enabled pupils to sustain their progress. In addition, the school knows itself well and the leadership style has enabled other senior managers to make a full contribution to school improvement. All of this has enabled the school to be realistic in its self-evaluation.

Children enter the Reception class with standards broadly in line with those expected. Most have well developed social and speaking skills enabling them to settle quickly. Because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage, they start Year 1 with standards in line with those expected and are well prepared for their future schooling. By Year 2, pupils have made good progress and are achieving standards again in line with those expected but have made particularly good progress in reading.

The good progress continues through Years 3 to 6. National test results at the end of Year 6 indicate that the majority of pupils achieve the expected level for their age and in 2006 nearly half gained levels above this in mathematics and science. However, more pupils were expected to achieve higher levels in writing, so an intensive programme called 'Sounds Discovery' has been put in place. While more still needs to be done an initial impact is already evident. The school's information, as well as inspection evidence, confirms that pupils are working at the levels expected for their age and substantial numbers are working above this. Targets and the progress made towards them suggest that test results will improve further this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and especially those with statements of special educational need make particularly good progress due to the very good support they receive.

The personal development of pupils, which has improved since the last inspection, is good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school, feel they are well looked after and are maturing into sensible and sensitive young people. This is because the systems to support and safeguard them are robust. This has also identified that, through better and consistent self-assessment procedures, pupils would better understand what they need to do to improve. As one pupil indicated, 'I know how well I am doing and have targets to move onto. I am not so clear about how to achieve these.' Pupils would not make this good progress without the good quality teaching they receive. While there have been a number of staff changes all teachers plan consistently and are supported very well by their colleagues. There is some exemplary teaching that provides good models for others.

The good leadership and management prior to this term have been continued under the direction of the recently appointed acting headteacher. She has good knowledge of the improvement plans and has quickly adapted to her new role. This characterises the shared approach to management that enables the school to continually strive for higher standards and demonstrates its good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing for the potentially higher attaining pupils.
- Improve the systems for academic guidance so that pupils are able to understand what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils have a range of very high and low level of skills on entry to the school. For this reason pupils are supported closely as soon as they start school. This support continues through all years. As a result, pupils achieve well. National test results in Year 2 improved again in 2006 with almost all pupils achieving the expected levels for their age. The concentrated effort on improving spelling, reading and writing, and last year's focus on mathematics, have meant that the percentage achieving above average levels has risen. This effort also helped improve the Year 6 results although, because results were not so high in writing, the school has rightly targeted this as the next area of improvement. The good rate of improvement in progress can be seen in the present Year 6. Here, no pupils achieved the higher Level 3 when in Year 2 but now nearly half are working above the age expected levels.

The drive for continuous improvement is clear from the expectations teachers have for their pupils. Pupils are expected to achieve highly in a wide range of subjects, for example history and physical education. Thus, the school is able to cultivate well-rounded individuals and engender a thirst for learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils clearly enjoy school and can eloquently explain their reasons why. Those in Year 6 say they will be sorry to leave but feel that they have been given a good start. The diverse range of activities helps promote good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, evidence of which can be seen in displays and work around the school.

Pupil surveys indicate few instances of bad behaviour or bullying and the school council monitors how effective their own 'peer mentors' are. Pupils know and understand about healthy eating and so they all eat fruit in the mornings! Pupils are involved in fund raising both for home and abroad and are working hard to gain 'Eco-school' status. An innovative project was recently undertaken on first aid that involved both pupils and parents and has further added to the pupils' preparation for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The range of expertise amongst this small staff ranges from very inexperienced teachers to those who have strong teaching expertise. Nevertheless, there is a consistency through the school with no examples of unsatisfactory practice and many examples of good lessons. This is because teaching is carefully monitored to ensure each person's strengths are built upon. Planning is well thought out to develop the different levels of ability, and support staff, some of whom have gained Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status, are used extremely well. There has been some long-term absence but, despite the concerns of a small number of parents, this has been dealt with as best as possible and has not had a lasting or detrimental effect on the pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The well balanced and broad curriculum provides all that is necessary to promote basic skills and other opportunities for exciting and relevant subject links. These include regular science and geography work at Wakehurst Place and a programme for gifted and talented pupils at other local schools. One teacher, who is supported by an advanced skills teacher from another school, teaches pupils Spanish. The range of extra-curricular activities is wide, particularly for older pupils. Personal development is fostered through a range of opportunities for different age groups to work together on creative, musical and aesthetic projects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All relevant procedures are in place to support and safeguard the pupils. Timely support is offered to pupils with learning difficulties, many of whom achieve the expected standards for their age but from a much lower starting point. The close-knit team, which includes not only teachers but also all the support staff, knows pupils and their families well. This enables any problems to be dealt with swiftly. Assessment procedures have improved and in some cases are innovative, for instance, class league tables help pupils understand their targets. However, the school has rightly realised that this is not consistent and the guidance available has not made all pupils aware of how they can improve things for themselves.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strong staff team has been very supportive of the acting headteacher, and the leadership she provides is good. There has been a seamless transition into this role,

since she was already closely involved in the strategic management of the school. The school improvement plan demonstrates that the school knows itself well and is enabling the school to focus on the key priorities that will raise achievement. Good teaching role models are being used to provide effective support. Evidence of the success of these measures can be seen in the way that where there were relatively lower standards, these have now risen.

The governing body provides good support and challenge. Finances are carefully managed and national priorities, such as the new workforce reform and the procedures for safeguarding children, have been incorporated well into this year's planning.

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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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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

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?	2

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 for looking after us so well during our recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you all and joining you in your lessons. No doubt you would like to know what we thought of your school, so I have included the main points below.

- You told us how much you enjoy being at St Peter's and that you felt you were doing well. We agree. When we looked at your work and talked to you about your lessons it is clear that you are making good progress. This is also confirmed by the SATs results.
- We think that you behave well both in lessons and around the school. The games in the playground looked like lots of fun and we were very impressed at how the older children were looking after the younger ones.
- You said that there was very little bullying or bad behaviour and, although there are perhaps some occasional instances, we certainly did not see any evidence of this while we were at the school.
- There have been quite a few changes of staff recently but we think that these have been handled well by your headteacher so that they have not had any lasting effect on the way you make progress through the school. As a result, the teaching you receive is good. We even saw some exceptionally good teaching.
- We think that all the staff really work well together and as a result, your school is very friendly. As you told us, this has also helped make sure that you feel safe and secure.
- Your teachers have focused well on making improvements in the right places. We think that their next ideas about improving writing, especially for those of you who should be really good at it, and helping all of you understand what you need to do to improve will make a big difference.

Finally, can we wish you all the best for the rest of your time at this school and hope that you will continue to work hard and achieve well.



St Peter's CofE Primary School
Holmans
Street Lane
Ardingly, Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH17 6UQ

22 September 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for looking after us so well during our recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you all and joining you in your lessons. No doubt you would like to know what we thought of your school, so I have included the main points below.

- You told us how much you enjoy being at St Peter's and that you felt you were doing well. We agree. When we looked at your work and talked to you about your lessons it is clear that you are making good progress. This is also confirmed by the SATs results.
- We think that you behave well both in lessons and around the school. The games in the playground looked like lots of fun and we were very impressed at how the older children were looking after the younger ones.
- You said that there was very little bullying or bad behaviour and, although there are perhaps some occasional instances, we certainly did not see any evidence of this while we were at the school.
- There have been quite a few changes of staff recently but we think that these have been handled well by your headteacher so that they have not had any lasting effect on the way you make progress through the school. As a result, the teaching you receive is good. We even saw some exceptionally good teaching.
- We think that all the staff really work well together and as a result, your school is very friendly. As you told us, this has also helped make sure that you feel safe and secure.
- Your teachers have focused well on making improvements in the right places. We think that their next ideas about improving writing, especially for those of you who should be really good at it, and helping all of you understand what you need to do to improve will make a big difference.

Finally, can we wish you all the best for the rest of your time at this school and hope that you will continue to work hard and achieve well.

Yours sincerely

David G Collard
(Lead inspector)