

Petworth CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125990
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315384
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Lintill
Headteacher	S Jones
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	South Grove Petworth GU28 0EE
Telephone number	01798 342369
Fax number	01798 343195

Age group	4-10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Petworth CofE Primary School is smaller than most primary schools and serves a mixed area that includes the local and surrounding rural areas. Most children are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is very high. Their needs are mainly concerned with speech, literacy and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school holds Healthy Schools, Activemark, Travel Plan and Eco Schools awards. There have been substantial changes since the previous inspection and the headteacher took up post just under four years ago after a period of turbulence in senior leadership and staffing. Two years ago, the school became federated with a middle school, Herbert Shiner School. The two schools currently share the same site, headteacher and governing body. Both schools were inspected at the same time as part of a coordinated inspection. There have been substantial building improvements in the last few years and a new Children's Centre, attached to the school, is due to open shortly.

In September 2008, as part of local reorganisation, the middle school will relocate to Midhurst Intermediate School and from September 2009 Petworth CofE Primary School will take Year 6 pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school is outstanding. It is a very welcoming and caring school, where pupils thrive. Pupils' achievement and personal development are excellent and they behave well. The school is rapidly improving because the development of basic skills is given high priority and there are strong opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and sporting talents. Central to the improvements is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. In a relatively short space of time, she has had an immense impact on turning the school round. She has built a strong team of staff who are fully committed to improving the all round education for each pupil. She is very well supported by an able senior team and governing body. Systems for strong, shared senior leadership are working well and this is particularly important as the school is federated.

Colourful and lively provision in Reception gives children a good start and standards are average by the end of Reception, including in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' achievement is excellent in Key Stages 1 and 2, and by Year 5 standards are exceptionally high in English and above average in mathematics and science. This represents superb achievement compared with pupils' starting points. The exceptional progress of those with learning difficulties and the steps taken to combat the legacy of pupils' past underachievement are also major reasons why standards are rising so well.

The very strong focus on teaching and learning and assessment of pupils' performance is significant to the improvements being made. The school excels in its assessment systems and the way each individual is nurtured and helped to achieve as well as possible. Self-evaluation arrangements are exceptionally strong and well embedded. Teachers' skills in planning and delivering lessons and their subject expertise are rigorously evaluated and developed and this leads to consistently high quality teaching. Parents are very pleased with the school, and as one parent commented, 'I feel the school and the teaching are of a very high standard and my children make excellent progress.' Provision for care, support and guidance is exceptional. Demanding academic targets have been set although these are not yet quite as precise for children in Reception as elsewhere.

The rich curriculum is enhanced by a splendid range of extra-curricular activities which spark pupils' interest and enjoyment of school. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision is very good and has been greatly improved. Specialist teaching from the federated school is used to great effect in music, sport and French. Support from the local church and strong links with the community help to promote pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The contributions pupils make to the school and wider community are excellent. They develop a very good sense of responsibility for caring for others and their local environment. Their ecological awareness is exceptional. The thriving school council is a very good vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to school decision making. Pupils know how to stay very safe, and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is led, managed and resourced well and children get off to a good start to their education. About one third have not had the benefit of pre-school education. As a result, they start school with skills and understanding that are variable but below the levels expected, especially in terms of communication and personal skills – a significant minority have

very limited skills in these areas. Staff provide high standards of care and there is a strong focus on developing children's language and personal skills. Children like coming to school because there are plenty of interesting and exciting things to do, and they make good progress in all areas of learning. Provision has been improved in recent years and standards on entry to Year 1 are rising, especially in literacy and numeracy. Teaching is good and staff work as an effective team to match work to children's wide range of attainment. A good balance is struck between children learning for themselves and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults. Role-play areas are of a high quality. Good assessment and record keeping enable close monitoring of children's progress. Children's achievement targets are demanding but not always broken down into smaller learning steps. This prevents staff from readily evaluating children's progress towards them and making any adjustments that might be needed.

What the school should do to improve further

- In Reception, ensure children's targets are broken down into smaller learning steps.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' overall achievement is excellent. They begin school with attainment that is below expected levels and by Year 5 reach exceptionally high standards in English and above average standards in mathematics and science.

Children now enter Year 1 better prepared than in the past, when there were gaps in their literacy and mathematical skills and few reached higher levels. Over the past few years, standards in Year 2 have greatly improved, and they have been significantly above average for the past two years. These pupils are also better prepared for the next stage of their education.

Standards and achievement have also dramatically improved in Year 5 in recent years. The school's particularly strong focus on improving literacy is paying dividends and by Year 5, standards often meet or exceed those expected nationally at the end of Year 6. The school is ambitious and working hard to lift mathematics and science to the same high level as English. Extremely effective identification and support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties are enabling them to make excellent progress and also enabling those who have underachieved in the past to make up lost ground in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils take pleasure in all aspects of school life. Relationships at all levels are excellent and pupils feel valued and know that adults have their best interests at heart. Pupils usually concentrate very well although a few occasionally find this difficult, despite the strong support provided. The high number taking part in after-school clubs, especially for sport, reflects their enjoyment of school and strong commitment to fitness. Pupils respect the feelings of others and have a very well developed sense of fair play. They contribute very well to their community as members of the school council, when leading playtime activities for younger pupils and in their recycling activities. They are keen fund raisers for many good causes and have elected ambassadors for the school who represent the school at various events in the community. The school rigorously promotes good attendance. Right from the start in Reception, pupils learn to use their initiative, solve problems and make decisions. Their excellent personal development

and progress in basic skills ensure they are very thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Throughout the school, teachers' planning is extremely good and they are well informed about the subjects they teach. They manage pupils well and know exactly what they expect pupils to learn. Their explanations are clear so that pupils are confident about tackling their work. They ensure pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their speaking and thinking skills through discussion. They use a range of approaches to help their pupils learn by listening and watching and by active participation. Assessment procedures are first-rate and result in work that is very well matched to pupils' learning needs in the mixed age classes. Teachers bring learning alive by using high quality practical resources such as interactive whiteboards. They have the knack of making learning interesting. The teaching of the key skills of literacy and numeracy is outstanding. Support for the high proportion of pupils with literacy learning difficulties is exceptionally good because of expert specialist teaching and the skilful support provided by teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in the context of a broad and rich curriculum. It provides a firm foundation for pupils to learn basic skills and to create. There are some strong learning opportunities in art and design, music and sport. Additionally, the very wide range of well attended activities outside normal hours encourage pupils to be active and healthy, take an interest in caring for their environment and extend their interest in music. The superbly organised provision for pupils with learning difficulties enables these pupils to achieve extremely well. Pupils' ICT skills develop well with effective use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. There is excellent liaison with other schools, especially the federated school, to develop pupils' skills, give them experience of working with other pupils and ease the transfer to their next school. Links between subjects and practical experiences bring learning alive, especially in writing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after at school. Vulnerable pupils are very well supported and there are excellent links with outside agencies to ensure they are given every opportunity to succeed. There are very effective arrangements for helping those who join the school with language, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Children are carefully settled into Reception and there is a very smooth transfer to middle school. Child protection and health and safety measures are robust. Academic assessment is first rate with consistent systems for tracking pupils' attainment and progress across the school. Target setting is very well established although targets in Reception are not quite as specific as in the rest of the school. Pupils are clear about their personal targets and learn to evaluate their progress towards them. In addition, teachers provide well judged guidance through marking. All these factors help to promote children's excellent progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's leadership is exceptional. Her clarity of vision, drive, enthusiasm and commitment to improvement are recognised and appreciated by staff, governors, pupils and parents. That the school has rapidly progressed and the federation has developed so successfully is a testament to her expertise and leadership in managing two schools in different circumstances. Very effective systems ensure there is strong, shared senior management and administration across the federation. The senior leadership team has also proved itself to be very effective and successfully manages the school when the headteacher is engaged in the other school. All levels of management, including a very effective governing body, contribute very well to making sure there is all round school improvement. The extensive building work has been successfully managed and did not distract leaders from their clear focus on raising achievement. Strong teamwork amongst staff contributes to the exceptionally thorough monitoring and evaluation of teaching and progress. Any issues are identified quickly and staff tackle them energetically and enthusiastically. The sharing of staff's expertise across both schools has begun, for example in art and music, and joint subject leadership makes best use of the staff's subject expertise. The middle school's specialist facilities, such as the music room, food technology suite and science laboratory, are also being used to enhance learning opportunities for Petworth CofE Primary School pupils. Issues from the last inspection have been tackled very effectively and the school's record shows it has an excellent capacity to continue to progress.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

11 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Petworth CofE Primary School, Petworth, GU28 0EE

Many of you will remember that Mr Shaw and I visited your school a little while ago. We were very impressed with the welcome you gave us and by your politeness. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

First, you need to know you go to an outstanding school. Your headteacher is doing a really good job of leading and managing both of the schools in your federation.

- You make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Everyone in the school takes very good care of each other and your good behaviour helps to make your school a happy one.
- The staff keep a very careful eye on how you are getting on and make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets it.
- You are doing a very good job in your eco work, for example when you do recycling.
- You have wonderful opportunities to take part in lots of different activities in school, for instance in information and communication technology (ICT), art, music and sport, and with other schools, especially Herbert Shiner.

Schools can always get better, and to do this we have asked your school to ensure that those of you in Reception have targets that are broken down into smaller steps.

I hope you will continue to work hard in all you do so you get better and better. I wish you every success in the future.

With very best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector

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Lead inspector