

Piper's Vale Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132836
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	360452
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Huggins
Headteacher	Sally Wright
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited an assembly and 18 lessons, observing 15 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 254 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those from staff and pupils.

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

- Is there secure evidence to show that the school is successfully raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress in writing and mathematics?
- Are assessment procedures used effectively to improve the quality of teaching?
- Do pupils know and understand how to achieve their targets?
- Are middle leaders and subject coordinators making an effective contribution to the development of the school?
- Can the school demonstrate that attendance is improving rapidly?

Information about the school

Pipers' Vale is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly similar to the national average. Most are of Asian heritage, with smaller numbers from a range of nationalities. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average. A few are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average for primary schools. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average. However, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. Piper's Vale has Healthy Schools status.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The determination of the senior leadership team, the commitment of staff and the support of the local authority have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. Standards are rising. Pupils' progress is satisfactory. Current attainment in Years 2 and 6 is broadly in line with national expectations in reading and writing but below in mathematics. Standards in reading are better than those in writing. Overall, this is a noticeable improvement as, historically, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has mostly been exceptionally low in English and mathematics. Parents and carers are generally pleased with the improvements. One wrote, 'My child was below the level she should have been at the start of the year but, with the help of the class teacher, she has reached the level she should have been.' Others made similar comments.

The improvements can be attributed to the focus on improving the accuracy and use of assessment information to raise expectations and to inform teaching. Although inconsistencies remain between classes, staff are now more aware of the importance of closely matching the work to pupils' needs and abilities. Assessment records show that most pupils have made more than the expected rate of progress in this school year. In most lessons, teachers demonstrate some features of good teaching. For example, clearly identifying the purpose of the lesson, establishing the criteria by which the lesson can be evaluated and the confident use of the interactive whiteboard to support learning. There are some good examples of teachers using questioning effectively to consolidate, probe and extend pupils' learning. This is not always evident in all lessons and some pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged sufficiently. There are examples of developmental marking on which the school can build but marking does not always provide clear guidance to enable pupils to reach their literacy and numeracy targets. Although a greater proportion of lessons are now taught well, teaching is satisfactory because pupils do not make consistently good progress. Their achievement is satisfactory.

A key strength of the school is its inclusive approach. All pupils are welcomed. The level of care, especially for those who find learning difficult and those who are potentially vulnerable, is good. Systems to monitor and improve attendance are effective. Pupils' rate of attendance has risen and it is now similar to that found in most primary schools. The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of the pupils. It is particularly effective in supporting aspects of their personal development. For example, their understanding of keeping themselves safe and of healthy living. This has contributed to the school gaining National Healthy School status.

The governing body is supportive and is becoming increasingly challenging. Key members are working closely with the senior leadership team and the local authority to improve outcomes for pupils. Considerable sums of money have been spent on developing the

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Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area. It is used well to promote the children's physical and creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Its potential to develop their literacy and numeracy skills has not been fully exploited. Middle managers are enthusiastic and have a shared view for the development of the school. Some are relatively new appointments and others are covering long-term absence of colleagues. The skills of these middle leaders to analyse and use assessment information or evaluate the impact of teaching on learning are developing satisfactorily, but are not sufficiently sharp. They do not rigorously check that school policies and procedures are implemented consistently. Nevertheless, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The school has accurately evaluated its own performance. Key priorities are correctly identified and outlined in the detailed raising attainment plan.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics throughout the school by:
 - making more effective use of assessment information to set work and challenge all groups of pupils, particularly the more able
 - providing pupils with clearer and more consistent guidance on how to improve their work
 - ensuring that questioning is used more effectively during whole-class teaching to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
- Boost the effectiveness of middle managers and subject coordinators by:
 - improving their skills in analysing and using assessment information and in evaluating the impact of teaching on learning
 - promoting consistency in the implementation of policies throughout the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - developing the outdoor area to give children more opportunities to practise their early writing and number skills
 - ensuring that activities are well planned and resourced to meet the needs and to challenge children of different abilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge below those expected. Throughout the school, they respond well when the work interests and challenges them. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils worked with enjoyment and sustained concentration to estimate and measure the perimeter of different shaped objects. They confidently used rulers, tape measures and string to measure the more complex shaped items. Pupils recorded their findings accurately and used mathematical terminology appropriately as they discussed their work enthusiastically. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted

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well. In most lessons, teachers ask pupils to discuss points with a 'talk partner'. Their reading development is enhanced through the regular guided reading sessions. Pupils are responding well to the strategies to improve writing and this is beginning to have an impact, as standards are rising. However, there is much still to be accomplished. Many pupils have not fully acquired the expected skills in spelling and punctuation. The use of adventurous vocabulary is often limited.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who find school challenging, make similar progress to their peers. Staff monitor their progress closely and place the emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and communication skills. Girls tend to attain higher standards and make better progress than boys, especially in English. Strategies have been put in place to close the gap. By the end of Year 6, the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language generally make satisfactory progress. The standards reached are typically below those for their respective groups nationally.

Most pupils enjoy school. They feel safe but a small minority raise concerns about the behaviour of some of their peers. Overall, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory but, in lessons that capture their interests, it is good. Pupils are aware of safety issues and are developing a secure understanding of the importance of e-safety. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, undertake tasks around the school and become members of the school council. They raise funds for national and international charities and take part in local events. However, their contribution to the wider community is not as evident as that found in most schools. Most pupils are reflective and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their knowledge of other faiths, cultures, religions and beliefs is underdeveloped. Nevertheless, pupils' improved attendance, improving key skills and their increasingly positive attitude towards learning provide them with a satisfactory basis for the next stage in their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

Within a profile of satisfactory teaching, there is some good and outstanding teaching on which the school can build. In the better lessons, the work is well matched to pupils' needs, the lessons proceed at a quick pace and teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support individuals and groups. In most lessons, there is a reasonable balance between the contributions of teachers and pupils. However, teachers do not expect enough of some pupils, especially those who are more able. Activities are not always sufficiently open-ended and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, especially in mathematics. Marking is undertaken regularly and effective use is made of praise. While there are some good examples of developmental comments, especially in the English books, this is not consistent and comments are not followed up as a matter of routine. Some teachers are more skilled than others at making sure that pupils reflect on the success of their learning at the end of the lessons.

Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and adequately matched to pupils' needs. However, opportunities to consolidate, refine and extend pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy in other lessons have not been fully exploited. Teachers do not routinely reinforce pupils' understanding and use of mathematical terminology. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support pupils' learning. Other subjects are mainly taught through a theme or topic approach. This helps

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pupils to understand the relevance of their learning. Pupils are increasingly being asked to find out information for themselves but this is not embedded throughout the school. Art displays reflect high quality work. Satisfactory links and partnerships with other schools or organisations combined with a good range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors, support pupils' personal development.

The good level of care contributes significantly to all pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils feel safe and know they can turn to adults for assistance. Systems and structures to ensure pupils' well-being and safety are well established. Procedures are followed by all staff. Senior staff and the special needs coordinator work closely with parents and carers and with a range of agencies to support individual pupils to ensure that their needs are met. Induction and transition arrangements are securely rooted in the work of the school. A well-run breakfast club enables pupils to start the school day in a calm and orderly manner.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team and middle leaders, based on their accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, provide satisfactory drive for its development. There is a shared understanding of the next steps to take the school forward. Staff work together well, they are supportive of the headteacher and are committed to continuing to improve provision and outcomes for the pupils. Senior leaders undertake a detailed analysis of assessment information. This information is increasingly being used to challenge staff on the progress the pupils make. Middle leaders have not fully developed their respective roles in using assessment data. Links with parents and carers are good. Regular newsletters are well presented and informative. The good links with parents and carers have contributed to improved attendance and are helping to accelerate pupils' progress.

The governing body ensures that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust and that procedures to keep pupils safe are established in school routines. Several governors have undertaken in-depth training on safeguarding and monitor school procedures regularly. The governing body is increasingly challenging the leadership team as its members more accurately evaluate the school's performance against external criteria. Equality of opportunities is monitored adequately and any suggestion of discrimination investigated. The school is working to ensure that there is no difference in performance between groups of pupils. Gaps are closing but differences between boys and girls have yet to be eliminated. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. Within the school and the local area, it is

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developing well, but it has not established national or international links. As a result, pupils' awareness of other cultures, beyond those represented in the local community, is underdeveloped.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. Induction procedures are good and relationships with parents and carers are quickly established. Children settle quickly, grow in confidence and develop a positive attitude to school. The Reception classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment. In the Nursery, the environment is less well developed. Although the Nursery and Reception classes make use of the outdoor areas, these have not been fully developed to promote the children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Planning in the Nursery and the Reception classes ensures that all areas of children's learning are covered. However, planning does not consistently provide sufficient guidance to enable staff to target individuals, raise expectations and accelerate children's progress. There is a reasonable balance between the activities the children choose for themselves and those that are adult initiated. Staff place an emphasis on developing the children's ability to communicate and to work together. Children follow instructions and develop their social skills well. The daily well-organised snack time ensures they quickly understand the importance of personal hygiene and healthy eating.

The Early Years Foundation Stage team has a reasonable understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Assessment arrangements have recently been reviewed and 'learning journeys' introduced. Examples of children's work are carefully annotated and used to check their development. This is beginning to have a positive impact on children's

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rate of progress. However, few children reach the expected levels by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned by parents and carers was higher than most primary schools. Most respondents were supportive of the school. Almost all agree that their children enjoy school and that they are kept safe. A minority considered that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour appropriately and that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions. Inspectors judged that behaviour in the school is satisfactory. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with appropriately by members of staff. The school welcomes suggestions from parents and carers and it is seeking additional ways to engage them in the life of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Piper's Vale Community 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 254 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 348 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	114	45	133	53	4	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	133	53	114	45	4	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	114	45	127	50	9	4	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	113	45	124	49	11	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	112	44	130	51	7	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	111	44	129	51	9	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	97	38	143	57	7	3	1	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)	88	35	147	58	5	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	92	36	142	56	12	5	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	81	32	134	53	25	10	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	79	31	138	55	21	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	85	34	147	58	11	4	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	112	44	130	51	6	2	4	2

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Piper's Vale Community Primary School, Ipswich, IP3 0EW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe because the staff look after you well. You know that you can turn to them if you have any worries. We agree with you that the staff look after you well. We were pleased to find that you have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. Your behaviour is satisfactory. In lessons that capture your interest and challenge you, we saw that you behave well. You make a satisfactory contribution to the school and the local community. Your attendance rate is improving and it is now similar to the national average. Well done.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Standards in the school are rising and are getting closer to the national average in reading and writing. Your standards in reading are higher than those in writing. In mathematics, standards are below the expected levels. Nonetheless, this is quite an improvement as, in previous years, pupils' attainment was exceptionally low. Your progress is satisfactory.

We have asked the school to do these things to help you reach higher standards and make quicker progress, especially in mathematics and in writing:

- to make more use of assessment information to set work that challenges all of you, for teachers to make better use of their skills in questioning and to make certain that when they mark your work they give you clear advice on how to reach your maths and literacy targets
- for middle managers and subject leaders to check on the progress you are making and to make certain that all staff are following the school's policies
- for better use to be made of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help children develop their literacy and numeracy skills and to ensure that activities are well planned for children of different abilities.

Please remember, to make your school better you must play your part by always trying your best and making certain that attendance rates continue to rise.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones

Lead inspector

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