

Peak Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112848
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325699
Inspection date	16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	35
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 Terry Boylin
Headteacher	Mr David Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tideswell Road Peak Forest Buxton Derbyshire SK17 8EG
Telephone number	01298 22074

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is much smaller than average. It serves the isolated village of Peak Forest and its surrounding area. Pupils come from socially and economically mixed backgrounds. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. Attainment on entry is a little below average. The school holds Quality Mark for Basic Skills and the Activemark awards for work in physical education. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision takes the form of a Reception class.

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. Pupils' academic progress and personal development are good, largely the result of good teaching and the pupils' very positive attitudes. The school's good tone is set by the headteacher and strongly supported by staff. There is an ethos of high expectations and care for one another. Parents support their children and what they see as 'their school' very strongly. Pupils' attendance is exceptionally high and fund-raising for the school by the local community is equally impressive.

The school moves children from standards that are below average on entry to above average at the end of Year 2. In Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science frequently exceed national averages. Currently, they are broadly average but rising. The small number of pupils in each year causes this variability. Good teaching and learning are particularly consistent in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 teaching is less effective, pupils' progress is inconsistent. Teaching in the Year 3 to 6 class is satisfactory overall, sometimes good. In all situations, teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils. The best lessons have higher pace and challenge and pupils make more rapid progress than in lessons judged as satisfactory. There is evidence of outstanding practice in the EYFS and Years 1 and 2.

The headteacher and governors monitor the school's work closely. They have put effective additional support in place in Key Stage 2 to help improve the performance of boys, especially with their writing. In the school as a whole, they have given high priority to the employment of as many teaching assistants as possible. The raising of 10,000 pounds in a day to help fund such posts indicates staff commitment and shows the strength of community support.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They enjoy school. Pupils have an extremely clear understanding of how to maintain personal safety and lead healthy lives. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute significantly to their progress in lessons.

These constructive features arise from clear guidance by staff, good support arrangements and an encouraging approach by the headteacher and his colleagues. All statutory requirements are met. Pupils enjoy school and make good progress. The curriculum is imaginative and well balanced. Since the last inspection, the school has improved pupils' awareness of ethnic minority cultures in the UK through educational visits and the use of visitors to the school, such as the Indian dance group.

The headteacher, with good support from staff and governors, ensures that school life is orderly, safe and enjoyable. His leadership and management have sustained good achievement and good personal development over a long period. High expectations are set, self-evaluation is accurate and action is taken to counter relative weaknesses. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Community cohesion is very strong. The school is the focus of much village activity throughout the year and enjoys strong local support.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children first come into school they have skills that are slightly below those normally expected for their age. Nevertheless, progress and achievement are good. Pupils well supported

in their learning and there is a good range of well-planned activities. Children make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. They are heard and listened to and the adults are positive role models. There is a friendly, homely and welcoming atmosphere in the EYFS that helps them to settle and feel part of the group. Children behave well and any anxieties they may have are dealt with quickly as their welfare and well-being are taken seriously. All are encouraged to be involved in the activities, such as drama activities and creative tasks. The partnership with parents and carers is valued. Staff take time to share the children's learning informally with the parents who on a daily basis bring their children into school and use the opportunity to address any concerns or worries. The children's attitudes towards one another are very positive. They go out of their way to look out for each other and encourage their friends to participate and play together. Leadership and management are good, with a clear view of the effectiveness of the provision and a vision for what needs to be done to improve further. The children use the outdoor area and there is careful planning to ensure that their learning is being promoted although access is difficult and children cannot initiate their own play and develop their ideas at will.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 to match the best in the school.
- Improve rates of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement in this school is good. Standards on entry to Reception are below average, but by the time pupils leave Year 6, their standards at least match national ones. Year 6 results in English, mathematics and science vary significantly from year to year, from well above average to a little below. Currently, they are average overall, with mathematics above average and all three subjects on a rising trend. Greater consistency is found in the above-average standards in Year 2 results. Progress between the end of Year 2 and 6 is not always good. The school is taking effective action to stabilise and improve pupils' writing in Key Stage 2, and the work of current Year 5 and 6 pupils indicates that this policy is bearing fruit. In a few years, boys underperform by more than the national margin. Booster classes and other forms of support are now helping to close the gap.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well and are friendly, welcoming and respectful of one another. Relationships in the school are very good and there is a caring atmosphere in which pupils look after each other and show tolerance and understanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as there is a strong ethos in the school, encouraging pupils to be reflective and to think of others. Pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves healthy and safe is excellent and they can articulate clearly what they should do to maintain a healthy lifestyle and remain free from harm. They are aware that exercise promotes their well-being. The whole school benefits from swimming sessions. Pupils say that they enjoy school. Their attendance record is impressive. They feel that they have good opportunities to take on responsibilities. Their attitudes towards one another are positive. They usually apply themselves to the tasks they are asked to do with a will, though occasionally, some need to be reminded to concentrate. Being a part of the

community is something they value and they are aware of how the local area supports the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. There are instances of outstanding practice and some lessons where it is satisfactory. In all teaching, staff show a good knowledge of their pupils and a keen awareness of the challenge of working with mixed ages and abilities. They respond well to this in most lessons, using group work, information and communication technology (ICT) resources and teaching assistants effectively to stimulate the full range of pupils' needs. In the very best lessons, the pace is brisk and interest levels stay high throughout. The energy and active involvement of pupils, which results in good learning, is a feature. Where it is satisfactory, the pace is slower, partly reflecting planning that lacks timings to instil urgency. Pupils are good learners: they have very positive attitudes and behave well. They are keen to do well for their teachers and to support each other.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are motivated well by the range of lessons and other activities. A good balance is struck between promoting the essential skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT and scientific understanding and developing awareness of foundation subjects, such as geography, technology and history. Schemes of work ensure that lesson planning builds-in a variety of resources and sufficient opportunity for assessment. Some links between subjects have been developed, for example in joint history and geography topics. ICT has been integrated across the curriculum giving opportunities for application of skills. Useful 'blocking' in Key Stage 2 has allowed most subjects, apart from key areas of learning, to periodically to have five consecutive afternoons to pursue a project in depth.

Extra-curricular activity has expanded since the last inspection. Sport plays a major role. Educational visits and visitors to the school enrich pupils' experience significantly, with events such as Indian dance and language work from around the world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Caring for the pupils is a strong feature of this school, where the ethos is one of being thoughtful, supportive, kind and considerate. There are procedures in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe and free from harm and staff are trained and kept aware of what they should do if they have any concerns. Pupils know that they can approach adults in school if they have any concerns and that these will be dealt with properly. They also say that, whilst inappropriate behaviour is rare, there are clear and effective measures to ensure that pupils behave well. Those identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and they make similar progress to their peers. Attendance levels in the school are extremely high, which the school attributes to the pupils' keenness to be involved. If any unexplained absence does occur, the school is well placed to address the issue and to work with families to improve the situation. Pupils know their targets for the next challenging steps in their learning and can explain these clearly. Their progress is tracked carefully and support is offered to ensure

that they make acceptable progress. The partnership with parents and carers is positive and is particularly strong when the children first start school. Links within the local community are also mutually beneficial.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school benefits from leadership that is professional, friendly and welcoming. Staff and pupils know that they are valued by the headteacher and are confident in developing their skills. The governing body has good knowledge of its school and carries out the role of critical friend well. Self-evaluation is accurate. Monitoring by the headteacher and the governing body gives the school a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses and action has been taken to redress underperformance, for instance, amongst boys in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing. The headteacher and colleagues set a good tone so that pupils value acting maturely and showing consideration. Their good academic progress and personal development reflect well on leadership and management at every level. Strong and effective links between the school and local community have been promoted by the headteacher and his colleagues, making the school a focus for local social and cultural events.

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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 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	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peak Forest Primary School, Derbyshire, SK17 8EG

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school last week. Your excellent attendance record shows how much you enjoy school and we agree that your school gives you a good education.

We were especially impressed with:

- the good progress you make between starting school and leaving Year 6
- the above average standards reached in Year 2 tests and Year 6 mathematics
- the good care, guidance and support you are given
- your own good behaviour and excellent awareness of how to stay safe and live healthy lives
- the headteacher's clear lead on how you should work to achieve high standards and always be alert to the needs of others in and out of school
- the good teaching in many lessons, especially in Reception and Key Stage 1
- the strength of support for your school from parents and the whole community.

If the school is to become even more successful it needs to:

- make sure your standards rise further in Key Stage 2, so that the progress you make between Year 2 and Year 6 becomes not just satisfactory but 'good.' This requires more teaching in Key Stage 2 to have the high pace and challenge seen in the school's best lessons.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at primary school.

Yours sincerely

Bob Drew

Lead inspector