

# The Petersfield School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116510
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338833
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Corbett HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Col Julian Starmer-Smith OBE
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nigel Poole
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Cranford Road Petersfield GU32 3LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01730 263119
<b>Fax number</b>	01730 265869
<b>Email address</b>	school@petersfield.hants.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	338833

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 37 lessons taught by different teachers, visited five tutorial sessions and two assemblies. They also conducted four 'learning walks', including one that focused on behaviour. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and the chair of governors. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including policies, data and analyses, records of the school's monitoring, governors' minutes and questionnaires completed by 80 staff, 160 students and 426 parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by different groups of students
- the impact of strategies to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning
- the extent to which leaders and managers at all levels contribute to school improvement
- the contribution made by partnerships and the performing arts specialism to students' achievement.

## Information about the school

The Petersfield School, known as 'TPS', is larger than average and has held specialist status in performing arts since 2005. It is the only state secondary school in Petersfield and students join the school from a wide range of primary schools both within the town and beyond. Most are from a White British background but some are from a range of minority ethnic groups, a very few of whom speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities are well below average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Artsmark, National Healthy Schools status and Sportsmark.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The Petersfield School is an outstanding school. It has significantly improved since the last inspection as a result of a relentless focus on students' learning and determination to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students. The specialism has skilfully been developed so it pervades all aspects of school life. It forms the backbone of the outstanding curriculum, which is innovative and highly tailored to meet the diverse needs and interests of all students. Excellent relationships between staff and students, and between the students themselves, characterise this caring school which holds equality of opportunity for all at the heart of its ethos. As a result, all students, including the most vulnerable, receive outstanding care, guidance and support. One parent's comment exemplifies this: 'TPS has offered an outstanding range of opportunities and challenges to both my son and daughter.'

Students say they feel exceptionally safe, well cared for and supported. They have an overwhelmingly high regard for the opportunities that the school's performing arts specialism has provided. Students thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to learn and participate, as evidenced by their excellent behaviour and above average attendance. Consequently, the majority of students make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 4, their attainment is above the national average. For some students, in particular the more able, progress is outstanding.

The school's good teaching is based on a whole-school expectation that lessons should actively involve all students in the learning, supported by a wide variety of tasks and activities. All teachers plan lessons in this way, based on the differing needs and abilities of students or in providing opportunities for students to reflect and experience a sense of awe and wonder in their learning. However, while there is much good and some outstanding practice in the way teachers deliver lessons, for a minority this is less well developed and in these instances progress is satisfactory. Similarly, the use of assessment to support learning, while good overall, is variable in its quality, both verbally within lessons and in providing clear written guidance to students on how to improve.

The key factor in the school's improvement has been the introduction of the departmental review system that has resulted in an embedded cycle of self-review and development planning, which very successfully involves the 'pupil panels'. This has been driven by the dedicated headteacher, ably assisted by an enthusiastic and capable senior leadership team. Middle leaders are taking responsibility and are supported by increasingly effective teams. As a result there is good capacity for further improvement.

**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

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good practice already developed, so that teaching is consistently good, an increased proportion is outstanding, and the majority of students are enabled to make exceptional progress, by:
  - ensuring that all students are actively involved in their learning
  - linking teaching strategies closely to students' differing learning styles and abilities
  - building more opportunities for spiritual reflection into lessons
  - providing both verbal and written feedback that guides students more clearly on how to improve
  - developing a consistent approach to whole-school assessment.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Students have very positive attitudes to learning and rightly recognise that learning is best when tasks are varied and active. Inspection evidence supported this view, with good or better learning in most of the lessons observed by inspectors. The performing arts specialism has built students' self-confidence and performance skills, often through cross-curricular activities such as 'marvellous maths', a performance event that joined mathematics and dance together. Behaviour is good and often outstanding in most lessons because students feel confident to ask questions, contribute well and support each other in their learning. Behaviour around school is exemplary and students get on extremely well together.

Students' attainment has risen steadily against all indicators since the last inspection, so that now it is above average overall. In particular, an exceptionally high proportion of students now achieve five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The school has successfully closed the gap between boys' and girls' performance, and they both now achieve equally well. Overall progress for the majority of students at both key stages, including the most vulnerable, is good, but there has been variation within this and higher-attaining students make the best progress. Progress in mathematics and for the less able, including those with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities, has been lower; however, school data show that this has been addressed and the majority are now making good progress. Progress in subjects such as art, English and science is outstanding.

Students make an outstanding contribution to school life through the wide range of opportunities provided, which include raising funds for charity and taking on responsibilities by acting as peer mentors, prefects and sports and performing arts captains. Of special note are the 'pupil panels' made up of students from every group in the school that assist with the reviews of each department, and the Junior Leadership Group that includes student representatives from each house who help to develop

**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

school policies such as the new teaching and learning policy.

Students have an excellent awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and this is reflected in their high participation in the sport and performance opportunities offered. Students regularly act as ambassadors for healthy living, as junior sports leaders in local schools or in giving performances on managing bullying or sharing their love of the performing arts.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the specialism having considerable impact on students' cultural and spiritual understanding through very regular performances and art exhibitions. However, understanding of national cultural issues is less well developed and opportunities are missed for spiritual development in lessons.

Students have a good understanding of risks, including those relating to the use of new technologies. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives, developing excellent workplace and good or better basic skills. As a result, almost all progress into further education, employment or training when they leave.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

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

**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

While the quality of teaching in the large majority of lessons is good or outstanding, inconsistencies remain both in and across subjects. Almost all lessons are well planned to structure learning that is based on excellent individual knowledge of each student and excellent subject knowledge. However, although opportunities to develop basic skills such as literacy or numeracy are included, tasks within lessons do not always take full account of differing learning styles and abilities. Teaching is most effective when lessons move at good pace, and students are provided with interesting and engaging tasks that enable them to reflect and take ownership of their learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching and the school's virtual learning environment increasingly supports learning beyond the classroom. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very effective support in lessons and in 'The Base' and 'The ALC', the school's additional learning and support centres.

The overall quality of assessment is good but practice varies across the school. In the most effective lessons, teachers expertly use questioning techniques to assess students' learning and provide accurate verbal feedback on how to improve or hone the next steps. Students' work is regularly marked, but the quality of written feedback is variable. It is stronger at Key Stage 4 but some students, particularly the less able, are not always clear about their current achievement or what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and flexible so the needs of all students are met exceptionally well. At Key Stage 3, the curriculum is appropriately shortened to two years for most students to allow more time for GCSE or other courses. For others, including those with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities, a foundation learning programme is provided and this includes opportunities to learn about forestry and horticulture. From Year 9, students follow one of four pathways that consist of GCSE and vocational subjects, many of which are provided through the school's extensive partnerships with other schools and colleges of further education. Students have an excellent choice of options, which include the popular performing arts-related courses as well as separate sciences, the new Diplomas, engineering and agriculture. An exceptionally wide range of trips, activity days and after-school activities, many of which are associated with the performing arts specialism, further enrich students' experiences. The school carefully monitors participation and encourages those who do not readily engage to do so. Citizenship and students' personal, social and health education are coordinated and delivered very effectively through the daily tutorial programme, special event days and across the curriculum.

Students belong to one of eight houses and these provide a strong sense of belonging. This system is highly effective in monitoring and supporting both the progress and well-being of students, including the most vulnerable. As a result, any underachievement is rapidly tackled and students receive outstanding care and support both within school and from outside agencies. Students express confidence that they always have someone to turn to with any problems or issues they may have, and that the school will deal with them effectively. The 'Cycle to Success' programme ensures that students, including the most vulnerable, are extremely well supported as they move

**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

from Year 6 into the school. This outstanding support and guidance continues as students move through the school making choices for Key

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have worked highly effectively to develop a shared responsibility for improving the academic and personal outcomes of all students based on rigorous self-evaluation. This has led to a climate of success and outstanding drive and ambition for further improvement, which has in turn brought about a steady rise in attainment over the last three years. Challenging targets are set for each student and their progress is tracked rigorously with well-planned and well-supported interventions wherever they are needed. Morale is high, and in the Ofsted staff questionnaires almost all staff said they were proud to be a member of the school.

The leadership of teaching and learning is outstanding because its quality is rigorously and accurately monitored and linked to the highly innovative and successful in-house programme of professional development. A key strength is the involvement of the Junior Leadership Group in improving teaching.

The school has robust systems to ensure the safety of students with the appropriate training in place. Policies are clear, well structured and understood by all and evaluated regularly. Excellent links with outside agencies significantly contribute to students' well-being and safety. Records are extremely well maintained. The equality of opportunity for students is outstanding because almost all aspects of school life are monitored and evaluated according to background, ability or educational need and any discrimination is tackled rigorously. The school has exceptionally outward looking approaches to enhancing provision, often taking a lead role in developing innovative and highly effective partnerships that provide excellent value for money. The school uses a range of methods to regularly engage and inform parents and carers, including an online forum, although some parents would like to see school communications improved.

Governors are very well informed, highly supportive, fulfil their statutory duties and provide increasing challenge in holding the school to account. However, gathering the views of parents and carers is in the early stages of development. Resources are extremely well managed and rapid action has been taken to address the very small and reducing deficit. The school understands its context well and used this effectively to develop an action plan to promote community cohesion. However, its effectiveness has



**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

not yet been systematically evaluated.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the school, and many added very positive comments about their child's experiences. However, a few raised concerns over a range of issues, including behaviour in some lessons, inconsistency in the quality of teaching and communication with parents and carers. The inspection team investigated these issues and agreed that while teaching is good overall there is some inconsistency; however, students' behaviour was good or outstanding in almost all lessons seen.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Petersfield 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 426 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1243 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	154	36	239	56	24	6	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	145	34	266	62	8	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	139	33	249	58	38	9	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	136	32	245	58	38	9	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	118	28	268	63	26	6	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	106	25	246	58	51	12	5	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	79	19	290	68	42	10	2	1
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)	119	28	259	61	17	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	129	30	253	59	29	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	101	24	246	58	50	12	15	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	77	18	268	63	38	9	6	1
The school is led and managed effectively	165	39	229	54	17	4	7	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	171	40	230	64	20	5	4	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



14 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Petersfield School, Petersfield, GU32 3LU

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. Here is a summary of our main inspection findings, although I hope that you will take the time to read the full report.

- Your school has improved significantly since the last inspection so that you now receive an outstanding quality of education.
- You make good progress by the end of Year 11 and your attainment is above national averages, and significantly above in some subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good, although in some lessons you do not always have sufficient opportunities to be actively involved or for reflecting on your learning.
- You particularly enjoy the opportunities offered to you by the very varied and outstanding curriculum and the performing arts specialism.
- Your behaviour around school is exemplary, you support each other well, and in most lessons your behaviour contributes well to your successful learning.
- You feel very safe because you are all exceptionally well cared for and supported.
- You make an outstanding contribution to school life and the wider community, in particular as prefects and school captains, fund raising for charity and through the 'pupil panels' and Junior Leadership Group.

Your outstanding headteacher and senior leaders have worked hard to improve the school and, together with all the other staff in the school, are keen to improve it further. To help them with this, we have said that senior leaders should:

- further improve teaching so that it is consistently at least good, by building on the good practice that has been established to ensure that you are all actively involved in your learning, receive clear guidance on how to improve, and have time for spiritual reflection in lessons.

You can help by making the most of opportunities offered to you, and being even more actively involved in your learning in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**