

Peasehall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124603
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328177
Inspection date	10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	17
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 Gaye Wilkinson
Headteacher	Mrs Kath Cook
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hackney Road Peasehall Saxmundham Suffolk IP17 2HS
Telephone number	01728660296
Fax number	01728660296

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the extent to which pupils make progress and whether improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) and presentation of work have had an impact on achievement
- the effectiveness of the federation with a neighbouring primary school in improving teaching, learning and the curriculum
- whether what is taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage consistently meets children's needs.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, staff, parents and pupils, observations of teachers and pupils at work and scrutinising documents, including records that track pupils' progress. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Peasenhall Primary School is much smaller than others of its type. Since 2005, it has collaborated in a federation with another small primary school. Older pupils from both schools are taught together for part of the week. The two schools share the same headteacher and their staff members work as a team to carry out much of their improvement planning. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, aged four to five years old, is available in a classroom with pupils in Key Stage 1. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils has been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Assessed over time, attainment on entry is broadly average. However, it varies greatly from year to year.

The school has an eco-schools silver award and is accredited under the Healthy Schools and Activemark schemes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Peasehall Primary is a good school. This matches its own evaluation. When the federation with a neighbouring school was first established, Peasehall suffered a number of unavoidable staffing difficulties. The headteacher put successful measures into place to ensure that these difficulties did not cause standards to slip though they did not rise either because of the unsettled staffing picture. As soon as the staffing situation was stabilised the headteacher set about improving the pupils' achievement. Since then, her outstanding leadership, including effective self-evaluation, has brought great improvements in all aspects. Despite the unsettled start to the federation parents are very pleased with what has happened. Many had been worried about a threat of closure. At first, some were also uneasy about working under one headteacher in a federation of two schools, feeling that theirs might lose identity. The remarkable openness of leadership, strength of governance and changes for the better have now won their unstinting support. One of them summed it up, 'All the staff are very helpful. I find the level of learning to be of a high standard. But it wasn't always like that. The headteacher is great'. It required outstanding leadership to deal with the federating of the two schools, the resolution of staffing difficulties and reassuring anxious parents that this was the best move for their children. Furthermore, the school has some features that have already reached an exemplary level. This track record of considerable improvement means that the capacity for further development is outstanding.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, because of an outstanding curriculum that includes excellent personal, social and health education. This ensures that pupils fully understand the importance of respecting each other's different views and needs. As a result, they work together very effectively and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils from both schools in the federation were observed researching together a project to help save albatrosses from extinction. Cooperation was at an exceptionally high level. In this lesson, teaching was excellent, enabling pupils to explore the birds' flight paths across a large map of the world. They sought places such as South Georgia and used mathematical skills to measure the distances flown. At times, pupils busily checked information on available laptops, as the need arose. This type of thematic approach to learning is an established feature of what is taught. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning this way and attendance is exceptionally high. Many opportunities have been introduced for pupils to play a musical instrument. For example, all older pupils are currently learning the clarinet. Enrichment through Forest Schools activities, visits, visitors and well attended clubs also adds much to this remarkable curriculum.

Achievement is good, although performance fluctuates from year to year. Differences in characteristics in the school's very small year groups result in a comparatively large impact on yearly standards. Nevertheless, attainment by the time pupils leave in Year 4 is usually above average. Currently, standards in mathematics are high. This is because of a recent highly successful focus on provision in this subject led by the federation's subject coordinator. Strong leadership has done much to improve provision in ICT, which was an issue in the last inspection. This means that nearly all pupils' skills now match normally expected levels for their ages, which was not the case at the time of the last report. A particular strength is pupils' ability to pick appropriate uses for technology by themselves. They frequently break off from their immediate task, find the specific information that they need and then return to complete it. Presentation, handwriting and neatness have also improved considerably. Good teaching is providing guidelines for setting out work clearly in logical steps. This is helping pupils in their learning, as they can

follow sequences more easily and thereby gain in understanding. In the 2008 national assessments at the end of Year 2 standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Given these pupils' starting points this represents good achievement and progress. Effective provision for pupils who struggle with learning and for able pupils and those who are gifted or talented ensures that they also make good progress in their learning. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Provision is under review and improvements are already underway. Indications from the tracking of progress are that achievement is now improving.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good - the first three elements especially so. Pupils know right from wrong and act almost unerringly on this knowledge. They are kind and helpful towards adults and each other and enthusiastically involve themselves in causes and charities. They are genuinely excited about the natural world around them and amazed at the variety of life that they learn about. While some elements of cultural development are strong, pupils lack opportunities to understand and experience Britain's rich ethnic diversity. The governing body, led by a highly effective chair, has recently raised this issue with senior leaders who are already devising plans to rectify the situation. Pupils know much about how good food and exercise contribute to health and fitness. The school's procedures for care, guidance and support are outstanding. Statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. Pupils feel secure as a result of this high quality care; they act very sensibly and are confident to raise matters that affect them, both informally and through their enterprising school council. They contribute well to local events, helping at village fetes, singing at festivals and ensuring that their school is as ecologically sound as possible. This also helps to bind the community together effectively. Pupils' developing literacy, mathematical and ICT skills, linked to their strong social skills, mean that their prospects for future success are good.

Highly effective monitoring, evaluation and feedback by staff at all levels have ensured that teaching and learning are now consistently good and increasingly outstanding. Thorough tracking of pupils' progress indicates that this teaching results in sustained good progress and rising levels of attainment. It is also used highly conscientiously to set challenging, realisable targets that are now being met consistently. The federation allows more flexible use of expertise and finance than previously, contributing to good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Effectiveness in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, because leadership has not been as effective in raising standards as quickly as in other age groups. This is partly because of weaknesses in exterior accommodation, that the school has only recently been able to address, which have affected children's achievement. Nevertheless, good leadership and management are evident, and much improvement in practice and academic guidance has occurred. Children receive a satisfactory and improving start to their learning. Arrangements to ensure children's daily health and safety are very thorough. They are supported effectively, so they settle into school quickly. Reception aged children are taught together in a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. The new outside area now provides much better opportunities for activities to flow from indoors to outside, promoting skills in all six areas of learning. However, planning for this type of activity is not yet fully established. Good leadership has correctly identified that adults direct children too much about how to use and learn from the resources available, thereby limiting creativity and acquisition of skills. A good emphasis on phonic skills is evident. Children work confidently and happily, learning to cooperate with adults and each

other. They enjoy being at school, and working alongside the older children prepares them well for the future. By the time they enter Year 1, children are usually close to normally expected goals. Currently standards are higher than usual. However, attainment on entry varies greatly from year to year and, considering starting points, this represents satisfactory progress and achievement. The school's excellent systems for tracking progress extend to this age group and show clearly that the changes are now resulting in rapidly increasing progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, place more emphasis on child-initiated, rather than adult-led activities, using children's own interests to improve their skills, and thereby raise achievement.
- Provide pupils with specific opportunities to experience and learn about Britain's rich multi-ethnic culture.

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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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
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?	1
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

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 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	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

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

11 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Peasenhall Primary School, Peasenhall, IP17 2HS

Thank you for being so helpful when Mrs Bavin and I inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent with you, looking at your work. We think that you are achieving well and we agree with you that Peasenhall is a good school. We enjoyed sharing lunchtime with you and hearing how much you all seem to enjoy school. This is reflected in your excellent attendance. Working together with your federated school seems to be successful, extending opportunities for you to learn and make friends with other children.

Here are some more important things that are good about your school.

- You behave exceptionally well, cooperating with each other and with the adults, so your learning is good.
- You know a lot about healthy foods and how to keep fit and safe.
- Your school provides you with opportunities to learn a wide range of skills, including how to play musical instruments, look after the environment and how to carry out research.
- Because the teaching at your school is good, your learning and progress are good and are continuing to speed up even more.
- All the adults at your school look after you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff have made a large number of changes for the better and have lots more excellent ideas to carry this improvement on.

Here are two things that we have asked your governors, headteacher and staff to do.

- Provide the Reception children with more opportunities to pursue their own ideas.
- Help you to learn more about Britain's multi-ethnic heritage, experiencing its richness more fully.

You can help by continuing to show how excited you are by learning new things. I wish you well in the future in all that you do.

John W. Paull

Lead inspector