

St Peter's Community Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114411
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	311587
Inspection date	10 October 2007
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 category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona McKinnon
Headteacher	Stuart McConnachie
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	St Peter's Road Portslade Brighton BN41 1LS
Telephone number	01273 418069
Fax number	01273 418046

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school, which serves the local area. All children in the nursery attend part-time. All the current teaching staff have joined the school within the last two years. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed a year ago. Children's standards on entry to the school are variable, but consistently below those expected for their age

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 a good school with a number of outstanding features. The school knows itself well but is always striving to be better and has a good capacity to bring this about. The ambitious but realistic plans for the future demonstrate that the school is close to achieving its goal of being outstanding. One sign of its success can be seen in the improved national test results at the end of Year 2. The new headteacher, supported well by his deputy, staff and governors, has had a strong influence in maintaining and improving the positive outcomes reported at the last inspection. He is providing a very strong direction for the school and is highly respected by the whole school community. The overwhelming support of parents is evident from the many positive comments that have been received, such as, 'We are extremely impressed with all aspects of the school'. Over a period of significant changes of staffing and management, there has been a continuing excellent support for pupils, particularly for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. This has ensured that pupils have high levels of respect for one another, they really enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is exemplary. Teachers plan exciting opportunities. Very good links are made between subjects, making lessons relevant and meaningful. Work in books shows that pupils have been given opportunities to use different methods to record their experiences, through letters, reports and artwork, for example. This is preparing them extremely well for their future education. Children make a good start during their time in the Foundation Stage and are well prepared for what lies ahead. Very good use has been made of the restricted accommodation, but rebuilding is imminent and plans are already underway as to how the best use can be made of the extended areas. All aspects of the early learning goals, including good use of the outdoor space, are rigorously covered. Children reach broadly average standards by the time they leave the Reception class, although in some years these are much higher. This good start is built upon through Years 1 and 2. Better analysis of the data is identifying pupils who need extra support and this is provided well through extra groupings and outside help and by giving pupils more challenging work. Standards, which are now above average in national tests, have broadly improved after a decline between 2004 and 2006. Last year, the focus was on improving reading because standards were not high enough. Results from the latest national tests indicate that this focus has been effective, with higher numbers reaching their ageexpected levels. However, whilst the overall proportion of pupils reaching average levels in writing has improved this year, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is lower than the school expects. The headteacher, governors and staff are successfully developing ways to make their school 'one of the best'. Analysis of the data has been rigorous and identified that whilst most pupils make good progress, some could do better. The monitoring of all aspects of the provision has been equally useful and helped provide support where it is most needed. In addition, the school is using all this information to help focus the school improvement plan more effectively and provide an explicit measure of the successful outcomes.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teachers in both the Nursery and Reception years have a good understanding about how to provide the right balance between activities that are closely supervised by the teacher and allowing children to play. Leadership is good and planning extremely thorough, identifying exactly what is to be learnt. Provision has been developed to overcome the restrictions of the small classrooms and difficult access to the outside areas. Often the many and varied activities

are connected with a central theme, such as Autumn. In some activities, more connections could be made, such as in reinforcing key vocabulary. This would help fulfil one element of the overall school improvement plan linked to language development. Nevertheless, children make good progress, with many groups starting Year 1 with standards at, or sometimes well above, the levels expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in writing for those pupils identified with potentially higher ability
- analyse all the available information and develop the school improvement plan so that its success can be realistically measured.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Whilst achievement is good throughout the school, standards have fluctuated since the last inspection. The school's thorough analysis of performance and the subsequent support for pupils means that standards are now on an upward trend. Notably, the targets set in reading and mathematics for those with higher ability were considerably exceeded in the 2007 national tests. Whilst standards improved in writing, there was not the same level of success nor were the targets achieved for the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Pupils' work shows that there are good levels of achievement in some other subjects, such as information and communication technology and art. Plans are being put in place to achieve these levels of progress in other subjects such as religious education and music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

As is summed up correctly in the self-evaluation, 'Children are reflective, respond well to stimuli and show appreciation of the world they live in'. The impact of this can be seen in the way in which pupils work extremely well both on their own and with others. Consequently, pupils have excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For their age, they also have an excellent understanding of safety, with one pupil explaining that an inspector must 'wash his hands before he can help make the bread'. Pupils develop an acute understanding of healthy lifestyles. Many packed lunches include boxes filled with grapes, carrot and mango that are thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils. Pupils make a good contribution to both their local and the wider community through activities such as providing a choir for the lighting of the town's Christmas tree. Attendance has improved and is now similar to the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There have been significant changes of staff in all classes but teaching has generally remained consistent. Monitoring information from lessons rightly indicates that high proportions are good with outstanding elements. Common strengths include the planning of lessons and identifying the particular and individual needs of each pupil. The school has worked hard to improve this by providing work that will move learning on in small steps. As has also been identified in the monitoring, this still needs some refinement. One report by the science co-ordinator noted, 'It is important to check in each lesson that there is progression from one

level to another'. With the more recent stability and with the good level of expertise that is apparent, there is very strong potential for the quality of teaching to continue to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has worked hard to make pupils' experiences challenging, relevant and exciting. Topic books have examples of their success in providing evidence of many different and varied types of work. First-hand experience is at the heart of learning. Visits, visitors and practical work are used extensively. Parents and carers are expected to play their part and are given the opportunity to contribute through very regular newsletters and the opportunity to take part in training sessions on new developments. The success of all the initiatives was borne out by one pupil's comment when asked about what was the best thing at St Peter's. He replied: 'Everything'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school rightly prides itself on knowing all pupils well. The high levels of adult support, the identification of each pupil's needs and the very good use of outside agencies are ensuring that both personal and academic guidance is addressed. In lessons, for instance, all staff are expert at deflecting any potential minor conflicts before they become a major incident because they know when this is likely to occur. Academic guidance has been strengthened by an astute analysis of both external and internal data and is guiding how support will be provided. On an individual basis, much of this has been highly successful although, because it is relatively new, it has not been fully reflected in the specific detail of the overall school improvement plan.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has very successfully worked on creating a common sense of purpose and fulfilling the school's aim of providing pupils with a 'Zest for learning'. He is ably supported in this by the deputy headteacher, staff and a committed and knowledgeable governing body. The correct priorities, formulated by the whole school community, have been developed by thorough monitoring, analysis and evaluations. These are successfully leading to further improvements from a strong position at the time of the last inspection. However, the resulting school improvement plan is not always explicit enough about how these will be measured. Consequently, it is not clear how much impact there has been or whether they have been achieved. Historically, there has been too much money held in reserve each year. Sensibly, plans are now in place to use this funding, some of which is to help resource the new building project, so that it will enhance the provision for pupils currently at the school.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1
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.

Annex A

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	1
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 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

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

- 11 October 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of St Peter's Community Infant and Nursery School, Portslade BN41 1LS Thank you for looking after us so well during our recent visit. We really enjoyed hearing all about your school and about the exciting things you do. You will not be surprised to know that we have said that you are at a good school. We think it has the potential to be one of the best. I have written the main points of my report below.
- You told us how much you enjoy coming to school. We can see why. You work hard and make good progress in every class.
- Those of you in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start. You all play well together. We also like the way that the older children help the younger ones. There are certainly lots of things to do in the playground. It will be even better when all the new building works are finished.
- By the time you leave in Year 2, you are reaching standards at least as good as in many other schools, and sometimes these are much better. We were very impressed with the work in your topic books. It shows how well your teachers plan different activities for you. This shows that your teachers are doing a good job and making sure you all achieve well.
- You are looked after very well. If you have any problems, there is always somebody there to help you and so things get sorted out quickly.
- Your new headteacher has got lots of plans for the future. Your parents and carers told us how much confidence they have in him and the rest of the staff. We agree with all of you.
- We have asked that everybody helps build on the good improvements that have been made. There are more of you who could do even better with their writing and we have asked if ways can be found to help this happen.
- We know that you all get involved in helping to decide on how the school should improve. We have asked if the future plans could say when these improvements have happened. Finally, we wish you all the best for the future. You can help improve your school even more by continuing to work hard and making sure that you always come to school regularly. Best wishes David Collard (Lead inspector)

Annex B

11 October 2007

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BN41 1LS**

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Finally, we wish you all the best for the future. You can help improve your school even more by continuing to work hard and making sure that you always come to school regularly.

Best wishes

David Collard
(Lead inspector)