

Pelham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101410
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	333410
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Lovett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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)	401
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	48
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Irene Holliss
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Hogarth
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pelham Road Bexleyheath DA7 4HL
Telephone number	020 8303 6556
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Following two years of falling rolls, admissions are now rising. The proportion of pupils who speak a first language other than English is about half that found nationally but is rising, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. When Pelham Primary School was last inspected in February 2008, it required special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. This is the fourth monitoring visit since then. The current headteacher joined the school on a full-time basis at the beginning of the summer term 2008. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. The Hearing Impairment Unit (HIU) caters for up to 13 pupils with severe to profound hearing loss. It is the only primary HIU provision in Bexley and is due to expand in the near future.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

One of the headteacher's favourite phrases is 'onwards and upwards' and this accurately describes the school's journey over the last 14 months. Pupils and parents are united in saying that this is an improving school and the inspection team is delighted to agree! The whole school community has worked together to ensure that the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed effectively and the strengths built on. As a result, the school is now satisfactory.

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been instrumental in bringing about improved pupil progress and rising standards. In order to achieve this, they have reinvigorated subject leadership and helped improve teaching and learning. The relatively new phase leaders, who are each responsible for one of the key stages, are enthusiastic and know their areas of responsibility well. They have developed consistent monitoring arrangements and are committed to raising standards further. The very effective HIU is led and managed well and makes a significant contribution to the life of the school. Governance is good. Governors are increasingly well informed and better able to hold the school to account for raising standards. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Its self-evaluation is detailed and accurate and sets appropriate priorities for improvement. For instance, the school has rightly identified raising the attainment of more able pupils and improving pupils' writing skills as priorities. However, self-evaluation and improvement planning do not always link the actions the school takes to their impact on standards sufficiently clearly. The school has made good use of the effective support provided by the local authority.

Children enter the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge which are broadly as one would expect for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with standards which are average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress has also improved and is now satisfactory, so that pupils attain standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science which are broadly average. This represents a significant rise in standards. The most noticeable improvement can be seen in writing. In Years 3 to 6, improved teaching and learning are also reflected in rising standards. In 2007 and 2008, standards were significantly below average. Standards are now broadly average. However, in English, mathematics and science, there are insufficient pupils reaching the higher Level 5 and in science, while standards have risen, they are lower than they should be.

Teaching and learning are good. Planning is thorough, and target setting and marking are significant strengths. Pupils are polite, enthusiastic and eager to help. They are very positive about improvements in the school and say that behaviour, enjoyment of lessons and attitudes to learning have all improved. As one pupil said, 'Lessons are great.' Pupils are enthusiastic about the improvements they see in the physical environment. They say the school is brighter, tidier and 'nicer to be in'. The school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views indicates high levels of support, and confidence. One wrote, 'The school has improved significantly over the last year', which represents the views of many. Not surprisingly, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle quickly into school because staff create a welcoming environment and establish consistent routines. There are good relationships.

When children enter the Nursery, they have skills and knowledge similar to those of other three-year-olds. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Reception, most reach the expected levels across most areas of learning.

The curriculum provides an appropriate balance of teacher-directed activities and those children choose for themselves. Children get on well with each other and form good relationships with the adults who care for them. Indoor and outdoor activities, particularly the introduction to early language and literacy skills, are well planned in the Nursery, which provides a stimulating and interesting environment. Recent improvements to the outdoor provision for the Reception classes ensure that these children now have good access to all areas of learning. Teaching is satisfactory, but opportunities are sometimes missed to interact with children and extend their learning and speaking skills.

Children's progress is monitored through observational assessments that contribute effectively to the formal tracking process and inform planning. There have been significant improvements in provision, resulting in good personal development. While the Early Years Foundation Stage leader is now regularly analysing the progress children make, not all analysis is sufficiently detailed to give a clear picture of children's attainment. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure the school's improvement plans and self-evaluation are more specific in linking actions to expected improvements in standards.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with levels of skill and knowledge which are broadly in line with national expectations. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with standards which are average. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' progress is now satisfactory, so that pupils attain standards which are broadly average. However, in English, mathematics and science there are insufficient pupils reaching the higher Level 5 and while standards in science have risen, they remain below average. Because they are well supported, pupils from the HIU make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is improving. They have positive attitudes to learning and most work hard in lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Behaviour is good, although a small number of pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour without adult support. Pupils like the 'diamond' system for tracking their behaviour and think it works well. They get on well together and agree that bullying is rare. They feel safe in school and say that there is always an adult they can speak to if they have any concerns. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking regular exercise. They make an effort to adopt healthy lifestyles and talk enthusiastically about taking part in physical activities. They are keen to take part in WOW, the 'walk to school on Wednesday' initiative. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community. They are pleased that staff listen to, and act on, their ideas to help improve the school and cite the new cycle racks as an example.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching has steadily improved since the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning are now good. Teaching routines are very well established, which helps ensure that even when classes are taught by someone other than their usual teacher, the quality of teaching remains good. Detailed lesson plans identify a range of assessment opportunities and teachers make good use of on-going assessment during lessons to modify the pace and content. Classrooms are bright, calm and orderly. Resources are well organised and readily accessible, which encourages a sense of independence in pupils. The good management of classes means that pupils generally settle quickly to their work and little time is wasted. Teaching is seen as a collaborative activity so that planning and classroom practice are readily shared with colleagues. The work of the learning support assistants supports learning well, particularly when pupils are working individually or as part of a small group. Good quality marking helps pupils understand how well they have done with respect to the learning objective of the lesson and how to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Provision for English, mathematics, and information and communication technology is good. However, there is currently insufficient focus on science. The school is keen to develop a creative approach to learning, with a greater emphasis on links across the curriculum but it is too early to see the impact of these plans on provision across the school. Pupils from the HIU are well supported through good adaptations to the curriculum which ensure high levels of inclusion. Special events and visitors to school, such as the percussion workshops and cycling proficiency course which took place during the inspection, enrich learning well. There is an increasing number of after-school clubs and activities. Pupils say they enjoy these hugely and both pupils and parents welcome the greater range. One parent of a Year 1 pupil described the sports club for infants as 'fantastic'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and procedures to ensure that they are protected, safe and secure in school are rigorously applied. Safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. Good support is provided for the increasing proportion of pupils who are new to English. Systems to

assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress are good. Teachers have a clear overview of how each pupil is doing. Information is used well to identify and support pupils who need extra help. Pupils are fully aware of their learning targets which, along with the good quality of teachers' marking, gives them a clear picture of what they can do and how to improve their work. They say that they feel a sense of achievement in striving for and achieving these targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other members of the leadership team, has been instrumental in putting in place many of the improvements which have resulted in rising standards. He has tackled underachievement with determination and commitment. There has been a rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Frequent lesson observations have identified where in the school the best teaching is to be found and ensured that this best practice is shared across all classes. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has risen. Pupil review meetings, where teaching staff jointly discuss the progress pupils are making and plan strategies to address underachievement, have proved extremely successful. The resulting links to teachers' professional development represent very good practice. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and robust.

The school has made a satisfactory start to the promotion of community cohesion. While the school has a strong commitment to celebrating its place in a culturally diverse world, much of the provision is new and it is too early to see its full impact.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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?	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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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?	3
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?	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**

19 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pelham Primary School, Bexleyheath, DA7 4HL

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we inspected your school. And thank you for making me feel so welcome on my visits over the last year or so. I shall miss my visits to Bexleyheath. I have spoken to many of you during my visits and the things you said helped me to get to know your school better.

The headteacher and deputy are doing a good job of helping the school to improve. Teaching and learning are good. Standards are rising and you are making more progress. You have positive attitudes to learning and obviously enjoy your lessons. You told me that behaviour is improving and that bullying is rare. You believe the 'diamond' system, which is used to encourage good behaviour, is working really well. You also said how much you enjoy the increased number of after-school clubs and how much you feel you benefit of these.

This was the fourth time I have visited your school and I can see that Pelham Primary School has improved a lot. However, both the school and I believe you can all do even better. Here are some of the ways we are asking the school to improve:

- Ensure that standards continue to rise, particularly in science and writing.
- Help more of you to do really well and reach Level 5.
- Ensure the school is clearer about how the improvements it makes will raise standards.

I was particularly pleased to see that attendance is improving. It is important you miss as little school time as possible.

Because yours is now a satisfactory and improving school, I will not make another monitoring inspection. I wish you all every success and hope you have an enjoyable and successful end to the school year.

Yours faithfully

Robert Lovett

Her Majesty's Inspector