

Peckover Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110652
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	310377
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	291
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Meekins
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Harvey
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Leverington Road Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 1PJ
Telephone number	01945 584741
Fax number	01945 466234

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Peckover Primary is larger than the average primary school. It is situated on the edge of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire but a considerable number of pupils live beyond the immediate area of the school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, although almost one in five has minority ethnic heritage. Of these, about half are at an early stage of learning to speak English, with Polish, Portuguese and Lithuanian being the most common first languages spoken by these learners. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. Children's attainments on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are below those normally expected of five-year-olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is somewhat higher than that in schools nationally, although the number with a statement of special educational needs is average for a school of this size.

The school currently holds Artsmark (silver) and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Peckover Primary provides a good education for its pupils and gives good value for money. A successful focus on raising standards in core subjects, along with good provision for information and communication technology (ICT), the arts and for sport, ensures that the majority of pupils achieve well and develop into well-rounded young people. The school has strong approval from parents who appreciate the high quality of care that staff provide. 'Peckover has a very happy atmosphere', 'staff are friendly' and 'the headteacher has all the time in the world for the children' typify parents' views.

Children get a good start to their education in EYFS. They make good progress over time to attain standards that are currently above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds achieve well because teaching, learning and the curriculum are good. Teachers link subjects creatively, plan interesting activities and manage their pupils well. As a result, pupils enjoy school and develop positive attitudes and behaviour that add to the quality of their learning. A strong feature of classroom practice is the contribution that teaching assistants make to pupils' learning. The specialist training that they receive enables them to give high quality support to many aspects of pupils' learning and is a key factor in promoting good progress. Teachers make good use of performance information to plan activities that meet pupils' needs across the range of age and ability, to identify groups for additional support or challenge and to set pupils' personal targets.

The school promotes pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. Pupils thrive, both personally and academically, because the school provides a good standard of care, guidance and support. Pastoral care is strong because all staff are attentive to pupils' needs and relationships are good. Safeguarding procedures are robust and fully meet government requirements. The school is largely successful in removing barriers to pupils' learning and support for pupils whose learning or progress falters is effective. Academic guidance for pupils is generally sound. However, in some classes, teachers' marking does not link closely enough with pupils' targets to promote best progress.

The school has dealt successfully with issues that emerged from its last inspection. Provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English and for pupils in mixed age classes has improved considerably, mainly because teachers' use of assessment information is better than it was. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has forged excellent links with neighbouring schools and outside providers that have been central to improving provision and outcomes. He has also done much to increase the rigour and frequency of the monitoring of standards and quality. However, because there have been numerous changes to senior and middle management, some staff are not yet fully trained or involved in this monitoring programme. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is accurate and results in challenging targets for staff and pupils alike. Staff at all levels respond well to this increased level of challenge and their positive response give the school good capacity to improve further. Governance is good but, here too, there is a need to involve newly appointed governors more fully in overseeing aspects of the school's work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception classes with attainment that is below that expected for their age, particularly in literacy skills, mathematical calculations and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills that are close to those expected, except in their ability to link sounds and letters. The school is taking corrective action to improve this area of learning with daily sessions for children to learn letter sounds and to blend them together. Induction procedures are good, so that adults quickly have a good knowledge of each child's needs and respond to them. The caring environment and structured routines support children's confidence and personal development well. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning and welfare. Teaching is good. Children are assessed regularly and activities are planned effectively across the two classes to meet the full range of children's needs. There is a good range of activities that can be chosen by the children themselves to practice skills and to promote independent learning. Children have good attitudes to learning and sustain their concentration on tasks well. The Foundation Stage leader works effectively with the whole team of adults and has a clear understanding of the strengths and improvements to be made. As a result, work is well under way in introducing the new EYFS strategies.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently supports pupils' understanding of their personal targets.
- Give new governors and staff recently appointed to management positions a more prominent role in evaluating the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievements are improving and standards are rising steadily. Children achieve well in EYFS and, from a low base, reach standards that are close to national expectations. The most recent validated assessment data for 2007 shows that pupils in both key stages made satisfactory progress and attained overall standards that were broadly in line with national averages. Since then, achievement and standards have strengthened. Standards continue to vary from year to year because considerable numbers of pupils face barriers to their learning, especially in Key Stage 1. The school provides effective support, with the result that pupils who find learning difficult, the many that are at an early stage of learning to speak English and the more able, make good progress. Most other pupils make at least the progress that they should and a good proportion exceeds expected rates of progress. Preliminary data for 2008 shows a significant improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science subjects by the end of Year 6. For example, in English, almost half of all pupils attained the above average Level 5, because all made or exceeded the expected rate of progress. The school's tracking shows that most had made good progress during their time in the school. Standards in ICT and in the arts are also above national expectations and pupils' progress in these subjects is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school reflects in their generally good behaviour and satisfactory but improving attendance. Their pride is evident in positive attitudes to learning and in the courtesy

and respect they show to each other and to staff. They respond maturely to having positions of responsibility, for example as 'playground friends', and readily offer ideas to improve the school. Whether campaigning for better toilets or for new playground equipment, they appreciate that staff listen and that changes result. Staff promote community cohesion effectively. Pupils enjoy opportunities to talk to town councillors about real community issues, in order to better understand democracy in action. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and permeates every aspect of school life. Pupils grow in self-awareness, think in moral terms and reflect well upon their feelings and actions. Pupils develop respect and appreciation for their own and other cultures. They welcome those from different countries and do much to help them settle quickly; all work and play harmoniously together. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and personal safety and this positively influences their work and play. Good standards in basic skills and ICT provide good foundations for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Standards are rising because teaching and learning are good. Lessons engage pupils' interest, and in most lessons, the pace of learning is brisk. Teachers manage pupils well. They establish good patterns of behaviour and response because their expectations are high. Teaching challenges pupils of different ages and abilities and staff use the school's reward systems effectively to build pupils' self-esteem and to promote a 'have a go' culture. A particular strength is the school's use of teaching assistants to improve the quality of pupils' learning. The school deploys this experienced and well-trained team effectively and this enables them to make an important contribution to effective EYFS provision, to the support for vulnerable pupils and to the development of literacy and ICT skills. Teachers' marking is regular and is usually constructive in the advice it gives. However, the link between marking and pupils' personal targets is not always close enough to focus pupils on the next steps in their learning.

In a minority of lessons, the timing of activities is not as effective as it might be, or staff do not monitor activities closely enough to identify and correct errors and misunderstandings. In these lessons, teaching is less effective and pupils' progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a strong emphasis on raising pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, there are initiatives to increase the opportunities for writing in the curriculum. These are already beginning to improve pupils' progress but have had insufficient time to embed further in order to have their full impact on standards and achievement over time. The school organises the curriculum effectively, linking subjects well to motivate pupils to learn. It follows rolling programmes to ensure that learning is suited to mixed-age as well as single-age classes. The school rightly takes pride in its good provision for the arts and sports in the curriculum. There have been good improvements in ICT, which is now effectively integrated into different subjects to aid pupils' learning. An excellent range of clubs, for example in sport, music, art and foreign languages enables pupils to develop interests and abilities. An extensive programme of educational visits and visitors, such as, artists, theatre groups and musicians, give added meaning and purpose to pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school that looks after its pupils well, whilst constantly challenging them to improve. All pupils, but especially those from other cultural or linguistic backgrounds, receive all the help they need to settle into school. Pupils thrive emotionally because they feel safe, knowing staff will resolve conflicts, attend to their needs and readily provide effective guidance. The very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour are handled promptly and effectively. Care is good because rigorous policies and procedures ensure pupils' security, health and welfare. Extremely constructive partnerships with outside agencies, other schools and the wider community benefit pupils' learning.

Careful tracking and good use of test data give teachers an accurate picture of the standards their pupils have reached and a starting point for realistic but challenging future goals. Staff quickly identify pupils doing better than expected or those struggling to meet their targets and give them the focussed support they need to make the progress of which they are capable. Most pupils find their targets useful because they tell them what they have achieved and how to improve. However, in some classes marking does not reflect the target sufficiently and so progress is slower.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an effective leader. His vision for the school has resulted in a strong team spirit amongst the staff. He motivates staff by giving them a real part to play in improving the school. Consequently, senior leaders give strong support. Newly appointed members of the senior management team are still undergoing training for their increased monitoring role but their work is already bringing greater accuracy to school self-evaluation. The direction that they provide and the challenging targets that they set give the school a good capacity to improve further. The school has begun to promote the leadership potential of other staff by developing their roles as middle leaders. However, many need further experience before their work can impact fully on standards and quality. Governors support the school effectively. Experienced governors gather a considerable amount of first-hand information in order to hold the school to account for what it achieves. However, the involvement of some recently appointed governors remains at an early stage of development.

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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peckover Primary School, Wisbech, PE13 1PJ

Thank you for your warm welcome when Mr Greatrex, Mrs Bosworth and I visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. Thank you for answering our questions so sensibly. I particularly liked your art work in the displays around the school, which was of a high quality and made the school look very bright and interesting.

Here are some of the good things that we found about your school.

- Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start in school.
- Most pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Staff, and you the pupils, do lots to help those who find learning difficult or who are just beginning to learn English.
- Everybody gets on well together and your behaviour is good.
- You get plenty of opportunities to use ICT to improve your learning.
- You enjoy school because there are many clubs and extra activities.
- Mr Harvey, the staff and governors are working hard to improve the school.

Because yours is a good school, there is not a lot that needs to be improved. However, in order to help, we have made two suggestions.

- When teachers mark your work, reminders about your personal targets would help you to remember how to improve your work.
- It would help Mr Harvey if staff who have just become 'leaders' and governors who have recently joined the school could do more of the checking on how well everybody is doing.

You can all help by trying your best to follow all of the good advice that staff give to you.

Best wishes to all at Peckover Primary

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector