

Petworth CofE Primary School

South Grove, Petworth, West Sussex GU28 0EE

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2016, too few pupils reached the expected standard at the end of each key stage. Pupils have not made enough progress in key stage 2 for the past few years.
- The recently appointed headteacher has led the school community in a drive to improve pupils' progress and attainment during an unsettled time. Although outcomes are improving, they are still not good.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Some lessons are based on a sharp assessment of pupils' skills and provide interesting and challenging learning opportunities. Others are occasionally too easy for pupils, especially in mathematics.
- When teaching fails to fully engage pupils' interest, their behaviour dips. They lose focus and daydream or chatter among themselves.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are inefficient and hamper leaders' ability to monitor and evaluate the progress of groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders and governors do not take sufficient account of the impact that their actions will have on the progress of groups of pupils.
- Some teachers do not communicate high expectations to pupils about the presentation of their work. As a result, pupils' work, at times, is untidy, careless and inconsistent.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has identified the main areas of weakness in the school and shown great determination in starting to make much-needed improvements.
- Staff, governors and parents are united in their support for the headteacher, and his warm, inclusive approach.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Staff know children well, take good care of them and provide many well-planned opportunities to develop the early skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well around the school and during free times. They are kind, respectful and considerate of others.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development and welfare is well provided for. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and seize all opportunities to help others.
- The curriculum offers many memorable experiences for pupils. These help bring learning to life and enrich pupils' understanding in a range of subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress across year groups, and subjects, by ensuring that:
 - teachers make good use of assessment information during lessons and when planning learning, so that they provide suitably challenging work for all groups of pupils, and keep all pupils engaged and interested
 - staff continue to develop their subject knowledge, especially in mathematics and writing, so that they are better able to address pupils' mistakes quickly, and know when pupils can be moved on to more challenging work
 - teachers develop more effective questioning skills so that they routinely ask questions which check pupils' understanding, probe their thinking and deepen their learning
 - staff set consistently high expectations and check the quality of pupils' presentation of their written work frequently.
- Further strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - improving the rigour of self-evaluation so that weaknesses are more sharply identified, and the success of planned actions to secure improvement are measured through pupils' outcomes
 - establishing a more effective means of tracking pupils' progress and using the information to help leaders and governors evaluate the impact of their actions on improving the school
 - adding greater rigour to the monitoring of teaching so that senior leaders quickly identify and tackle any areas of weakness.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher joined the school when it was at a low ebb. Standards were poor, teaching was weak and behaviour was far from good. Morale of staff was low and there was little capacity in leadership. He has wasted no time in raising morale, improving behaviour, engaging the support of parents, and striving to eradicate weak teaching. He has united the school in a concerted drive for improvement. As a result, the school is now improving and there is stronger leadership capacity.
- Leaders and governors clearly understand the urgent need to improve pupils' attainment and rates of progress rapidly, especially in key stage 2. However, this view is not reflected in the school's self-evaluation documentation, which presents a much more positive image of the school's current situation than is the case.
- The school improvement plan is founded on this overly optimistic view of the school and does not get to grips with the most urgent areas of weakness. While leaders recognise that improving teaching is central to their drive for improvement, planned actions are not clearly focused on achieving this.
- The school improvement plan's success criteria are not sharp enough. They are not measurable, and do not focus on the impact of actions on accelerating progress and raising standards for groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders do not have a sufficiently clear view of the quality of teaching in the school. Inspectors found compelling evidence that some teaching, that leaders had judged to be good, was weak and required improvement. Despite this, the headteacher has taken effective action to eradicate inadequate teaching. As a result, some teachers have left and others have started working at the school recently.
- Leaders at all levels are hampered in their drive for improvement by a system for tracking pupils that is overly complicated and unreliable. It hinders leaders' and governors' efforts to evaluate the progress of groups of pupils, although they have plenty of information about how well individual pupils are doing.
- Senior leaders struggle to evaluate the overall progress of year groups and specific groups of pupils because there is a lack of precision in their understanding of what constitutes good progress. As a result, they are not able to explain convincingly whether the progress currently seen in the school is good.
- The headteacher has galvanised the staff team and transformed the culture of the school. He has trusted staff with increased responsibility and the permission to take risks. He has raised expectations so that all staff fully appreciate the need to improve standards quickly across the school.
- One staff member said: 'The school's climate has changed dramatically for the pupils and the staff. We are encouraged to challenge ourselves and the children.'
- Parents are unanimous in their support for the headteacher. They feel that the school now welcomes them, that concerns are dealt with promptly, and that there is improved provision for pupils who are struggling. Parents also appreciate the improved curriculum opportunities for pupils, especially in physical education and computing.
- One parent wrote, 'I have seen [the school] absolutely transformed since the arrival of

[the present headteacher].’ Another wrote, ‘There is a great feel and atmosphere around school with an overall happier environment.’ The vast majority of parents who expressed a view echoed this sentiment.

- Middle leaders have started to drive improvements in their subjects, including in English and mathematics. They are beginning to draw from a range of evidence to evaluate how well pupils are achieving in their subjects. This is beginning to have a positive impact, but it is too early to see substantial and sustained improvements in pupils’ outcomes.
- Leaders ensure that staff are provided with training to improve their skills and to support their professional development. At times, this includes visiting local schools to observe aspects of good practice, or working with staff from these schools to check that teachers’ assessments are accurate.
- The headteacher regularly carries out performance management to ensure that the best teachers are rewarded and underperformance is challenged.
- The curriculum has understandably focused on improving standards in English and mathematics, but science also receives good coverage. All other areas of the curriculum are covered, but in much less depth.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum, with a particular focus on sparking the interest of boys. This was seen in a number of lessons, where such topics as warriors and battles were being discussed.
- Learning is further brought to life by visits to such places as the Isle of Wight, Goodwood Farm and the local fire station. Older pupils visit Brixton Market and other famous places in the capital with pupils from a school in Streatham. Later in the year, the Streatham pupils visit Petworth. This helps pupils develop a good idea of life in another part of the United Kingdom, and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to play musical instruments and perform to parents. Theatre companies visit the school, with one putting on a pantomime last Christmas. Older pupils visit the Globe Theatre in London, and learn about the life and works of William Shakespeare. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions, especially during religious education lessons and through acts of collective worship.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and activities, outside of the school day. These include: a variety of sports, computing, gardening, yoga, construction, and a film club. A large majority of pupils take up these opportunities.
- Additional funding for pupil premium, and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is well used. These pupils typically make the same progress as other pupils in school. However, their progress is not as strong as that of other pupils nationally.
- The physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively to increase the range of sports on offer to pupils, and to improve the quality of PE teaching in the school. As a result, there is now an increased participation of pupils in sporting competitions, including county-wide festivals.
- The local authority and diocese are now working closely together to provide support and challenge for the school. They know the school well and have a generally good

understanding of its strengths and the areas for improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a broadly accurate view of the school. However, their view is clouded by self-evaluation documents that gloss over some areas of significant weakness.
- The same issues that prevent leaders from having a clear view of pupils' progress also hinder governors. Progress information is presented to them in a way that is hard to understand, without considerable attention to detail.
- Governors understand the need to draw on a range of evidence to form an accurate view of the school's performance. They do this by visiting classrooms, looking at pupils' work, meeting with middle leaders and checking on a range of documentation.
- They do not accept the information that leaders provide at face value, but ask probing questions, sometimes about quite detailed information. For example, one governor recently asked about the outcomes of girls in mathematics in a particular year group, when they noticed a drop in their progress.
- Governors understand their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils and undertake these thoroughly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff understand the importance of safeguarding pupils because this is part of the culture of the school. All have received training and are informed about the most up-to-date guidance. It is a key element in the induction of new staff.
- Pupils are safe and have a good understanding about how to stay safe, including when they are online. They receive visits from other organisations such as the police and paramedics to further develop their awareness. Older pupils are taught how to stay safe on the road when riding their bicycles.
- Policies, practices and procedures around safeguarding are fit for purpose and are reviewed regularly. The school keeps detailed records, including those to make sure that unsuitable people are not allowed to work in the school.
- Some staff are not entirely sure about how to note concerns about a pupil without being able to speak to a senior leader, although the school's policy is very clear. Nevertheless, the school's records show that concerns are carefully recorded and used effectively to safeguard vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time is not consistently good and varies across the school. This has an impact on the rate of pupils' progress, which varies from class to class.
- Where teaching is most effective, pupils are engaged, excited about their learning and strive to achieve the high expectations set for them.

- In some lessons, teaching is dull, expectations are not high enough and pupils struggle to concentrate to complete mundane activities. In such lessons, pupils do not achieve well or put much effort into their work.
- Where teaching is weaker, assessment information is not well used to plan next steps for pupils. For example, teachers sometimes stick rigidly to the school's scheme of work for mathematics. They do this even when it is clear that some pupils need more time to consolidate their understanding, or the most able pupils need to move on to work with a greater challenge. This means that, at times, pupils are not sufficiently challenged and pupils' books contain many pages of work without any mistakes.
- Some teachers' subject knowledge is weak. In English, this limits their ability to develop pupils' understanding of language features such as similes and metaphors. In mathematics, the lack of precise language prevents pupils from deepening their understanding of mathematical concepts. This insecure subject knowledge particularly limits the progress of middle-ability pupils.
- Teachers and other adults do not consistently use questioning effectively. At times, questions focus on getting the right answer rather than on carefully checking pupils' understanding and extending their thinking.
- Standards of presentation are inconsistent across the school. In some classes, pupils' work is neat and well-presented because teachers have high expectations and pupils take pride in their books. In other classes, work is messy, careless and littered with mistakes. The teachers of these classes do not regularly address errors such as inaccurate letter formation and the incorrect spelling of the days of the week and months. As a result, these mistakes become ingrained and bad habits are formed.
- Where teaching is strongest, pupils relish the challenge that results from teachers' carefully framed questions and high levels of expectation. In a Year 6 writing lesson, pupils were grappling with the precise vocabulary needed to describe a battle scene from Macbeth. They understood that words and phrases carry different shades of meaning and they spared no effort in finding the best ones to use. Pupils knew that the teacher would only accept their very best work and all rose to the challenge.
- Reading is beginning to have a high profile in the school. Older pupils, who inspectors spoke to, said that they love reading, tackle challenging texts and spend time at home immersed in books. Even younger, less-able readers have positive attitudes and are able to use their growing skill in phonics because they are taught well. This enables this group of pupils to read unfamiliar words and texts, and talk about books that they have enjoyed.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support and develop the learning of pupils with a wide range of abilities.
- PE is taught well in the school. Learning is well organised and teachers provide good levels of challenge so that all pupils make strong progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their child felt safe, happy and well looked after.
- The school's Christian ethos and shared values ensure that the school is a harmonious community where everyone is valued, and parents are always made to feel welcome.
- Older pupils enjoy taking the many opportunities for responsibility on offer and see it as their duty to take care of the younger ones. For example, Year 6 play leaders help pupils in key stage 1 by teaching them new games, sorting out any minor arguments and providing a friendly face for pupils who are on their own.
- Collective worship provides pupils with opportunities to think about aspects of their learning and their personal development. One inspector observed an assembly where a number of different pupils were asked to try new things, such as juggling and learning a foreign language, to show that determination and persistence are important qualities in becoming good learners.
- Where teaching is good, pupils become independent learners who are able to overcome difficulties and challenges in their work. In other classes, some pupils lack resilience and give up too easily when they are stuck.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and say that it rarely happens. On the few occasions that it does, it is quickly reported to staff, who deal with it swiftly. The overwhelming majority of parents echo this view.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When pupils lose interest in lessons, they regularly drift off task and their concentration reduces. This usually results in pupils becoming distracted rather than disruptive. Inspectors saw this poor attitude to learning and disengagement from their work in a few lessons. It occurred in all lessons where pupils were not challenged or interested.
- The school is a calm, orderly place. In corridors, during assembly and at free times, including playtime and lunchtime, pupils behave well. They are respectful, kind and patient.
- Senior leaders have worked with some parents to improve their children's rates of attendance. Leaders have focused particularly on disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance was well below national figures in 2016. These pupils now attend nearly as regularly as other pupils in school. This represents a considerable improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes in recent years have been too low, especially at the end of key stage 2. For the past two years the school has not met the government's floor standards which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The rates of progress of pupils at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently well below national figures for several years. In 2016, pupils of middle ability made particularly weak progress.
- In 2016, attainment dipped sharply in all key stages and standards were well below the national average, including in the Year 1 phonics screening check and at the end of the early years foundation stage (EYFS). No pupils were working at the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Only a very small proportion achieved the higher score in reading at the end of key stage 2, but none achieved it in writing or mathematics.
- Senior leaders have worked hard to change the culture of low expectations that has affected the school in recent years. They have been largely successful. However, in some classes, where teaching is not good, this culture still lingers.
- Attainment and rates of progress are improving in most year groups. Lesson observations, pupils' work and assessment information provide strong evidence that the best teaching is helping pupils to make at least good progress. In some classes, pupils are making up lost ground. This is not consistent across the school. Work in pupils' books clearly reflects these inconsistencies in the rates of progress across classes.
- There are now larger proportions of pupils on track to achieve age-related expectations in most year groups. Some are on track to achieve the higher standards.
- Standards in phonics have risen this year as a result of good teaching. Proportions of pupils on track to achieve the expected standard at the end of Year 1 are in line with national figures.
- There are below-average numbers of disadvantaged pupils in the school, but they achieve in line with other pupils. Although they make similar progress to their peers, they do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally. The school provides many opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to join clubs and activities, before and after school.
- Teachers expect pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make the same rate of progress as other pupils with the similar starting points. Additional funding is used effectively to provide appropriate interventions, tailored support and advice from external agencies. This enables this group of pupils to make good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- All areas of learning are well provided for because planning is linked with children's interests across the curriculum. Staff provide an individually tailored curriculum, based on thorough, regular and accurate assessments of children.
- This approach is particularly successful in engaging boys in learning and inspiring them

to write. An inspector listened in on a conversation, between some boys who were making superhero masks and chatting about their favourite character. By the end, a teaching assistant had challenged one boy to write the word 'Leonardo'. He worked hard and made a good job of it by applying his phonic knowledge. Progress in writing is particularly strong.

- Engaging activities sustain children's interest and enable them to concentrate for long periods of time. This is equally true whether they are playing alone or with classmates. Children's attitudes to learning are strong because the activities provided foster independence.
- Adults are quick to intervene, where appropriate, to move children's learning forwards. Staff offer children carefully planned ideas of how to take their play further and ask questions that make children think.
- Staff know children well. They spot gaps in their learning quickly and put precisely targeted interventions in place. As a result, children are making good progress this year and are on track to achieve outcomes in line with national expectations. They are developing the skills and attitudes that will help them to achieve well in Year 1.
- The teaching of phonics is effective in providing children with the early skills needed to succeed in reading and writing. Staff take this development further by creating an environment rich in written and spoken language.
- Parents are actively involved in their children's learning. Leaders recognise that they have a vital role to play in their child's learning and development in the early years. Parents make regular contributions to ongoing assessments of what their children have achieved.
- A strong safeguarding culture, underpinned by robust procedures and policies, ensures that children are kept safe. Risk assessments are securely in place and adults have the right training to take good care of the children.
- The EYFS leader has looked carefully at how to raise standards, following a sharp dip in 2016. She has taken effective steps to improve the tracking of children and uses assessment information to inform planning and support teaching. Her development plan is focused, concise and well-pitched. It is based on a range of information that gives leaders a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.
- Leaders understand that there is still work to be done to accelerate progress so that all children achieve the highest standards that they are capable of.
- While the outside learning area is engaging and well resourced, it does not support children's learning as well as the inside area.
- Some teaching in mathematics does not challenge the most able children because adults' use of vocabulary does not meet the expectations of the EYFS curriculum. Staff lack precision in the use of some of the mathematical language needed to speed up the progress of the most able.

School details

Unique reference number	125990
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10032879

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara Bennie
Headteacher	John Galvin
Telephone number	01798 342369
Website	www.petworth.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@petworth.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Petworth CofE Primary is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- There are eight single-aged classes. There are two classes in Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that seen in other schools across the country.
- Most pupils are White British. There are relatively few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below that seen nationally.
- The school has a much higher proportion of boys than is seen in other schools nationally.

- The headteacher started at the school in January 2016. Since then, there has been significant change to staffing.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in all year groups. Some of these observations were joint observations with senior leaders. An inspector observed an act of collective worship.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed pupils' work in lessons. They carefully scrutinised work in pupils' books, from every class, with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held a meeting with a group of pupils from across the school. They spoke to pupils in lessons and at free times, including in the lunch hall and at playtime.
- They also held meetings with a group of staff, a large group of governors, four middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the local diocese.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, leaders' improvement plans, a number of the school's key policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They also considered a case study in relation to child protection, and checked records regarding safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector analysed 89 responses to the Parent View questionnaire, together with 32 written comments provided by parents. An inspector met with parents at the school gate.
- Inspectors took into account 121 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey and 19 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Matt Batchelor	Ofsted Inspector

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