

Peter's Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103791
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308423
Inspection dates	16–17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	797
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judy Mills
Headteacher	Sue Pearce
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Peters Hill Road Amblecote Brierley Hill DY5 2QH
Telephone number	01384 816740
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Peters Hill is situated in a residential area in south west Dudley. It is much larger than most other primary schools. Within the school premises there is a private after-school club that offers care for up to 60 children, an Early Education Centre for children aged 3 to 5 years and a pre-school that operates from September to December for children aged 4 to 5. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups, those whose first language is not English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below the national averages. The school has been recognised as a Health Promoting School and it has been awarded Investors in People, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Active School award and Football Association Charter Status.

Since 2006, there have been a number of staffing changes. The governors appointed a new headteacher in April 2006 and two assistant headteachers in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school and it has a number of good features. Pupils and parents appreciate the good quality care, guidance and support for pupils. 'My children continue to flourish thanks to the dedicated team at Peters Hill,' wrote one parent, reflecting the views of many. Staff place a high priority on the development of pupils' personal development. Consequently, progress in this area is good. Pupils develop good social skills, as reflected in the care and consideration they show for each other. They have positive attitudes towards learning and their behaviour in and around school is good.

When children start in Reception, their performance is above that which is expected in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Pupils make satisfactory progress from this starting point and leave the school with standards that are above the national average in English and mathematics. In 2006, attainment at the end of Year 2 fell, particularly in mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 also made less than expected progress in mathematics and science. The school responded to this well by developing a consistent approach to the teaching of these subjects. It also reorganised pupils so that teachers in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 taught their own classes for all lessons. These combined actions had a positive impact on the 2007 results. The most recent assessment information shows that attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 2 has improved. Rates of progress in mathematics and science between Year 3 to 6 are also better. Progress in these subjects is now satisfactory.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In many lessons, pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of because teachers do not challenge them sufficiently through the questions they ask and the tasks they set. When this happens, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. In the better lessons, teachers make good use of assessment information to match work to different learning needs, and pupils' progress is good. The headteacher and senior staff are aware that teaching and learning are not yet consistently good throughout the school, and particularly in literacy and mathematics. They are working with teachers to strengthen the quality of teaching and increase the level of challenge for pupils.

The satisfactory curriculum is well enriched with many clubs, visits, visitors and opportunities for sport. Pupils also appreciate the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument. In Year 4, for example, all pupils learn to play the cornet. During the inspection, they demonstrated their musical skills with confidence and enthusiasm. The school's special educational needs coordinator provides good leadership. She regularly monitors the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and works effectively with support staff to ensure that the curriculum matches their individual needs. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is good. They form a strong working partnership. Governors, assistant headteachers, middle managers, teachers and support staff share their determination to raise achievement further. The headteacher is constantly seeking ways to improve the work of the school. She has recently clarified and extended the roles and responsibilities of middle managers so that they can provide additional support for staff and pupils. However, the headteacher has rightly recognised that some middle managers require support to fulfil their specific responsibilities. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based

on a detailed analysis of teacher assessments and pupils' test results. This evaluation, coupled with recent improvements in attainment and pupils' achievement, contributes to the good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Performance in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development is consistently above what is expected when children start in Reception. In the other areas of learning, performance is at least at the expected starting point for their age and sometimes above it, with variations from year to year. By the end of Reception, most children are working above the early learning goals. This represents satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because staff encourage children to work together and behave well. Children feel well cared for and safe. There are too few opportunities for the children to develop their ideas in the outdoor area because it is underdeveloped. Small group activities are interesting and practical. These help maintain children's interest and encourage them to become independent. Although teachers have detailed information about the progress that children make, this information is not always used well to plan activities that meet the needs of different learners. The Foundation Stage leader provides satisfactory leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress in literacy and mathematics throughout the school.
- Strengthen and improve the quality of teaching and increase the level of challenge so that teaching is consistently good and better.
- Ensure all middle managers fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The children enter Reception with above average standards overall. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, between 2004 and 2006, there was a steady decline in standards with mathematics falling below the national average for the first time in 2006. The 2007 results show that this decline has halted following the introduction of the more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and new books to teach reading. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been consistently above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The Year 6 test results in 2007 and observations during the inspection show that the progress of pupils has improved following some underperformance in 2006. This is due to effective processes of setting targets, monitoring and a more consistent approach to teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective monitoring and support and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, which is evident in good behaviour and a caring ethos. Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good awareness of safety rules, for example, the fire drill and playground rules. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles through frequent exercise, a good understanding of healthy eating and regularly drinking water. They are prepared well for the next stage in their learning because they achieve good standards and social skills. Year 6

pupils in particular contribute effectively to the well-being of others. As prefects and water monitors, they support and advise the younger pupils in school. The work of the enthusiastic school council has a positive impact on school life. They have, for instance, improved playground resources. Good opportunities to foster links with the local and wider community broaden pupils' spiritual and cultural development. For example, Year 5 pupils act as hosts for a group of children from Chernobyl and all year groups support their own chosen charity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While the quality of teaching is improving, and an increasing proportion is good, it is satisfactory overall. Pupils make good progress when teachers set clear targets and use strategies which help pupils to become independent learners. For example, pupils talked in pairs in a Year 6 mathematics lesson to help them consolidate their understanding of percentages. A strong feature of recent developments is the regular and thorough marking of work. Teachers use a "bubble and block" system to help pupils identify what they have done well and the steps that they need to take to improve their work. However, in too many lessons pupils are insufficiently challenged and do not make the progress of which they are capable. In these lessons, work is not always well tailored to meet the full range of pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are confident in their role and, when they are effectively deployed, they give very good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Behaviour in lessons is good and this reflects the warm relationships pupils have with their teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a wide range of activities to support learning. Pupils enjoy and value the after-school clubs, physical education lessons and the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Educational visits widen pupils' experiences and give them the chance to learn in a range of settings. Good examples include a visit to a farm and an outdoor adventure centre. One parent commented, 'The availability of after school activities and trips within the curriculum helps our children develop fully.' The effective use of information and communication technology in lessons adds to pupils' attainment and enjoyment of their learning. The above average standards in literacy and mathematics across the school allow the pupils to access the curriculum provided. However, provision for literacy and mathematics is satisfactory because not all pupils are fully challenged. The school is in the process of reviewing subjects such as history and geography to ensure a greater focus on basic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils and adults have built strong and trusting relationships. For example, members of the school council describe their headteacher as 'a very good listener who sorts out problems'. The school has a strong and caring ethos where children feel safe. While many pupils receive good academic guidance and know what they need to do to achieve their individual learning targets, this is not yet consistent throughout the school. All pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive a good level of care, guidance and support. The school complies with all statutory requirements for safeguarding children and has robust and appropriate health and

safety procedures, including regular risk assessments. The majority of parents are positive about their school and the school plans to develop further links with, and support for, parents. The school uses homework books effectively to inform pupils and parents about progress towards learning targets. Pupils feel positive and well prepared for transition to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a very clear focus on raising standards and achievement. She has used her relatively short time at the school to put in place robust systems to ensure the whole-school community shares this focus. Recent effective action to set challenging targets for all pupils is already leading to signs of improvement in the rates of progress pupils make. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers all have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the school's self-evaluation is accurate and leading to carefully planned actions. While middle managers are aware of their new roles and responsibilities, they have yet to be consistently effective in promoting good quality teaching and learning. Their monitoring of the school's work is inconsistent. Governors support the school and are developing systems of monitoring and evaluation to improve their effectiveness as critical friends.

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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	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

18 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peters Hill Primary School, Brierley Hill DY5 2QH

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school. We liked talking with you about your work and visiting your lessons and assemblies. We would like to say a special thank you to the children in Year 4 who showed us how well they are learning to play the cornet.

We decided that Peters Hill is a satisfactory school and found that it has some good features. You behave well, are very kind and think carefully about the ways you can help others. We especially like all the good work you do to raise money for people in this country and abroad. We were delighted to hear how much you enjoy visiting different places and taking part in the after school clubs. You told us that the adults in the school help you to feel safe, encourage you to keep fit and eat healthily. We enjoyed talking with the members of the school council and think they work hard. They have really helped to improve the playground with all the new games.

When we visited some of your lessons, we could see that when teachers give you work that challenges you, you do really well. We have asked all of your teachers to challenge you to do your best. We have also asked Mrs Pearce, the staff, governing body and especially all the year group teachers to help you learn at a faster rate in reading, writing and mathematics.

Thank you once again to all the adults that work with you, the governors and you for making us feel part of your school. We wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Usha Devi Her Majesty's Inspector



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Her Majesty's Inspector