

Picknalls First School

Oldfields Road, Uttoxeter, ST14 7QL

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too few pupils work at above expected levels of skill and so achievement requires improvement.
- Records about pupils' progress do not always record the approaches that staff can use to increase the rate at which pupils progress.
- Pupils are not invited to assist staff in gathering evidence that they have met their targets and so they are not clear how well they are doing.
- Teaching requires improvement because extra challenges are not routinely set which would enable pupils to reach higher levels of skill. Oral comments from staff are positive but they are not always specific.
- Not all teachers and staff check pupils' attainment effectively part way through the lesson so that not all make good progress.
- Some parents do not receive detailed information about how much progress their child is making in between parents' meetings.
- Some governors do not challenge leaders totally successfully because, in the past, detailed information about groups of pupils making slower progress was not given to them.
- Leadership requires improvement because although teaching is monitored every three months, not all staff collect evidence that they have met their personal targets until the next observation occurs.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and they behave well in lessons and around school. This is because staff care for them successfully.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well. For example, pupils are proud of their sporting, musical and drama achievements.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they know how to look after themselves in a variety of situations.
- Attendance is high and pupils' punctuality is good.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make effective progress in learning to speak and use language.
- Pupils who have extra pupil-premium funding achieve well by Year 2 and reach expected levels of skill.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons taught by ten teachers. Four of the observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, parents and carers, school staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures. They heard some Year 1 and 4 pupils read. They scrutinised Year 4 pupils' work in books for literacy and mathematics.
- The inspectors took account of 81 responses to the online Parent View survey. The questionnaires of 21 staff were also taken into account.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, tracking documentation of pupils' progress, records of governing body meetings and performance management arrangements.

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Macfarlane	Additional Inspector
Kathryn Skan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the extra pupil-premium funding is below average. These pupils are those who are eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or children of parents who are in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A new headteacher started at the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - all lessons include extra challenges for pupils which will inspire them to work at more complex levels of skill
 - all teachers and staff check each pupil's attainment part way through the session so that all pupils progress well
 - all staff give pupils specific oral comments about what they have done successfully.
- Improve pupils' achievement so that more pupils make better-than-expected progress each year by making sure that:
 - a higher proportion of pupils work at above expected levels of knowledge and understanding in every year group
 - progress meetings record the approaches that staff can use to increase pupils' rates of achievement
 - teachers invite all pupils to help to gather evidence that they have met their targets.
- Develop leadership and management so that it is more effective by making sure that:
 - governors enhance their skills in the use of data to monitor how much progress different groups of pupils are making
 - staff are fully involved in collecting evidence that they have met their personal targets
 - parents receive written information about whether their child is making expected progress in between parents' meetings.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils work at higher-than-expected levels of skill by the end of Year 2. In 2012 pupils' attainment dropped again and was broadly average in reading and mathematics. This year teacher assessments indicate that attainment in Year 2 is similar to last year and the decline has been halted. Pupils make expected progress in learning to write and this year their skills are broadly average.
- Year 4 pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, make expected progress and their attainment is slightly above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is not significantly above average because considerable numbers of pupils do not make better-than-expected progress. The school has not watched all groups of pupils' progress carefully each term. It is beginning to do this more effectively because data is being analysed in more detail by senior leaders and staff.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress. Their achievement requires improvement because it varies a little too much from year to year. Not all minutes of pupils' progress meetings record the approaches that staff could use to assist pupils making slower progress.
- Nursery and Reception children achieve well from starting points which are a little lower than expected for their age. They make good progress and their attainment is slightly above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make effective progress in learning to speak. This is because staff develop language skills successfully. For example, in a lesson observed in the Nursery class, children made good progress in learning to describe the patterns seen in animal skins. They learnt effectively about how to use technical vocabulary because the teacher explained the meaning of many different words which you could use to describe the markings on animals' fur.
- Achievement for pupils who receive the extra pupil premium-funding is good. In 2012 the attainment of these pupils who were in Year 2 was above the national average for similar pupils. A higher proportion of pupils with extra funding reached the expected standard in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics than other pupils in the school. The school is successfully closing the gap between pupils who get extra funding and those who do not. This is because extra funding is used productively to give these pupils one-to-one tuition and extra adult support in lessons.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not challenge all groups of pupils successfully in every lesson. This is because extra challenges are not always set which encourage pupils to develop their skills and knowledge to the next level of expertise.
- Teachers and staff do not always check effectively on how well pupils are doing partway through the lesson. This means that some pupils make slower progress in developing their key skills and time is not always used well.

- Since the last inspection the school has worked successfully to develop the use of marking in pupils' books. Pupils receive detailed written comments about their work. Oral feedback by staff is not always specific and so pupils do not know what they have done well. As a result pupils are not receiving feedback partway through the lesson which tells them how they have been successful and what they can do to improve.
- The best teaching uses practical activities to make learning exciting and highly memorable. In a good lesson seen in a Reception class children learnt about which materials float and sink in water. Then they learnt about how to make objects, which had initially sunk, float because the teacher set an extra challenge which made all groups, especially the more-able pupils, think deeply for themselves. This meant children learnt that changing the shape of a material can make it float.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and cooperate with each other and adults because positive relations are developed. The pupils appreciate the rewards and sanctions which the school uses to ensure that pupils become thoughtful and respectful young people. Pupils work well in groups and teams. Paired discussion time is used thoughtfully to develop pupils' social skills.
- Attendance is considerably above average and pupils enjoy school. Their punctuality is good and it has improved again this year. In recent years no pupils have been excluded. This is because staff guide them successfully.
- Pupils concentrate well in lessons and are keen to learn. They talk enthusiastically about their school successes. They value the special weeks where they develop many skills at one time. For example, they liked the recent topic on the solar system where they learnt about the planets in detail and using their literacy skills. They enjoy many school projects including one about the Second World War where they learnt about how it feels to be an evacuee. This work developed their spiritual awareness as well as their knowledge of history.
- Pupils from different backgrounds mix well. This is because leaders welcome all pupils and celebrate many aspects of each child's individual personality and heritage.
- Bullying is rare and pupils say it is dealt with successfully by adults. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet because staff are vigilant and make sure that pupils learn not give out personal details to people they contact online. Parents say that pupils are safe at school because staff support them thoughtfully.
- Pupils are not encouraged to help gather evidence that they have met their targets each week. This means that they do not have a deep understanding of how they are doing or whether they are ready for a new target.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, although teaching is monitored every three months, a few staff are not acting quickly enough on their personal targets for improvement and they do not collect evidence that they have met them. This means that improvements in teaching are not established totally effectively.
- Parents say that their children are happy at school. They value the parents' meetings they receive each term but some say that they would like more formal feedback about how well their

child is doing and whether their child is making expected progress in the key areas of learning in between these meetings.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work productively together. This newly formed strong team has not had enough time to have a full impact on pupils' achievement and attainment. Senior leaders and staff have considered carefully what needs to be improved and they are using a thorough and detailed development plan to drive improvements. Recent use of self-review is helping the school to develop more successfully. All staff are keen to improve the school and some use training and courses successfully to develop their skills.
- The school plans an effective range of topics and projects which develop pupils' basic skills. Their school lives are enriched by many sporting, musical and drama activities as well as learning activities in woodland areas.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is promoted well. For example, they are confident in their own abilities and are keen to try new things. Assemblies are used carefully to develop everyone's understanding of how to treat others fairly. Pupils are proud of the concerts they give where they sing and play musical instruments.
- Pupils are kept safe appropriately because the leadership place a great deal of importance on safeguarding policies and procedures. All the necessary checks are made on staff and a list of these checks is kept effectively. Staff training is up to date for child protection and first aid. Vulnerable pupils are cared for well because the special educational needs coordinator, the pupil support manager and staff work successfully with other agencies.
- Leaders ensure that discrimination is tackled effectively and pupils have equal opportunities to learn.
- In recent years the local authority has not had a lot of involvement with the school. It provides appropriate support and challenge. Recently it has effectively helped the school to improve the quality of leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carry out all their legal duties suitably. They keep pupils safe because they make sure that all staff are selected using thorough procedures. They know the reasons why staff are promoted or have pay rises. They understand how weaker staff are encouraged to improve their skills. They vigilantly review targets for the headteacher. Governors complete training courses which are beginning to help them hold the school more effectively to account. They have a basic understanding of how good the quality of teaching is developing pupils' key skills. They ensure that money is spent well, especially the extra pupil premium funding. Governors receive a simple summary of each year group's progress and attainment. Some governors do not challenge school leaders sufficiently about the progress made by different groups of pupils. This is because not all governors have a full understanding of how to interpret school data which tracks pupils' progress and attainment.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124142
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	412756

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

Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Fuller
Headteacher	Anne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2009
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