

St Peter and St Paul CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114564
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338402
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Robin Gaff

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Miles
Headteacher	Richard White
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 June 2007
School address	Buckhurst Road Bexhill-on-Sea East Sussex TN40 1QE
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observing all 14 teachers in the school at least once. Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, parents and governors, as well as a representative of the local authority. They scrutinised the school's own analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at planning and evaluation documents as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff. A total of 108 questionnaires, completed by parents and carers, were received and analysed.

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

- the attainment of current Year 6 pupils, and the quality of their learning and progress in the classroom
- the extent of the school's success in improving pupils' attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism
- the school's accuracy in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.
- the effectiveness of the school's systems for engaging with all groups of parents and carers.

Information about the school

St Peter and St Paul CofE is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is below average, but has grown recently. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have statements of special educational needs, is below average. The majority of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties. An above average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal time of transfer. The current headteacher was seconded to lead another local school in February 2010, and has been appointed permanently to that post with effect from September 2010. In his absence, the school has been led by first one then another acting headteacher, both drawn from the school's senior management team. The school intends to appoint a permanent headteacher to take up the post in January 2011. The school hosts a breakfast and after-school club which are managed by an external provider. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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

St Peter and St Paul CofE is a good school which caters well for pupils with a wide range of abilities and from increasingly diverse backgrounds. It has built successfully on the strengths identified by the last inspection. It has improved in some areas, including the way it enables pupils to make an excellent contribution to the school and wider communities. The school has developed ever stronger links with its local community, as well as connections with an impressively wide variety of schools and other organisations elsewhere in the world. Pupils appreciate and celebrate one another's different cultures, and they gain an excellent understanding of different ways of life in the United Kingdom and in other countries. Their spiritual, social and moral development is also outstanding. Pupils feel safe in school because they know there is always someone they can turn to if they need help. This includes the large number of their fellow pupils who have been trained as peer mediators. This scheme is only one of the many ways in which pupils take on responsibility and make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.

The school has continued to develop its curriculum in ways which promote pupils' enjoyment of school, as well as their academic progress and personal development, extremely effectively. Topics are well tailored to stimulate pupils' imagination, for example the 'Castles' project in Year 2 which enables pupils, particularly boys, to develop their writing skills. The school's excellent systems for caring for and supporting its pupils, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable, are a continuing strength of the provision. Staff work very closely with parents and carers, including those of pupils who join the school at other than the normal time for transfer to ensure that they settle in quickly. Parents and carers of the increasing number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive extra help, for example in enabling their children to acquire the specialist vocabulary they need in science. Although attendance remains broadly average, the school has significantly reduced the number of pupils who are persistent absentees.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education. They develop their skills well because adults provide them with well-planned activities that focus strongly on learning, particularly indoors. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 they have made good progress from their starting points and their attainment is broadly average. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is at least as good as that of their peers because they benefit from excellent support, as individuals and in small groups. Pupils' good behaviour contributes to their learning and pupils listen to, and learn

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from, one another as well as their teachers. Most lessons proceed at a good pace, although occasionally teachers spend too long explaining activities before allowing their pupils to start working by themselves. A few lessons do not include a sufficient variety of activities which limits the progress of some pupils, for example those who can work more quickly. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and give them good opportunities to learn by assessing their own and each other's work.

The school has continued to develop since the last inspection and the commitment and capabilities of leaders and managers at all levels show that it has good capacity to improve further. The governing body closely monitors the school's progress and challenges school leaders when appropriate. Together with school leaders, they understand the school's strengths as well as the areas which require further development. Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is accurate because leaders have addressed the weakness of focusing too much on teaching and not enough on learning, identified in the last inspection report. The current acting headteacher and other senior and middle leaders have risen to the challenge of taking on additional responsibilities. They have ensured that pupils' progress and well-being have not been adversely affected by the recent changes to the management team. Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school, but a small minority feel they have not been informed promptly enough, or in sufficient detail, about these changes. The governing body understands the need to address this situation in order to maintain the confidence of parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, by ensuring that all lessons include enough:
 - activities which are closely matched to all the pupils' interests and abilities
 - opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- By the end of October 2010, ensure that all parents are fully informed about developments concerning the leadership of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Skill levels when pupils join the school are lower than those typically found. By the time they leave, their attainment is in line with national expectations. This represents good progress. Pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science have risen steadily in recent years. Although the levels reached by current Year 6 pupils are lower than last year's group, inspectors found that they are still making good progress. Pupils participate well in 'talk partner' activities. They understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because of their use of the well-developed self-assessment system. They learn particularly well when they have good opportunities to make links between different activities. For example, Year 6 pupils particularly enjoyed their work in a science lesson on animals' habitats when their teacher took them straight out into the school garden to record their

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observations.

Pupils behave sensibly and safely around the school. They are not unduly worried about bullying because they are confident that they will be helped to resolve any issues that occur. They are polite, helpful and welcoming towards visitors. They show their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the way they respond to opportunities for reflection in lessons and assemblies and develop an excellent understanding of, and respect for, different cultures. Pupils’ good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles is demonstrated by their high participation rates in sports and other physical activities such as dance. They learn about healthy food by eating the vegetables they have grown in the school garden. Pupils contribute to the school and wider communities in many different ways. Within the school they act, for example, as play leaders, school council members and ‘Fair Trade’ or ‘Water Aid’ organizers. They take part in harvest festivals, each one linked to a different country, in a number of local churches. Pupils raise considerable sums of money for a range of international charities and also sponsor a school in Kenya. Their opportunities to develop leadership skills make a good contribution to their preparation for the world of work.

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	3
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	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good working relationships with their pupils. They use well-developed questioning techniques to extend pupils’ learning and they adapt their lessons in response to pupils’ answers. Most teachers plan their lessons carefully to include activities which are well matched to pupils’ different abilities and learning styles. In

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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an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 1, the teacher used a range of strategies and resources, including picture cards and the effective deployment of teaching assistants, to ensure that all the pupils made excellent progress. However, a few lessons do not include sufficiently varied tasks or enough opportunities for active learning, with the result that some pupils’ progress is more limited. Teachers’ use of detailed written comments in their marking, particularly in mathematics, has improved since the last inspection.

The school has developed its curriculum so that it continues to provide an excellent match to pupils’ interests. One pupil said, ‘We learn everything in a fun way – you get to do more than just learn. I like working with partners and being investigative.’ Writing and mathematical tasks are closely linked to topics such as studying the development of the seafront. Pupils make imaginative use of computer-based technology, such as digital voice recorders, in their investigative work. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are helped to make good progress because they benefit, where appropriate, from a specially adapted curriculum. Pupils enjoy taking part in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music and drama, as well as a variety of trips and visits.

Pupils are extremely well supported from the time they join until they leave the school. Staff work with a wide range of outside agencies to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils are very well cared for and make good progress. The school makes its expectations of behaviour clear and the number of pupils it excludes is very low. The school has implemented many different strategies to improve attendance. These include incentives such as the weekly presence of ‘Jerry the Giraffe’ in the class with best attendance. The school has strenuously challenged unauthorised absence during term time. As a result, the attendance of those pupils with the highest absence rates has improved.

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 headteacher and his senior staff have worked vigorously and enthusiastically to maintain the school’s forward momentum since the last inspection. They have succeeded in sharing their ambition with the rest of the staff. Self-evaluation is rigorous and robust, and leaders have focused successfully on raising the overall quality of teaching and assessment, particularly in mathematics. The governing body includes a good range of expertise and fulfils its responsibilities conscientiously and

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effectively. The school engages well with different groups of parents and carers, including those who find it difficult to communicate with school staff. Attendance at events such as art exhibitions and concerts is high, and parents have contributed their skills and time to developing the school garden as a valuable resource for learning. The school works well with its partners in the local family of schools to share good practice in teaching and learning. It promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination effectively. This is evident from the harmonious atmosphere within the school, the low and decreasing number of racist incidents and the good progress made by pupils from different groups and with different abilities. Pupils are also encouraged to challenge stereotypical roles, for example when they learn about the successes of female scientists. Procedures for safeguarding children are comprehensive and robust. All appropriate policies, including those relating to vetting staff appointments, are in place and are regularly reviewed. Child protection arrangements are secure because all staff receive regular training. The school has carefully examined its place in the local and wider communities. Pupils acquire a very good understanding and appreciation of their own and others’ faiths and traditions. They learn about ways of life in other parts of Great Britain through, for example, their study of different coastal communities, as well as in other parts of the world, through the school’s growing links with schools, churches and other organisations.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers confirm that their children thoroughly enjoy their time in the Reception class. One parent said that her son ‘loves school – he’d come seven days a week if he could!’ Children learn to persevere as they solve puzzles, and enthusiastically develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they learn about the life cycles of mini-beasts, some of which they can observe in the

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school garden. Adults use classroom resources well to help children to link sounds to letters. Outdoor activities designed, for example, to encourage boys to practise their writing skills are less well developed. Children safely use equipment such as scissors. They develop good hygiene practices by washing their hands carefully before lunch, and they enjoy healthy snacks at playtime. Children work and play well together because staff know them well and are expert in resolving potential disputes. Staff use their observations of children effectively to plan to meet their individual needs and provide a good mixture of adult- and child-initiated activities. Leaders show a good understanding of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements as well as of the strengths of the setting and of what needs further development. They successfully encourage parents and carers to help their children to learn and develop, for example by attending 'Stay and Play' and 'Find-out Friday' sessions.

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	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are pleased with their children's experience of the school and with their progress. They agree that their children are happy and learn to be healthy there. The overwhelming majority of responding parents and carers say their children are safe at school. A very large majority are satisfied with the quality of teaching, feel they are well informed about their children's progress, and agree that the school helps them to support their children's learning. Most believe that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. A small minority are not convinced the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour or that it is led and managed well. A few do not agree that the school meets their child's particular needs or prepares them well for the future. Inspectors agreed with most of the views expressed by parents and carers, although they found that the school deals effectively with inappropriate behaviour, and judged all aspects of leadership and management to be at least good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter and St Paul CofE 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 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 406 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	46	50	46	6	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	59	55	47	44	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	45	42	52	48	8	7	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	43	47	44	10	9	5	5
The teaching is good at this school	40	37	52	48	7	6	4	4
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	29	55	51	15	14	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	38	63	58	2	2	1	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)	28	26	64	59	9	8	2	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	34	31	59	55	12	11	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	20	62	57	13	12	9	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	26	60	56	14	13	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	27	25	53	49	17	16	5	5
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	44	49	45	7	6	4	4

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 all 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). 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">■ 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 pupils' 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.

8 July 2010

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of St Peter and St Paul CofE Primary School, Bexhill-on-Sea
TN40 1QE**

Thank you very much indeed for the warm welcome and the help you gave the inspectors when they visited your school recently. I am writing to tell you about what we found.

We think yours is a good school. Most of you, whatever your abilities or background, make good progress. You understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. Your sensible behaviour in lessons helps you to learn and you feel safe, because the peer mediators as well as the adults help you to deal well with any bullying that occurs. Very many of you help one another by acting as play leaders or joining the school council and other groups, and you make a tremendous contribution to help people in other countries by your charity fundraising. Well done! You relate very well to one another as well as to adults in the school, and you have an excellent understanding of what life is like in other parts of the world.

Most of you enjoy your learning because your teachers give you different things to do in lessons and encourage you to make links between different subjects. We think you would do even better if more lessons included activities which were suited to each one of you and gave everyone more chances to learn for themselves. The adults in the school take excellent care of you, especially those of you who need the most help.

The headteacher, acting headteacher, the staff and the governors are all working hard to help everyone to do well. We have asked them to make the school even better by making sure:

- teachers include plenty of different activities in lessons to suit everyone's interests and abilities, and chances for everyone to learn for themselves
- the school lets parents and carers know in good time about changes affecting the headteacher and his senior team.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robin Gaff
Lead inspector

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