

Pencombe CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116907
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	358053
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Kerr

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	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Foster
Headteacher	Chloe Evans
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, pupils' books and pupil tracking data. All the teachers were observed teaching and nine lessons were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors, and 59 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The level of challenge for more able pupils in lessons.
- Whether standards in mathematics are now as good as those in English.
- What has been done to identify and remedy any weaknesses in teaching.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. None of the pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. A below average proportion of pupils is included in the register of special educational needs and/or disabilities and none of these has a statement of special educational needs. The school has retained its previously gained awards and has recently gained the Eco School Silver Award.

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

1

Main findings

Pencombe is an outstanding school. It has built on the considerable strengths celebrated in the last inspection report and successfully addressed the few short-comings that were identified. Pupils make very rapid progress overall and reach high standards by the end of Year 6. More-able pupils now achieve as well as other groups because of a closer focus on their needs. Standards in mathematics, which had lagged behind those in English, have been brought up to the same high level. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Children of Reception age do well across the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Provision is good, but progress is not yet as rapid as in the rest of the school because the resources are not always organised to best effect and opportunities are sometimes missed for adults to aid learning as the children play.

All aspects of the pupils' personal development are outstanding. They enjoy school, work hard and develop excellent levels of maturity and independence. Attendance is average, however, because of the impact of holidays taken in school time. Teaching is of a high standard and lessons are lively and challenging. Pupils are, therefore, kept highly motivated, which contributes strongly to their exceptional progress over time. The outstanding curriculum is a major factor in gaining and keeping parental approval and support. Care, guidance and support are also of the highest standard, with excellent systems and procedures to track pupils' progress and personal development. As one parent commented: 'The curriculum is amazing for such a small school and the opportunities offered to pupils are many and varied. Children feel happy and safe and are well prepared for their future.'

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The headteacher is inspirational and receives excellent support from governors, staff, parents and the wider community. Self-evaluation is rigorous and effective. For example, teachers have identified and addressed specific elements in their teaching that needed improving in order to secure outstanding progress. The successful cultivation of partnerships is a key feature in extending and enriching the pupils' learning and personal development. Sustained improvements to progress and to the quality of teaching over the past two years reflect the determination of the governors and staff to provide the very best for the pupils. They set an ambitious agenda for themselves and also responded very positively to any constructive criticism from outside. This demonstrates an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the rate of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from good to outstanding by:

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- improving the quality and range of resources
- ensuring that no opportunities are missed for adults to aid children's learning as they play.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Outcomes are outstanding because both achievement and personal development are of the highest order. Current tracking shows that pupils are making exceptionally rapid progress across the school. A key factor in this is the recent acceleration in progress in mathematics, especially for the more-able pupils. This addresses a key issue raised at the last inspection and was illustrated during the inspection by the enthusiastic and competent way in which pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 tackled demanding mathematical investigations. The learning observed in English was equally impressive, with pupils thoughtfully articulating their ideas, listening carefully to one another and clearly developing advanced communication skills. There is now a settled trend of rapid progress in mathematics and English across the ability range, with attainment rising from just above average to high over the two key stages.

Pupils feel very safe in school and talk confidently about how to keep safe and stay healthy. Their knowledge of safety procedures and rules within the school is exceptional, and older pupils naturally assume responsibility for ensuring that younger ones learn and abide by them. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils say there is no bullying. They show sensitivity towards each other and great awareness of the needs of others in society. The confidence and skills that they gain in the school stand them in very good stead for the next stage of their education and for the life of work. As one parent said: 'When pupils move from Pencombe to local secondary schools they are happy, confident, supportive of other children and the majority perform at the top levels both in education and sport.'

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The only weakness in teaching identified at the last inspection was a lack of challenge for more-able pupils in some lessons. This has been successfully addressed so that teaching is now at least good with much that is outstanding. Teachers use accurate assessments of pupils' prior learning to set targets and plan tasks that challenge all abilities. Samples of pupils' work from previous terms shows that this has led to rapid learning and progress over time, including for the more able, enabling them to reach appropriately high levels of attainment. Marking is thorough and helpful, using praise well and providing pointers for improvement. Teaching assistants are very usefully employed and make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Teachers use new technologies well along with a wide range of other resources to enliven lessons and make learning more memorable.

The excellent range of learning opportunities provided within and beyond lessons. includes music, dance, art and sport. Residential field study trips provide adventure activities such as abseiling, which the pupils enjoy and appreciate. Such a trip immediately prior to the inspection was important in getting the new grouping off to a very positive start to the school year. The pupils are all known well by the staff and the many helpers that come into the school from the local community. This network complements the excellent formal procedures and policies developed by the school to ensure that every pupil's welfare and development are fully supported. The school operates as a loving and supportive extended family and this contributes enormously to the life chances of each individual pupil.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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 governors and staff form a very effective team in setting an ambitious agenda for driving forward improvements to the school. The governors are particularly active in promoting collaboration between local schools so that experience and expertise can be more closely shared. This enables the school to provide far more opportunities for its pupils than it could from its own resources and is a major factor in maintaining an outstanding curriculum. Equality of opportunity is actively promoted within and beyond the school. This is evident in the support given to pupils with particular needs within the school, including gifted and talented pupils and in the school's partnerships with disadvantaged schools in Africa and Asia. Safeguarding procedures are good. The school is very vigilant in screening visitors and ensuring that health and safety rules are well-established and observed. The school contributes strongly to community cohesion. Links with groups representing different religions are well-established and contribute to a mature understanding by the pupils of their place in the wider world.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The attainment of children entering Reception is just above the expected level for their age. They settle in quickly because of the clear routines and begin to make good progress in each area of learning. The one or two children for whom English is a second language receive good support so that they develop friendships and rapidly acquire sufficient English to communicate with their peers and staff. Progress is good over the six areas of learning so that most children have exceeded the early learning goals in each area of learning before they begin Year 1.

Teaching is good. A good balance is achieved between activities directed by teachers and child-initiated play for the Reception children within the Key Stage 1 class. They are usefully included in more formal class activities, such as number recognition and counting, as appropriate. On occasions, some of the resources in the play areas are not as attractive or well-organised as they could be to stimulate purposeful play. This leads to some lack of purpose in the activities on occasions. There is scope for free-flow between the indoor and outdoor areas, but the school has not yet fully equipped the setting with suitable resources to fully extend the children physically. The staff keep meticulous records of the children's development through observations and use these to plan further activities. For much of the time they interact with the children appropriately to encourage language and creativity, but on occasions miss opportunities to guide the children's learning. Due attention is paid to health and safety and the children demonstrate a good knowledge for their age of what foods are best for their health. Behaviour is good and the children develop a good degree of self-confidence and initiative.

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

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

Parents express overwhelmingly supportive views of the school. The number of returns exceeds the number of pupils on role as for some families more than one parent returned a form. All the parents were happy with their children's experience at the school. Many included written comments, all but one of which were very favourable. The aspects most appreciated were the range of learning opportunities provided, the dedication of the staff and the leadership and management of the school. The inspectors firmly endorse these views. The one critical comment concerned the quality of communication with parents, but the overwhelming majority thought this was good, which is also the judgement of the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pencombe 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	86	8	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	88	7	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	75	14	24	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	76	11	19	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	83	10	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	73	14	24	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	83	10	17	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	80	11	19	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	76	12	20	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	54	23	39	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	54	22	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	90	5	8	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	90	6	10	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Pencombe CofE Primary School, Bromyard, HR7 4SH

My colleague and I enjoyed our visit to your school, which we found to be outstanding. You have dedicated teachers and governors and many varied and exciting activities to do. When I asked some of you what you would do to make the school better you told me that the school is good enough just as it is and I am not surprised!

You all evidently enjoy your time at school and you work hard and achieve well so that you are very well prepared for your secondary education. You feel very safe in school and know how to keep healthy. You are exceptionally well-behaved and sensible and you all make an excellent contribution to the school as a community. You are also learning more about the wider world through your links with the schools in Birmingham, Tanzania and Sri Lanka. I was glad to be there when you were learning the Asian dance steps and hope that you have many more enjoyable experiences of different cultures.

You all make excellent progress through the school, especially in English and mathematics, and many of you excel in other areas such as sport and art. This is because the teaching is so good and your targets are just right for each of you. The youngest among you do well in the Reception Year, but we have asked the teachers to help you to do even better by improving the equipment and talking with you even more while you play.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr

Lead inspector

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