

Peters Hill Primary School

Peters Hill Road, Amblecote, Brierley Hill, DY5 2QH

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well in this rapidly improving school because they are taught well.
- In 2013, there was a particularly good level of improvement in the quality of pupils' writing in Key Stage 2 because teachers expected much more from pupils.
- Talented mathematicians in Year 6 currently make outstanding progress because they receive teaching of the highest quality.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils are proud to be part of the school. They feel safe and get along well with the adults who teach and support them.
- Attendance is above average because pupils love their work.
- The ways in which the school checks on whether pupils are doing well enough are highly effective.
- The school provides many good-quality opportunities for pupils to develop into mature individuals.
- Leadership and management, including governance, are good.
- The key to the success of this school lies in the very strong leadership of the headteacher.
- Senior leaders work together very well as a team and have been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching and raising the attainment of pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Until recently, children in the Reception classes did not get off to a good enough start. Teachers and other adults sometimes do not make the most of opportunities to help children improve. They do not always have a clear understanding of how children this age learn or whether children are making enough progress.
- Not enough teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is outstanding. Teachers do not always ask enough of their most able pupils.
- Not all teachers give pupils enough guidance on how to reach the national curriculum level they are working towards when they mark their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff, including senior and subject leaders. There was also a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 109 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke informally with parents and carers.
- Inspectors observed all aspects of the school’s work. They looked at a range of documentation, including the school development plan, policies, information about pupils’ attainment and progress and how the school sets targets for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at child protection and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Kath Campbell, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jonathan Smart | Additional Inspector |
| Pamela Matty | Additional Inspector |
| Martin Bertulis | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Peters Hill is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A few speak English as an additional language.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local education authority and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action and an above-average proportion are supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs.
- The school provides care for pupils before and after school that is overseen by the governing body and formed part of the inspection.
- The governing body oversees provision for a class of nursery age children which is housed in the on-site children's centre. It did not form part of this inspection. It is inspected and reported upon separately.
- In recent years, the school has experienced several changes of staffing at headteacher and class teacher level.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education (NLE).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making sure:
 - all staff have a clear understanding of how children of this age learn
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good
 - teachers and other adults are fully involved in helping children to make good progress
 - all staff know how to assess children's learning so that they can provide the right opportunities for each child to make at least good progress.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by making sure all teachers:
 - share and learn from the outstanding practice that exists within the school
 - have the highest expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve
 - consistently provide more information for pupils about how to improve their work and what they need to do to reach the national curriculum level they are aiming towards when they mark their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2012, attainment in Year 6 dipped because too many pupils had not made good enough progress in Key Stage 2. This downturn triggered the school into making major changes. With the appointment of a new headteacher, the school changed the way in which it tracked pupils' progress and identified potential underachievement. It also introduced a very rigorous structure for improving the performance of teachers. This combination of changes proved highly successfully. Attainment rose in both key stages, but particularly in Key Stage 2, and was above average in 2013. The upward trend in attainment and progress has been sustained in pupils' current work. An above-average proportion of pupils currently make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Previously this proportion had been below average.
- Although there is some way further to go before the most able pupils consistently reach the levels of which they are capable, initiatives introduced to raise attainment by giving pupils greater responsibility for, and involvement in, how they learn are having a good impact because pupils enjoy this way of working.
- Achievement in reading is good, particularly in Key Stage 1. The teaching of phonics (using letters and sounds) is effective and a very important part of daily routines. Younger pupils are enthusiastic about reading because they quickly gain the confidence to read without help. Reading has now been given a higher profile in Key Stage 2. The development of a new library, combined with the introduction of exciting reading materials and e-books, has created much interest. Older pupils like reading. They talk knowledgeably about their enjoyment of Shakespeare and why they like authors such as Michael Murpurgo.
- The rise in attainment in writing in Key Stage 2 in 2013 was the school's real success. When looking at pupils' current and past work, it is clear to see why standards rose. Some of the work produced is of very high quality. Older pupils talk about their written work with great maturity. In Key Stage 1, the school focused successfully on raising the proportion of pupils reaching average levels, and is now working to increase the proportion reaching higher levels.
- Attainment in mathematics rose in 2013 because the school concentrated on improving pupils' calculation and problem solving skills. The school also provided much greater support for those in danger of falling behind and attainment rose in Key Stage 1 to above average. It was not quite as strong in Key Stage 2 because not enough of the most-able pupils reached the levels of which they were capable. Current mathematics teaching in Year 6 is of the highest quality. It is helping some very capable pupils to make exceptional progress.
- The school has been highly successful at closing the gap between its least able pupils and the rest. There have been major changes in the way in which the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is monitored. As a result, these pupils achieve well because they receive exactly the right level of support they need to enable them to succeed.
- The school has used its pupil premium funding effectively to make sure that the additional individual and group support it provides is of high quality. The progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium is tracked meticulously. In 2013, the school totally closed any gaps in progress between these and other pupils. The school also closed the gap in attainment. Pupils were working a term behind other pupils in reading and writing and two terms behind in mathematics. This represented a good level of improvement. The gap has closed further this academic year.

- Children start in the Reception classes with knowledge and skills that are slightly below those expected for this age. Early writing skills are particularly weak. They make slower progress than in the rest of the school and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. This is because, until recently, some staff were not knowledgeable enough about working with this age group or had a secure understanding of what to expect. The most able children, in particular, made slow progress, because not enough was demanded of them. As a result, not enough children were well prepared for their move into Year 1. Recent restructuring has brought rapid improvement, but many initiatives are new and it is too early to measure their impact on children's achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Better teaching is at the heart of this school's success. Teaching is much improved since 2013. Nearly all of the teaching seen during the inspection was of at least good quality in Years 1 to 6, with some lessons being judged outstanding.
- Activities are exciting because teachers present them in a lively and interesting way. As a result, pupils are often seen absorbed in their work because they want to succeed.
- In lessons where teachers have high expectations, work is very demanding for even the most-able pupils. A good example of this was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where pupils were sorting out information. Although pupils were working at a very fast rate, the teacher made sure they had enough time to absorb new information so that they could move to the next stage with confidence. Good levels of co-operation, collaboration and enjoyment greatly aided learning because pupils pooled their ideas and mathematical knowledge. The result was a highly effective learning experience for all abilities, but particularly for the most-able pupils.
- This level of challenge is not common to all lessons. Occasionally, pupils do not make as much progress as they should when the work is too easy for them or they spend too long working out what they have to do because they did not listen carefully enough to the teacher's instructions.
- The adults who support teachers and work with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make sure that these pupils make good progress. They talk with pupils about what they have to do, so that they can settle to their work quickly and enjoy success.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because many staff are new to this year group and do not yet have a clear enough understanding of the many ways in which children this age learn. The recent changes to, for example, the ways in which adults measure children's progress are at an early stage of development. Sometimes adults do not help children learn more quickly and they do not always know how to judge whether children are doing well enough.
- Work is carefully marked and most, but not all, teachers give pupils valuable information about what they need to do to improve a particular piece of work. However, although pupils know the national curriculum level they are working towards, they are not always given clear enough guidance about what they need to do to reach that level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and contribute greatly to their good personal development.

- Children in the Reception classes develop good social skills right from the start. They can be seen responding quickly to instructions and helping each other to clear away at the end of lessons. They enjoy their work very much.
- Pupils are eager to learn and keen to talk about their work. They behave well in lessons, around school and in the playground.
- In lessons, they work particularly well with partners and in larger groups. They co-operate and collaborate and there is much good humour.
- In classes where there have been staffing changes, pupils show respect and good manners to different teachers.
- Pupils take pride in their work and, as one pupil stated, regard school as a 'special place'.
- Staff, pupils and parents are confident pupils behave well and very few concerns are raised. Adults manage pupils' behaviour consistently well.
- Occasionally, particularly in lessons where teaching requires improvement, some pupils take longer than they should to settle into their work and they do not always listen carefully enough.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are very aware of what they need to do to keep safe, including when using computers and the internet. In discussion, pupils are clear about the different types of bullying. They say that, on the rare occasions when bullying does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. They are confident that they will be listened to if they have any concerns.
- Attendance is above average because learning is fun and school is a place where pupils develop well both academically and socially.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been particularly successful in raising pupils' and adults' performance in a very short period of time. He has brought much needed stability after a period of high turnover at headteacher level.
- The restructured senior leadership team, comprising of the headteacher, highly supportive deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, provides strong, decisive leadership. Senior leaders are high calibre teachers who support, mentor and work alongside their colleagues. Their tenacious approach to staff development has led to a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching because staff feel they are supported well in their work. All adults are far more accountable than they were in the past and are only rewarded with a pay increase if pupils achieve well.
- Subject leadership is good because teachers now have an accurate view about whether pupils are doing well enough in their subjects. The recent appointment of a new co-ordinator in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been a positive addition to the school that has started to move this aspect of the school's work forward. However, changes to ways of working in this key stage are very new and are not yet firmly embedded.
- Restructured systems for measuring the progress of pupils are of high quality and have

contributed greatly to the recent rise in attainment. The reorganisation of special educational needs leadership has meant that the school now keeps a more careful eye on the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and it makes sure none of them falls behind. It successfully removes barriers so that all pupils have an equal chance of success. For example, it uses its pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one support so that all pupils can participate fully in every aspect of school life.

- The school teaches different subjects in innovative and exciting ways. Pupils receive numerous opportunities to participate in a wealth of activities, both in and after school. Sporting opportunities, drama and music all contribute greatly to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has improved its use of technology to support learning through, for example, the school's radio and TV stations and its 'blog'. The use of visitors and visits to places such as Birmingham Repertory Theatre further enhance pupils' learning.
- Sports funding has been allocated appropriately to provide additional specialist teaching during the school day and after school. Pupils and staff value this input because it improves their expertise and it contributes well to the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, parents appreciate the links they have with the school. They feel very much involved in their children's learning.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.
- The local authority knows the school. It does not review its work but is available to provide training if requested. Currently, the school engages its own consultants to provide external reviews and specific support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The quality of governance has improved since the previous inspection. The long-serving Chair has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, understands the data and knows what needs to be done. The governing body has made changes to the way in which it works, both in terms of its structure and in its ability to challenge and hold senior leaders to account. It recently played a very important role in securing the appointment of the current headteacher. Governors speak knowledgeably about the impact of pupil premium funding on attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. They keep up-to-date with training requirements on important matters such as understanding data and safeguarding. They are strongly committed to future improvement and have secure procedures in place to make sure any underperformance is tackled robustly.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 103791 |
| Local authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 440444 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 785 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mel Gilhooley |
| Headteacher | Neil Hopkin |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 June 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01384 816740 |
| Fax number | 01384 816741 |
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