



The Pastures Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120102
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280731
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Kathy Taylor AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Thornhills
School category	Community		Leicester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Leicestershire LE19 3YP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2867738
Number on roll	274	Fax number	0116 2867738
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Paul Dobbins
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Kerry Mannion

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	7 February 2006 - 8 February 2006	280731

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Pastures is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils attending the school are from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds. None of the pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average, and so is the proportion of those with statements of special educational needs. Socio-economic circumstances are favourable. Pupils in the Reception classes attend full-time or part-time, depending on when their fifth birthday falls. When pupils enter the Reception classes, their attainment is above average overall, but their attainment is relatively weaker in language and literacy skills. There is a pre-school facility on the school site for children aged two to four years. There has been a very high turnover of teaching staff in the past few years and almost all members of the senior management team are new to this role.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Senior managers judge the school's effectiveness as good, but inspection evidence shows it to be satisfactory, with strengths in pupils' personal development and pastoral care. As a result, pupils are confident, form good relationships and enjoy school. Pupils make good progress in the Reception classes, where the provision is good. Standards as a whole are above the national average by the time pupils leave the school at Year 6. This represents satisfactory progress when compared to pupils' above-average attainment when they enter the Reception classes. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While there are strengths in teaching across all year groups, staff changes have resulted in some inconsistencies. For example, expectations of pupils' work are not always high enough and, sometimes, pupils are not given enough feedback on how they can improve. These shortcomings are most marked in writing. The school has begun to strengthen the curriculum by developing links between subjects, but improvements are at an early stage. Pupils therefore do not have every possible chance to apply literacy and numeracy skills to their work in other subjects. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Despite the disruption caused by changes to staff, the school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. The rate of improvement demonstrates satisfactory capacity for bringing about further improvement. Staff readily get involved in new initiatives, but have met with mixed success because they do not always monitor pupils' work rigorously enough. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of pupils' written work, and ensure that marking gives pupils clear guidance about what they need to do to improve.
- Monitor work in pupils' books more regularly so that senior managers and subject leaders identify and resolve inconsistencies in teaching and learning.
- Continue to develop the curriculum so that pupils have frequent opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, with some areas of good progress. Reception-aged children make good progress during their first year in school, and maintain their above-average attainment in to Year 1. However, language and literacy skills are relatively weaker than other areas when pupils first join the school, and writing skills are largely average when they join Year 1. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT), and standards are high by the time they leave the school. Pupils with learning difficulties progress well because they receive good support in class, their progress is carefully monitored, and the school successfully runs a number of catch-up programmes. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. Targets are sufficiently challenging, and most

pupils meet them. Standards overall are above the national average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. The exception is in writing, where standards are broadly average. Nevertheless, this represents satisfactory progress, given pupils' relatively lower starting points. The school has been focusing particularly on improving standards in writing. Some success was illustrated in a sharp rise in the most recent national test results in English for Year 6 pupils, but the school was less successful in improving results in writing tests in Year 2. Much attention is given to developing pupils' ideas and the content of written work, but the same level of attention is not always given to improving handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in consistently high rates of attendance. Most pupils concentrate well and are keen to be involved in other school activities. They relate well to each other and to the staff. Behaviour is usually good but, very occasionally, the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of pupils limits the learning of others. Pupils say that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. They willingly take on responsibility, and fulfil their roles as monitors and 'break buddies' with maturity. Independent learning skills increase through their use of ICT and within project work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy working together in lessons and during extra-curricular activities. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community through the work of the school council, their discussions during 'circle time' and their contributions to charities. However, although pupils' awareness of life in a multicultural society is satisfactory, not enough use is made of the ethnic diversity that is represented within the local community in order to widen their knowledge further. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, fostered by, for example, a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme, and their work towards achieving the 'Healthy Schools' awards. Pupils' positive attitudes to work and their competent basic skills prepare them well for the next stages in their education and future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the Reception classes because staff provide a wide range of independent and group activities which motivate children and ensure that they learn well. Strong features of teaching were also observed in lessons in Years 1 to 6. For example, teachers have good subject knowledge and plan and prepare lessons thoroughly. They have good presentation skills and use ICT skilfully to enhance teaching and learning. Good relationships with pupils motivate them to work hard. Teaching assistants are well trained. They give close support to pupils with learning difficulties, and those from Traveller backgrounds,

so that these pupils progress well. Weaker aspects of teaching are evident in lessons and pupils' work. For example, sometimes introductions to lessons are a bit too long, or pupils do not have enough opportunities to contribute during the times they are taught as a whole class. Very occasionally, the challenging behaviour of a few pupils impedes the learning of others, and pupils do not make the progress they should. Marking does not always point out to pupils how to make improvements to their work, especially to their writing. Spelling mistakes and errors in punctuation are not corrected rigorously enough, and teachers' expectations about handwriting and presentation are not always as high as they should be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, and has strengths. Pupils in the Reception classes enjoy a wide range of activities, and outdoor provision is well developed. Planning for ICT has been much improved, and pupils use computers with considerable confidence to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils say they enjoy their 'topic' work, when activities in more than one subject are combined. However, the school is still in the early stages of establishing links between subjects. It is, therefore, not yet making the best use of opportunities to build on pupils' interests, or enabling them to practise and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in their work across other subjects. Opportunities are also missed to increase pupils' awareness of cultures that are different to their own. Closely-focused programmes of support provide well for pupils with learning difficulties. Traveller pupils are well supported in school and benefit from distance-learning work at other times. Good attention is given to teaching pupils about staying safe and keeping healthy. Pupils have regular opportunities for exercise during physical education and swimming activities, and during after-school sporting activities. Good extra-curricular activities and links with other schools and the local and wider communities also provide opportunities for pupils to develop confidence, teamwork and initiative.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The provision for care, guidance and support is good. There are particular strengths in the pastoral care of pupils, and academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' year-on-year progress is conscientiously tracked and pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their work and progress. Nevertheless, teachers' marking provides too little explicit guidance about what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils say they feel very safe. They know they can approach any adult in school if they have a problem and that their views are taken seriously. Arrangements for ensuring health and safety are thorough, including regular risk assessments. Child protection procedures are in place, although not all staff have received recent guidance about how to deal with any concerns. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are supported very well because the school has forged strong links with parents and external agencies. Staff work well with parents and carers. Good links with those of children attending

the pre-school provision help pupils to settle into school quickly. Facilities giving care before and after school, and holiday provision, support pupils and working parents particularly well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Despite the many changes to staff, the school has maintained stability and a satisfactory rate of academic achievement and overall improvement. The strengths of leadership are evident in the calm efficiency of daily life and pupils' good personal development. The school regularly seeks and responds to the views and concerns of parents, and they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. These factors demonstrate that the school has sound capacity to make further improvements. Good opportunities for professional development often lead to staff gaining promotion elsewhere. This factor has had a significant impact recently on the senior team, to the extent that most members are either holding the position temporarily, or are relatively inexperienced in senior leadership. However, new staff are settling in well. Senior and subject leaders regularly monitor lessons and there is now a stronger focus on evaluating the extent of pupils' learning. Nevertheless, key staff do not routinely review the work in pupils' books. As a result, they have not been quick to identify and take action to improve weaknesses in teaching and learning. The headteacher accurately analyses the school's data. However, because several subject leaders are new to this role, they are not as yet fully familiar with this information. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and many visit the school regularly to keep an overview of the school's effectiveness. However, they do not always challenge the school as rigorously as they should about its performance.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils I am writing to tell you about our findings when we visited your school. However, first of all I want to thank you for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your school. Most of you are polite and helpful and behave well. Just sometimes a minority of older pupils did not always behave well in lessons and interfered with other pupils' learning. Your work in reading, mathematics, science and ICT improves steadily as you move up through the school, but your written work could be better. You come to school very regularly. You are cared for well in school, and enjoy all the extra activities the school gives you. You are responsible children and it was good to see you playing happily together and getting on well. You told us that you enjoy lessons, and that you particularly enjoy the topic work that takes place in the afternoons. We recognise that your teachers are working hard to make the curriculum more interesting for you, and have asked them to continue to develop this. You usually work hard. We have asked your teachers to make sure you get even better at writing, by making sure that you take more care with handwriting, spelling and punctuation and by giving you more opportunities to write. We have also asked teachers to give you more information when they mark your work, so that you will know exactly how to make it the best it can be. We have suggested that your work should also be looked at more regularly by some of your senior teachers, so that they can see where other improvements can be made. Your school gives you many opportunities to learn new things and helps you to grow into sensible, responsible young people who are well prepared for secondary school by the time you leave. We would like to wish you lots of success in your future education. Yours sincerely
Kathy Taylor Lead inspector