

Paxcroft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126483
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360096
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Danny Underwood
Headteacher	Ewan Caldwell
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 11 teachers. They held meetings with members of staff, representatives of the governing body and pupils and met informally with some parents, carers and other specialists who visited the school. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documentation including the school development plan, various policies and minutes of meetings. They analysed the responses of questionnaires from pupils and staff and from 88 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether there had been sufficient improvement in the outcomes for pupils since the last inspection, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Whether the recent changes in senior leadership and staffing structure had brought about a strong and sustainable capacity to improve the school and meet the aims of making this school one of the best.
- How well middle leaders have played a part in driving the school forward, in particular in monitoring and evaluating work in different subjects.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school that serves its local area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is low. Most of these pupils' needs relate to specific learning difficulties, language and vocabulary acquisition. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

The headteacher was appointed 18 months ago and since then there has been a restructuring of the senior and middle leaders. The school has gained an International 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and the outcomes for pupils, teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support for pupils are now all good. The headteacher has shared his highly ambitious plans to make this school one of the best with the school community. The staff have given him their full backing in this endeavour and there are already signs that, while not all the improvements have been completed, the school is well on its way to achieving this vision. This all points to a school with a good capacity to continue improving into the future.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes, and progress well so they are prepared and ready to take on more formal work in Year 1. Through the rest of the school, pupils' good overall academic achievement is most noticeable in their improved literacy skills and particularly so in their writing. This has had a strong and beneficial focus over the last year. In both English and mathematics, pupils' books demonstrate accelerated progress since September. As a result, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, while broadly average against national figures, shows nearly half of pupils reaching levels above those expected for their age.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. For example, the daily 'Wake and Shake' is thoroughly enjoyed by all, and pupils understand the purpose of this energetic activity to start the day. Pupils are polite and considerate to each other and to staff and visitors. Expectations of the way they conduct themselves are high and so lessons run smoothly and there is little evidence of over- boisterous play or silliness. Pupils' understanding of cultural issues is less well developed. The school has gained an award for its outstanding international work and there are some especially good links with a school in France. Pupils also benefit from learning different languages and topics connected with aspects of other cultures. However, because the school has not fully evaluated and developed the provision in this area, pupils do not have a thorough understanding of wider cultural traditions or about the differences and, as importantly, the similarities between their own and others' beliefs and cultures.

The good teaching, and some that is outstanding, is characterised by thorough planning, a generally good mix of different activities within each lesson and vibrant questioning. Pupils respond well to these stimuli and are eager and enthusiastic to do their best. On just a few occasions, where teaching is not as well defined, pupils do not complete what is expected of them and only make satisfactory progress. The school's assessments show that these instances are reducing as the ongoing professional development of teachers takes full effect.

The headteacher, members of the governing body and other senior staff have prioritised improvements for the school extremely well. A key feature of these improvements has been the rigorous use of data to determine the progress of pupils between Key Stage 1

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and 2. Senior staff have correctly identified that some elements of the provision have not had such a high priority and that they now need to be focused upon. As a result, while self-evaluation is secure and accurate, the impact of this on pupils' outcomes is better than the paperwork would suggest. The rigorous and effective use of assessment data to influence progress and learning outcomes at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has not yet been extended into the Foundation Stage so as to influence pupils' progress as early as possible. This would allow a clearer picture of progress over the complete time at school to emerge and to be analysed in order to drive further school improvement. This lack of follow-up is also the case for governors' risk assessments, as suggestions for improvement have not always been acted upon quickly enough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use self-evaluation processes to help strengthen the school's improvement plan by:
 - allowing leaders and governors to take an active role in whole school self-evaluation
 - evaluating and rigorously analysing the provision for community cohesion and acting on the findings
 - refining the processes for the risk assessments conducted within the school and acting on the recommendations.
- Increase the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics by:
 - developing more rigorous analysis of assessments of children's entry levels allowing a clearer gauging of the progress they make through the Reception year and then through the rest of the school.

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

From slightly below average starting points, the pupils' good achievement is evident both in their good learning and progress and good personal outcomes. Progress in the basic skills of English and mathematics has been improving over the last 18 months and those currently in Year 6 show good capability in their descriptive texts, their persuasive writing, and in the use of calculation and of technology. In one lesson, for example, pupils coherently explained their emotions towards an animated film using words such as 'nostalgic' and 'contrived' and could then raise some interesting ideas about the feelings that were inspired by it. In another class, pupils had been writing poems about their own 'Magic Box' saying that, 'I would put in my box the feeling of my tenth birthday'. Equally, pupils can adeptly use computers to produce their own research books or presentations. Progress rates still vary somewhat although these are being evened out as better identification of those underachieving is ensuring they get the support they need. This is especially the case for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, where assessment information shows that they are making at least the same level of progress as their peers and sometimes better. This is all ensuring pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils can talk about what it is like to be healthy, such as through exercise and eating the right foods. Their lunchboxes, in the main, reflect this. They also understand about the dangers that they might face as shown by their use of 'the dolphin' to blank the screen

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when they come across an unsafe internet site. They are clear that they must use computers in sight of an adult. Pupils enjoy their work in the wider community such as at the adjacent nursing home, although, as yet, they do not have much input into deciding where this work will happen; much is instigated by the adults. Pupils enjoy their email contact with their link school in France but feel they would like to know individual children there and to find out more. The curricular opportunities are good through topics relating to events such as the Chinese New Year. However, pupils find it more difficult to talk about their country's diversity or to voice their informed judgements about various traditions and cultures around the world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Almost all lessons seen were at least good with just a small proportion that was satisfactory. Teachers mention how much their own practice has improved with the sharper focus on 'how pupils learn'. This noticeable improvement in teaching is reflected in pupils' motivation, concentration and work rate within individual lessons.

Feedback to pupils, either orally or through marking, the use of termly targets and self-assessment are generally further developed and more effective in English than mathematics. In writing, pupils fully understand how they need to improve, how well they have done and what level they should be aiming at. This is not so strongly the case in

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mathematics as yet and is one of the reasons why attainment and progress can be improved further in this subject.

The restructuring of the curriculum has been successful. Pupils again note how much better this is and that they can see a purpose for their learning. The curriculum has been developed to ensure that cross-curricular skills are developed, such as teamwork and collaborative research, and that subject-specific skills are also developed sequentially. Very good use of time is made when year groups go swimming and then teachers can concentrate on the other year group within their class on age-related tasks such as writing, spelling or mental arithmetic.

Pupils are cared for well. Adults know how to intervene to avoid a crisis and ensure they encourage and support as necessary. There are instances of outstanding support by some teaching assistants, who have very high expectations of all those they are involved with and not just of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher defines his main aim as to become a 'self-improving organisation and for academic standards to be in the top 25% within three years'. With the strong support of the staff, the school is on its way to achieving this ambitious target. A rigorous programme to improve learning opportunities through better teaching is evident in the accurate monitoring and ensuing professional support. The impact of this can be seen in the improving attainment of pupils and good equality of opportunity both for staff and pupils. Pupils comment that there is no evidence of any discrimination and this is confirmed by the behaviour and demeanour of pupils and their above average attendance. Other leaders have been given the opportunity to take control of their areas of responsibility. However, partly because of their inexperience in taking this higher level of responsibility, this does not yet extend to them playing a full and active part in developing whole-school priorities through the school development plan or self-evaluation processes.

Members of the governing body, having gone through a turbulent period, are once again playing their part effectively. They have a realistic understanding of what needs improving, show good levels of expertise and monitoring and are increasingly involved in challenging decisions through their own first-hand observations and, subsequently, through knowledgeable reports. They have fulfilled their statutory responsibilities and, from an analysis of these, are now working on even more rigorous procedures for risk assessments. However, this relative area of weakness is the reason why safeguarding

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procedures, which are very good at ensuring checks on staff and ensuring the safety of pupils during school time, are only satisfactory.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the work of the school, with many commenting positively on how things have changed. Effective partnerships are being further developed, such as through sports, arts and music networks, with other cluster schools and with the special school on the same site. This is all helping to raise the profile of the school within the local area.

Members of the governing body are at an early stage of developing their systems to audit and evaluate community cohesion. There are already some strong links and work focused on developing pupils' understanding of different ancient and modern cultures. However, the work misses opportunities for pupils to develop tolerance of different traditions and particularly so that pupils can see the values within different ways of life.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They develop well and enjoy their learning because adults help them to become independent and direct them towards the play opportunities that will help their basic skills improve in language and number. Provision includes a range of activities both indoors and outdoors across all areas of learning. For example, registration time includes opportunities for children to think about estimating and counting. Adults are good at questioning the learning that is taking place and then allowing time for children to think about and form their answers. The whole environment is safe and is adapted well to suit the needs of the children. However, some of the equipment is quite 'tired' and is not as exciting as it could be.

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Teaching is good and characterised by clear planning. This year, for example, the adults have concentrated on developing the personal, social and emotional education as this was a clear need when children started school. The teaching assistants provide invaluable support for this. Involvement of parents and carers starts first thing in the morning and so there is time available for them to share any concerns or to highlight any important events. This has all helped children develop good routines and levels of confidence to ensure that they are able to leave their parents and carers and involve themselves quickly in early morning activities. One parent commented on how good the induction was for them this year through home visits. Another pointed out how the school had extended the induction period as their child had had trouble settling and that these procedures were 'much improved since the new headteacher had started'.

Leadership is good. Teachers assess children continuously through the year and make accurate evaluations about how well children are doing. However, at a whole school level, this information is not used well enough to define the particular strengths and weaknesses of any one group of children as they move through the school.

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

There were an average number of responses to the questionnaire. Almost all parents and carers support the various aspects of the school's work and, in particular, they feel they are happy with their child's experience at school. There are no significant areas of concern although just a few parents and carers do not agree that their child's progress or the teaching is good enough, or that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team cannot endorse this view and feels that the behaviour and progress of pupils, as well as teaching, are all good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Paxcroft 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 268 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	67	28	32	0	0	1	14
The school keeps my child safe	58	66	29	33	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	56	38	43	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	50	39	44	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	56	35	40	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	50	43	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	50	43	49	1	1	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)	42	48	39	44	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	47	46	52	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	41	45	51	5	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	33	55	63	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	51	41	47	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	66	29	33	1	1	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Paxcroft Primary School, Trowbridge BA14 7EB

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. We enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing all the things that you are involved in. You will not be surprised to know that we have said that yours is a good school. As I promised some of you, I have included the main points of our report below.

- You said that you thought you were taught well and we agree. This ensures you are making good progress through the school and that you leave in Year 6 with the standards expected for your age but with nearly half of you gaining the higher Level 5. Keep it up!
- Many of you said that you think behaviour is good and we agree. In lessons you concentrate well and are really interested in all the many good topics and work you have to do. We were especially pleased to see how you all played together so well.
- You are cared for well. Those of you who find learning difficult are soon provided with the help you need and you said that you know who to go to if you have any problems.

Your headteacher has made a lot of changes for the better. This was something that was mentioned by quite a few of you and we can see how this is making your school even better. We have suggested a few things that will help your school become one of the best.

- To help you do even better in English and mathematics, we have asked that the school looks at all the assessment information from when you start school as closely as they look at assessments in older year groups to make sure you are making good progress as early as possible. In addition, we have said that the good work being done to link your school with others should be widened so that you have a really good understanding of all the different cultures around the world.
- We have asked that all the leaders are as involved as possible in building up a really detailed school improvement plan that will ensure your school continues to improve.

Finally, you can all help by continuing to suggest good ideas and by keeping up all the hard work in lessons. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Collard

Lead inspector

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