

Peafield Lane Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122434
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327727
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	364
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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Nestor
Headteacher	Mr Gary Walker
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Litton Road Mansfield Woodhouse Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG19 9PB
Telephone number	01623 460 366
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average-sized school on the outskirts of Mansfield Woodhouse, with a large proportion of pupils who travel from beyond the school's catchment area. The percentage of pupils who claim free school meals is low. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few pupils speak a language other than English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools.

The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a Nursery (Foundation 1) and two Foundation Stage classes (Foundation 2). Funding for the EYFS is both direct and through the school's budget, but the setting manages one EYFS unit within the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness: this is a good and improving school. Leaders, governors and staff have clearly demonstrated their commitment, ambition and capacity to make it even better. Provision for children in the EYFS is also good.

Key to the school's current success is the headteacher. In a relatively short time he has got to know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and has skilfully carried staff, governors, parents and pupils along with his findings and ideas, every step of the way. Everyone has played their part in setting out a vision for the future and they all share the same clear understanding about where the school is on its improvement journey. Furthermore, significant changes to the leadership and management structure of the school have allowed for greater devolvement and sharing of responsibility. Consequently, the response to issues is swift and the pace of school improvement is quickening. The next step is to continue work to develop leadership and management systems across school so that staff at every level recognise and play their full part in making sure that improvement happens as quickly as possible.

This is a welcoming school where everyone feels valued because of a well-established caring and inclusive ethos. Pastoral care is strong and results in pupils feeling safe and cared for. Pupils show good enjoyment, work hard and behave well in lessons and around the school. They have the right attitudes towards learning, both because teachers develop good relationships with them and also because they appreciate the way teachers plan and deliver the good curriculum. They say the curriculum is getting even more interesting and fun the more hands-on and practical it becomes. There is a real buzz in the air when pupils are working together to be the first group to solve real-life problems. A good range of clubs, and the effective use of memorable visits and visitors, enhance learning and contribute well to pupils' good personal and social development. The curriculum has yet to include detailed planning of how pupils might develop further their understanding and beneficial partnerships beyond their immediate locality.

Teaching is good, never less than satisfactory and sometimes outstanding. Teachers use careful assessments and the rigorous tracking system to plan lessons and set targets that increasingly challenge pupils to do well. Consequently, most pupils make good progress whilst they are at the school. A period of declining achievement and standards in English and science has been halted. Whilst standards are satisfactory at present, encouragingly, pupils look set to achieve targets that are more challenging in the future. These better outcomes need to be maintained consistently, particularly for boys and for the most able.

Parents appreciate the school's existing and developing strengths and are overwhelmingly supportive of its work. The comment of one summed up many when they wrote: 'Peafield is a truly wonderful school, made so by the dedicated team of staff. I am so pleased that my child has been here.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Caring and able staff, led by a practitioner with an excellent understanding of learning in the Early Years and its curriculum, welcome the children warmly. Therefore the young children settle extremely quickly and happily. Some join with language and social skills below expectations for their age. A plethora of highly effective strategies is introduced in the Nursery to develop

children's confidence and personal skills. These are built on suitably in Foundation 2 and result in children making exceptional progress in their personal skills which are good by the time children enter Year 1. Children share, take turns and look after each other well. They learn how to listen, respond and behave well from the good examples and high expectations that adults set. The promotion of children's learning and development is good and most now reach expectations for their age in most areas of their learning by the time they transfer into Year 1. The integrated and themed approach to the organisation of the curriculum in the Nursery is outstanding. It gives children an array of exciting opportunities to experience, experiment and practise what they are learning in different ways across all areas of the curriculum so progress here is often swift. Similarly, children are given many opportunities to build their skills of independence and to direct their own learning. Leaders are looking forward, quite rightly, to developing these practices fully in Foundation 2 and into Year 1. Skilled practitioners were seen to be making the most of opportunities presented through child-initiated and purposeful play to extend children's learning. They use well chosen and incisive questions and recognise when to stand back and let children try things out for themselves. However, there are not yet enough of these opportunities, used consistently well, across the EYFS and as a result progress slows. Good leadership and management have resulted in highly effective systems to gather a great deal of information about how well children are doing and in leaders who know the strengths of the provision and its areas for development well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards further by continuing to embed the measures taken to ensure that boys and the most able do as well as they can.
- Continue to develop systems for leadership and management so that responsibility for raising achievement and standards is shared at all levels.
- Further develop the school's contribution to the promotion of community cohesion by engaging in partnerships and other opportunities beyond the immediate locality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are now making good progress. This masks a more complex picture where, in the years following the last inspection, standards declined from being above average at the end of Year 2 to average in writing and slightly below average in reading and mathematics. Similarly, at the end of Year 6, standards declined in English and science. The progress of pupils slowed and occasionally slipped behind that expected in English and science, particularly for boys and the most able, who did not achieve well enough. However, over the last year, rigorous systems have been put in place to closely assess and check on pupils' progress. These have resulted in weaknesses being identified and measures promptly put in place to address them. As a result, evidence in school confirms that the progress pupils are making is at least satisfactory, most often it is good and in some areas of the school, where teachers really challenge all pupils, it is outstanding. Pupils are on track once again to achieve at least average standards at the end of Year 2 and above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. The achievement of these more challenging targets now has to be sustained over time. Good provision for those who find their learning more difficult ensures that they make similar progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because lessons are 'interesting and fun' and staff provide 'lots of help for those who need it'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils relate well to teachers and to one another, and display a clear sense of right and wrong in issues such as bullying and fair play. Consequently, behaviour is good and pupils treat others with courtesy and respect. However, pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures in Britain is limited and this restricts the school's capacity to promote pupil understanding of wider communities. Nevertheless, pupils make a good contribution to school life and a satisfactory contribution to the community beyond the school gates. Pupils know how to be safe. They are untroubled by bullying or disruptive behaviour. 'School feels like a second home', said one. Attendance is close to that in schools nationally. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, are enthusiastic about physical education and sport - unsurprisingly as they are national champions in soccer, and have played at Wembley Stadium. Satisfactory standards of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), along with positive attitudes and willingness to cooperate, provide a sound preparation for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All adults manage behaviour and lessons well. They enjoy respectful relationships with pupils who behave well and work hard so lessons flow. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and careful assessments to prepare well planned and stimulating lessons. They have embraced the themed topic-based approach and use practical and meaningful activities wherever possible to enthuse all pupils. Able teaching assistants support those who need additional help with their learning, ensuring that these pupils do well. This has particularly improved boys' learning. Teachers make expectations for lessons clear and pupils' work is marked with comments and targets for individuals, contributing constructively to raising achievement. Progress is even better where pupils assess their own performance, set their own targets for improvement and are given opportunities to direct their own learning. Some exemplary practice was seen. This included highly enthusiastic teaching using incisive questioning, which really challenged pupils to develop their thinking and problem solving skills, and ensured that the learning of pupils of all abilities proceeded at a fast pace. Leaders recognise that such practice is not yet consistent across all areas of the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy the new creative curriculum which has recently been introduced at the school. It offers them a stimulating and exciting range of learning experiences, delivered through a thematic approach which links different subjects in meaningful ways. The remodelling of the curriculum has been carried out astutely in response to the outcomes of the school's own self-evaluation, and it recognises the needs and interests of all groups of learners and includes the development of higher order skills for the most able. A well thought-out programme of personal, social and health education helps to ensure that these outcomes are good. The curriculum is well enriched, for example, by opportunities to attend a range of clubs which go beyond the required subjects. Learning is well supported by educational visits, such as to

Sherwood Forest where pupils took part in nature studies and learnt about the legend of Robin Hood. Visitors to the school add greatly to the learning experience. Pupils were inspired by the visit of a local Olympian who brought along her gold medals and joined the pupils in their lessons. School leaders recognise the need to develop the curriculum further to better promote pupils' awareness of cultural diversity and ways that they can develop their contribution to the well-being of communities beyond the immediate locality.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures are rigorous in ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. All requirements are met in ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Central to the school's ethos is that everyone is included in all that the school has to offer and adults get to know pupils well. Highly effective and manageable systems have been put in place to assess pupils and to regularly check on their progress. Staff are increasingly taking ownership of these as can be seen in the rapidly improving outcomes for pupils in some areas of the school. These systems are used to quickly identify any potential underachievement and to provide the appropriate forms of support. They are also used to set targets for pupils, who say these help them to learn more effectively. Where pupils are becoming skilled in evaluating their own work and even setting their own targets for the future their progress is more rapid, but this practice has yet to be applied consistently well across school. Procedures for managing the provision of additional support are rigorous and ensure resources are well directed. Links with outside agencies are strong so that pupils with particular difficulties can receive specialist support. Partnerships with parents to help pupils do well are also strong and highly valued.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has demonstrated an outstanding commitment and contribution to recognising and halting a decline in standards and achievement. He is successfully implementing the necessary measures to turn the school around. A key to his success has been his incisive evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses followed by the prompt identification and execution of the correct priorities. These have included a revised staffing structure, an inclusion co-ordinator, improvements to security, a new curriculum, tracking and target-setting systems and development of the EYFS, to name but a few. Importantly, he has astutely set about empowering and developing staff and governors, building on their existing skills and talents so that they can use these even more smartly to share responsibility for school improvement. One member of staff said: 'We have always known that this could be an outstanding school and now we understand what we have to do achieve it.' Governors say they feel 'transformed'. Because of the excellent quality of information they receive they are able to provide a high level of support and challenge to school leaders. The team with responsibility for setting a clear strategic direction for the school's work has been broadened and those in the team share a high level of ambition for the future. Leaders are rightly planning to continue to develop the systems of leadership so that responsibility for monitoring and raising standards can be shared even more effectively by those at all levels.

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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	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	3

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	3
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?	3
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**

26 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Peafield Lane Primary and Nursery School, Mansfield, NG19 9PB.

We were pleased to meet you and the staff recently and enjoyed the time we spent with you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome, talking to us, and helping us to find out about you and your school. We especially enjoyed seeing you play and work together cooperatively and watching you politely carry out your jobs, which help to make your school such a pleasant place.

You go to a good and improving school. Those who lead the school, the teachers and all the other grown-ups do their best to look after and care for you. Your good behaviour in class and around school helps you to learn. It is clear that you are happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there. Teachers are good at planning interesting things for you to do and which help you to learn well. Most of you make good progress while you are at the school and you often reach standards which match those of most children. Those who lead the school check carefully on how well you are doing and this information tells them that your progress is improving and the standards you reach look set to rise.

The school is keen to find ways to help you do as well as you can, so we have asked those who lead the school to make sure that:

- more of you reach the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6, and boys do as well as they can
- everyone plays their part in getting the school to improve as quickly as possible
- you learn to understand about different communities beyond your immediate neighbourhood and how you might play your part in helping them.

We are sure that Mr Walker and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to work hard, behaving well and by coming to school every day.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector