

# Python Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133389
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	360501
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kenneth Thomas

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	274
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Wendy Moakes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Burns
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Kirklington Road Mansfield NG21 0JZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 10 teachers and saw 20 lessons. Inspectors observed a school assembly and held discussions with staff, parents and carers, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. They looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including: school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 54 parents and carers, 132 pupils and 13 members of staff were analysed.

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

- Has the upward trend in attainment been maintained, particularly in English?
- How effective are strategies to promote regular attendance?
- How well are pupils prepared for life in a culturally diverse society?
- What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and has it improved since the last inspection?

## Information about the school

This is an above average sized primary school with slightly more girls than boys on roll. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage that caters for Nursery aged children part-time before they move into Reception. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about average. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language and none are in the early stages of learning the language. One in four of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is more than in many schools. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school provides accommodation for, but does not manage, a pre-school playgroup and an after-school club. This provision is inspected separately. Python Hill has received national recognition for its work in several areas and has achieved the Healthy Schools Gold status and the Eco Schools Bronze award. Through the Wider Opportunities in Music initiative, all Year 4 pupils learn to play a brass instrument.

**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

Python Hill Primary School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. It is a school in which pupils feel safe and valued because staff know the pupils really well and provide good levels of care. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and derive great benefit from the welcoming and attractive learning environment. This is recognised by most parents and carers. Nearly all of those who replied to the inspection questionnaire or who met with the inspectors expressed much satisfaction with the school and their children's experience. One, capturing the views of many, said, 'An impressive school, superb environment for learning and enjoyment, consistently innovative, challenging and fun.' Pupils take pride in the range of jobs that they carry out, such as being members of the school council, and take their responsibilities seriously.

With drive and determination and good support from his deputy and staff, the headteacher is giving clear direction to the school. Together, they have brought about significant improvements since the last inspection. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and is now good. As a result, children make good progress from the time they start school. This good progress continues as pupils move through the school and standards at the end of Year 6, although broadly average, have risen in each of the last three years. Reliable school tracking information and the work inspectors observed in Year 6 confirmed that this rise is continuing. A range of strategies is being successfully implemented to improve pupils' performance in writing and these are contributing to the rise in standards in English. Challenging targets are set and the effective use of assessment information to check pupils' progress enables targeted support to be provided where needed. This is having a substantial impact on standards and proving particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. One particularly notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the effective support provided for any who may be in vulnerable circumstances to ensure that they keep up with classmates. Attendance, although average, is improving because of the meticulous way in which all absences from school are pursued.

Because much has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning, most teaching is good. However, this quality is not yet found consistently throughout the school. There is more still to do to ensure that pupils in all classes are provided with activities that consistently challenge them. In some lessons, too few checks are made on pupils' progress during lessons so that learning can be moved on more rapidly. While pupils' work is marked regularly, the marking does not always provide clear guidance on the next steps in their learning. The school's links with the local community are underpinned by a clear understanding of the context in which the school operates. As a result, community cohesion is promoted well on a local level. However, the curriculum is less effective in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures within national and international contexts.

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Because the strategies put into place to tackle weaknesses are proving successful, the school's overall effectiveness has risen from satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, to good. Self-evaluation procedures and the school's view of itself are accurate and its record of raising achievement shows it is well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve further.

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

- Make all teaching good or better to accelerate learning and progress, by:
  - planning learning tasks that are appropriately challenging for pupils of all ability levels
  - making more frequent assessments of pupils' understanding as lessons proceed and checking pupils' learning at the end of lessons
  - ensuring consistency in the marking of pupils' work so that all errors are corrected, clear guidance on how to improve is given and that pupils respond to the advice provided.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion by providing more opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of cultural diversity in national and international contexts.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage, the skills of many in all areas of learning are below those usually found in children of their age, and this is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy. Nevertheless, because the school is very attentive to individual needs, effective adult support ensures that learning is good for all groups of pupils. As a result, by the time pupils enter Year 1 most are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals, although weaknesses in communication, language and literacy remain. Because close attention is paid to pupils' individual needs as they move through the school, inspection evidence shows that all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very few from different minority ethnic backgrounds, progress equally well. Pupils enjoy and achieve well in their learning when lessons are stimulating and engaging. In these lessons, they also show consistently good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. This was exemplified in an English lesson with a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. In the lesson, pupils took great delight and made good progress in constructing sentences including adjectives to describe 'witches' spells'. A feature of the school is the good quality of pupils' artwork and displays that contribute much to the attractive learning environment.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. Their good behaviour helps to make the school the calm and welcoming place it is. Collaborative working is very well developed. While pupils accept and respect each other's differences, their cultural development is less strong because they do not have enough awareness of people from other cultures, religions and backgrounds. The overwhelming majority report that they feel safe at school and are confident that they can turn to an adult to sort out any concerns. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during their journeys to and from school. The school council has been responsible for important initiatives, such as

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the promotion of better sporting activities. These efforts, and the Healthy Schools initiative, have ensured that pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Improving skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, together with their good personal development, ensure pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**How effective is the provision?**

All lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. In the very best lessons, pupils make good progress because assessment information is used well to guide the planning of learning tasks and pupils are expected to work independently, stretching themselves and others as they talk things through. Perceptive questioning is used to extend pupils' thinking and encourage the use of more varied vocabulary in their answers. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson, for example, where pupils were challenged to extend their vocabularies as they wrote the front page for a newspaper. However, in lessons that fall below this standard, the work planned is not pitched at the correct level and progress slows because the tasks do not offer enough challenge. Although there is much good practice in the marking of pupils' work, in some instances grammatical and spelling errors in written work are not checked. Particularly effective use is made of assessment information to identify underperformance and to track pupils' progress towards their targets.

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The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning experiences. Pupils' needs and interests have been taken into account and, as a result, provision for creative subjects, such as art and music, is good. The curriculum is enhanced well through local partnerships: for example, links with other schools and sports clubs broaden pupils' experiences and residential and other visits broaden their life experiences.

The vast majority of parents and carers say that the school is very caring. This is borne out by inspection findings. All adults are particularly sensitive to those pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Staff work hard to involve parents and carers in their children's learning and through innovative groups, such as 'The Learning Zone', 'Touchstone' and the 'Out and About Club', children with various emotional and behavioural issues, as well as a wide range of learning needs, are provided with effective support.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers at all levels have successfully improved provision and outcomes for pupils. There is a clear sense of direction and the school is firmly set on an upward path. Through the monitoring of teaching and learning and careful tracking of pupils' progress, the school has recognised its strengths and ensured that weaknesses are identified and tackled. In particular, there is a shared determination to raise standards further. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and has close links with a number of agencies that support the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds. This is one aspect of the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. The progress of different groups of pupils is also carefully tracked to ensure there are no attainment gaps and all are progressing equally well.

Members of the governing body have worked well with other leaders and managers to ensure that safeguarding procedures are of good quality and all staff are well trained in these matters. As a result, the school has the full confidence of parents and carers. The governing body takes its statutory responsibilities seriously and provides the school with considerable support. Its members are well informed about the school through regular reports from the headteacher and are becoming more directly involved in monitoring the school's performance. Parents and carers are provided with a good range of information. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place that promote pupils' understanding from a local perspective well. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very effectively. The school recognises,

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rightly, the need to expand its links to provide national and global perspectives, and open pupils' minds to the range and diversity of culture in the United Kingdom and beyond.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children settle quickly on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the well-organised induction arrangements and good adult care and support. As a result, children feel safe and enjoy their learning. A strong emphasis on children's personal and social skills ensures that they soon begin to share, to learn and to play together. All adults are vigilant in meeting the needs of children, and welfare requirements are fully met. Parents and carers are delighted, typically commenting on 'the high standard of care and teaching - children couldn't have a better start'. Teaching is good because staff have a good understanding of how children learn and they work well as an enthusiastic team. They provide a broad range of activities to promote all areas of learning. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and to work independently. The teaching of letters and sounds receives good attention and children are making good progress in acquiring early writing skills. However, opportunities that arise to extend children's early literacy skills outdoors are not always taken. Effective leadership and management have ensured that the Early Years Foundation Stage, judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection, is now good. This is because adults share a vision about what can be done to enhance children's learning experiences.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire was lower than in most primary schools. The response to the questionnaire may have been affected by a similar survey of parents' views that had been carried out by the school shortly before the inspection. This survey had produced a high and very positive response. All parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire indicated they are very happy with their children's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with safety in school, the sense of enjoyment, the quality of teaching, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the leadership of the school. These views reflect inspection findings. A very small minority of parents and carers do not believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the overwhelming majority of pupils are well behaved and that any instances of inappropriate behaviour are effectively managed by staff.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Python Hill 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 274 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	76	12	22	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	76	12	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	57	22	41	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	56	22	41	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	35	65	18	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	52	25	46	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	56	24	44	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)	32	59	19	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	61	20	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	46	24	44	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	43	28	52	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	70	15	28	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	70	15	28	1	2	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



25 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Python Hill Primary School, Mansfield, NG21 0JZ**

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the friendly way you received us. We spoke to many of you and you were really cooperative.

Yours is a good school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a good start to their school lives and make good progress. Most of you enjoy school, listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and are willing to work hard in your lessons. Your good behaviour is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why you are doing well. You make more progress in some lessons than others and we have asked your teachers to make sure that in all of your lessons you are really stretched so that you make the best possible progress. We have also asked that teachers make more frequent checks on your learning in lessons. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and we have asked that when they do this, they correct any mistakes and make clear what you have to do to take the next steps in learning. You can help yourselves to make more progress by making sure that you try hard to follow the advice you are given.

You understand the importance of being healthy; you eat sensibly and take part in physical activities regularly. You learn to work and play well together and to help each other. We were impressed with how you all do so much to help the school, especially those who help at playtimes and in the classrooms and those of you involved in making decisions through the school council. Adults at school look after you well, so that you are safe and happy. Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better. As part of this, we have asked that you are given more opportunities to learn about people with different faiths and cultures.

We think that everyone at Python Hill can work together to do these things and that you will want to play your part by working hard and attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead inspector

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