

Palterton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112617
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337974
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Beresford-Robinson
Headteacher	terton Primary School
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2007
School address	Back Lane Palterton Derbyshire
Telephone number	01246 823143
Fax number	01246 824524
Email address	info@palterton.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, senior teacher, teaching staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at documents including the school improvement plan, systems for tracking the pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, school policies and analysed information from 31 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the reason for the large gap between girls' and boys' attainment and progress and what leaders and managers are doing to address this
- whether leaders and managers at all levels have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and whether they embed ambition in order to drive through improvement
- whether the school's capacity to improve has been affected by the lack of clear leadership during the headteacher's and senior teacher's relatively recent absence
- the strengths in the school's work.

Information about the school

Palterton Primary is a smaller than average sized primary school. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the mixed Year 1 and Reception class. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is lower than that usually found. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities is above average and is rising steadily from year to year. In some year groups the percentage is high. The majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties and/or behavioural and emotional needs. The school has gained a number of awards which reflect a commitment to promoting pupils' healthy lifestyles.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Palterton Primary School is a good and rapidly improving school. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning experiences both inside and beyond the classroom. Parents overwhelmingly praise the school for its work and the headteacher is singled out as being a super role model for both staff and children. Staff questionnaires and inspection evidence would support this view. One parent wrote, 'I find the school to have had many changes over the years and these are definitely an improvement. The headteacher is a true credit to the school! A very positive role model.' In the words of another, 'An outstanding headteacher, incredibly supportive.' This is most certainly the case, she works tirelessly to further pupils' achievement in every area of their education. The outstanding curriculum is testament to this. Innovation is to be found around every corner. For example, pupils attend 'Palterton University' over a number of weeks. A series of workshops on offer are assessed against a series of five pre-planned skills that feed back into the pupils' learning across the whole school curriculum. University points awarded per module enable pupils to work towards different diplomas at the University depending on the workshops that they choose.

All staff work together well as a team. They support, challenge and share each other's practice. This results in a group of highly reflective practitioners who have the pupils at the heart of everything they do. The school is small, so teachers have many responsibilities. Good organisation and excellent relationships make the workload manageable and teachers feel valued. They monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility but some have not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching first hand. Governance is satisfactory but improving quickly. The school has good procedures in place to welcome new governors and swiftly help them to make a full contribution. They have a firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and what the performance data show. Members of staff are well trained in aspects of child protection and procedures to ensure the well-being, health and safety of pupils are exemplary. Although the headteacher and senior teacher were absent for a substantial time last academic year, they soon galvanised staff into a cohesive unit once more on their return.

The school's capacity to improve is good. Self-evaluation is accurate and all staff and pupils contribute well to this. The quite clear difference between girls' and boys' attainment and progress has been identified and dealt with appropriately. Already there is a good impact on girls' achievement because effective strategies which challenge and motivate girls more effectively have been put into place. Results in the 2009 national tests show marked improvements, continuing the ever upward trend. Attainment is above average for both girls and boys in both English and mathematics. Also evident is

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the accelerating progress which is consistently good across all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also good, the way the outside area is used and the lack of resources and equipment hampers learning.

Improving attendance is an issue to be resolved. Too many families take their children away during school time on holidays despite the school's efforts to dissuade them. When children are not in school, they cannot learn and this adversely affects their achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the planning makes certain that children have outside access to activities during the whole day
 - replacing worn-out resources and increasing the amount of large-play equipment to support learning better.
- Improve attendance by:
 - taking immediate action to discourage holidays taken during learning time
 - working closely with the education welfare service and parents to ensure that agreed action raises attendance rates.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make at least good progress and often better in the vast majority of their lessons. This is because teachers plan effectively for the learning needs of individual pupils and groups. It is clearly evident that they enjoy their learning. In one outstanding lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, there were squeals of delight from pupils as they played a game in science which helped them to learn the names of the bones of the skeleton. They then went on eagerly to make their own skeletons out of straws, string and pasta. Teachers all have excellent relationships with their pupils, which ensures that pupils' behaviour is outstanding. This in turn means teachers are able to prepare challenging paired and small-group work in the knowledge that pupils collaborate and work well together. This gives rise to good learning.

Different groups of pupils are catered for well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The previous issue of girls' underachievement has been tackled robustly and inspection evidence now shows girls attain and make progress as well as the boys in both English and mathematics. All pupils are provided with work which challenges them at the right level so that they make consistently good and better progress.

Trends overtime indicate that attainment is rising. The performance data are adversely affected by the small numbers of pupils in a year group who are each worth a large percentage. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 1, where results fluctuate widely from year to year. Generally, pupils reach average levels of attainment by the end of

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Year 2. Excellent use of learning outcomes and learning targets ensures that gains in learning in Key Stage 2 are good, resulting in above- average levels of attainment in 2009. This trend is set to continue according to the school's own tracking data, which has been historically accurate.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and share excellent relationships with adults in the school. A good assembly ensured that pupils were given time to reflect and ponder about temptation. A relatively weaker area is the cultural development of pupils. Their knowledge of other faiths and cultures is limited. The school has plans in place to remedy this through partnering another school. Pupils clearly know what makes a healthy diet and, as a result, lunch-boxes contain healthy foods. They also value fitness and exercise, the 'Palterton University Active Module' is highly subscribed. Pupils are safety conscious and understand what they need to do in a variety of given situations. They have confidence in all the adults in the school. Pupils have many opportunities to take on extra responsibility and to participate in fund-raising activities. The school has won an award for serving the local community and engaging with it. Pupils acquire a good and improving level of basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology that contributes well to their future economic well-being. Currently, regular attendance has not a high enough profile for some families.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

2

How effective is the provision?

It is obvious that pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning at Palterton. They are always eager to do their best in all lessons because teachers take the time to prepare stimulating, interesting and relevant learning experiences for their classes. Games are used particularly well to motivate. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils played a simple but highly effective 'stepping stones' game which served to practise times tables. The ingenious scoring system meant pupils chased and retreated until one caught the other and every pupil was able to participate in a short time. A great variety of learning activities means that pupils' differing learning styles are very well catered for. Pupils have lots of opportunity to practise speaking and listening, which helps them to prepare well for writing activities. Teaching assistants generally engage well with pupils. In another mathematics lesson, a teaching assistant led the learning activity outside in the playground with a group of less-able children. They learnt much in a short space of time. This was because the learning was related well to 'real life' and pupils quickly learnt to change decimals to fractions and relate this to money problems. Sometimes teaching assistants are not quite as effective and are not proactive enough during whole-class teaching. Teachers take time to assess pupils' learning and throughout the school there is consistent use of target setting. Learning-outcome criteria pitched at three levels are a feature of all lessons. This ensures that pupils' are all challenged effectively.

The excellent curriculum ensures that both pupils and staff are motivated and inspired by unusual themes and topics. For example, Year 6 study 'the stage and screen' and in Year 4/5, 'lights, camera, action'. These topics promote pupils' creativity and imagination particularly well. The curriculum is built on engaging children by encouraging a thirst for learning - each topic begins with a 'big bang' or 'big WOW' event, which makes the children want to learn more, and results in them asking questions. In consultation, all pupils said they thought that this way of teaching the curriculum had made them want to learn more. The topics also develop pupils' capacity for independent learning and research. The school offers a very effective life skills programme which teaches them about real life, employment, banking, personal health and safety, relationships and shopping to prepare them for life beyond Palterton. Pupils think this is extremely useful. One wrote in his evaluation, 'I enjoyed first aid especially when we did the slings and bandages. I even helped my mum pass her first aid course.' Pupils are also able to visit places of interest to enhance their learning; for example a group went to visit a Viking centre which served to bring the topic alive. Considering the size of the school, there is a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs which are well attended.

Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that the particular needs of every pupil are extremely well met. Policies and procedures in place safeguard the welfare of pupils well. Vulnerable pupils are identified through the 'every child matters' criteria, and well thought through, individualised plans are put in place to support them. There is

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excellent inter-agency team-work which makes sure that no child falls through the net. Those pupils who are in danger of underachieving are also supported well through timely intervention to boost their progress. The school has also made good links with local Nurseries and secondary schools so that the times at which pupils change schools are handled well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school regularly assesses how well it is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. This ensures that leaders have clear priorities for development. The school is self-critical and this makes for a sharp evaluation of its effectiveness. There is a genuine feeling of everyone working towards the same goal, because they all share the same high expectations and vision for the future of the school. There are robust systems in place which analyse information so as to help pupils make even better progress. Systems are linked clearly to improving the quality of teaching. A simple but very effective tracking system is in place which all staff share and understand. It was plain to see the narrowing gap between girls' and boys' attainment and progress and how the interventions put in place to bolster girls' achievement have had an impact. The school ensures that equality is promoted and discrimination tackled. The excellent leadership of the headteacher in particular has brought the school on considerably in terms of pupils' achievement. In light of this, it is clear that there is good capacity for further improvement. Because the school is small, all teachers have considerable responsibilities. They are beginning to monitor these well, but not all of them gather first-hand evidence to support how well pupils are learning. There are good channels of communication open for both parents and pupils and as a result the headteacher and staff are able to hear their views and respond appropriately.

Governors are highly supportive of the school's work and know where its strengths and weaknesses lie. The quality of their work is currently satisfactory but improving. The school ensures that new governors are able to function effectively in their role as quickly as possible through a clear induction programme. This was praised by a governor new to post. They make a strong contribution to the positive school ethos and they, along with the headteacher and her staff, help to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are exemplary. There is yet work to be done to ensure that governors are able to be more influential in determining the strategic direction of the school.

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Community cohesion is promoted well because the school has conducted an audit of its provision and knows the next steps to take to develop its work. The school is regarded positively by the community within which it sits. This is because under the guidance of the school, pupils conduct activities in the local community beyond the school gates. The pupils engage in projects such as helping to develop the local playground for children, offering social events for families, working with a local 'residential help' and working with two local churches. The school has plans to link further with a school abroad, but does not yet have links which develop pupils understanding, first hand, of different faiths and cultures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because teaching is engaging and children respond well. In a good lesson, children busily decided who owned a huge metal key, a feather pen, magic wand and a cheese sandwich. Children start Reception with overall skills, knowledge and understanding that are just below average overall for typical four-year-olds. Their skills in numeracy and physical development are just above those expected nationally, but their personal, social, communication, language and literacy skills are much lower. They settle into school routines well and make a good start to their education. They gain confidence and independence in choosing indoor and outside activities, though they do not have free access to an outside area until the afternoons. Teachers' planning includes focused activities led by adults and, quite appropriately, there is a strong emphasis on the development of children's speaking and communication skills. Children make choices,

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work and play enthusiastically, sustain concentration and relate well to each other and to adults. The learning environment is safe and teachers try to make it attractive, though much of the equipment is old and tired-looking. School leaders have a clear understanding of weaknesses in provision, notably the need to ensure that the outdoor access is improved to enable all Early Years Foundation Stage children to participate in high-quality outdoor activities and more spontaneous learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children. Parents are particularly pleased with the way the school is led and managed, the quality of teaching and the excellent care provided by the school - all of which were confirmed during the inspection. A very small minority of parents raised concerns about the reporting of progress and occasional bullying, but even these parents had positive things to say about the school too.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Palterton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	58	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	42	16	52	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	52	13	42	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	42	15	48	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	55	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	55	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	61	11	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	60	8	27	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	45	11	35	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	74	7	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	74	7	23	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Palterton Primary School, Palterton, Derbyshire, S44 6UN

Thank you very much for helping me to enjoy my two days at your school when I visited it recently. My colleague was particularly grateful to those of you who took special time to speak to her. We thought that you behaved extremely well and that you got on with all the adults in your school and each other. We watched you work together in groups in your lessons. You learnt a lot while you chatted together, but more importantly, you listened very well to what each other had to say. You convinced us that you understand what you need to do to lead a healthy life and how to stay safe. You told us about the work you do as councillors and buddies, and this is highly commendable. Well done (!

We think your school is a good one, which is getting better all the time. This is because the headteacher and her staff have high expectations of you and know that you can all do well. Your test results are getting better. The teachers teach you well and think of lots of exciting and fun activities for you to do in your lessons. I watched one group of you playing 'Boney said' during a science lesson. You all had great fun but learnt lots of names for the bones in your body. It was a good job your heads did not fall off when Boney's did! Even though your school is doing well, there are always things to be improved. We have asked that your headteacher makes sure that the youngest children in your school are given their own bit of outside area, so that they can play and learn outside more often. They also need some new things to play with. Secondly, and this is something that some of you can help with too, some children are taking holidays during learning time. Unfortunately, if your parents take you away on holiday in learning time you miss lots of work, so we have asked the school to watch this carefully and ensure that it happens less often.

Once again, thank you for making our visit to your school a memorable one, we really enjoyed it. We wish you every success in your school.

Yours faithfully

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector

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