



The Pochin School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120110
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280734
Inspection dates 5 June 2006 to 5 June 2006
Reporting inspector Doris Bell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Barkby
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Leicester, Leicestershire LE7 3QL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2692078
Number on roll	142	Fax number	0116 2692078
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr S M Cotton

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular small school serves a community where social and economic indicators are average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average. All are fluent English speakers. Last September, for the first time, the school admitted all of its Reception children at once instead of at different times in the school year. Children start school with a broadly satisfactory range of skills and experience.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school that, in the headteacher's words, is 'aiming to become outstanding'. The good quality educational provision begins in the Foundation Stage and continues throughout the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well, whatever their background, because they are taught well. Standards, which are as expected for pupils' ages when they start school, are above average by the time they leave. In all age groups, however, writing is a relative weakness. Opportunities are missed to promote and develop this aspect of English in other subjects. The otherwise good curriculum does not give teachers clear enough guidance in this area.

The school is justifiably proud of its reputation as a caring school that supports and guides its pupils well. It successfully promotes good standards of behaviour and good attitudes to learning. The effective partnership the school has with parents and external agencies contributes to this. The school is well led and managed. It has an accurate view of its effectiveness because it rigorously checks the impact that the quality of teaching and any new initiatives have on pupils' learning. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well. The school has good capacity to improve further and it provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing by providing more explicitly planned opportunities for pupils to consolidate and further develop their writing skills in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all ages, backgrounds and levels of ability achieve well because they are taught well and their progress is rigorously checked. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, but there are relative weaknesses in writing. Pupils' work shows that they can write well and that they have a good range of vocabulary. However, they do not use their writing skills well enough to write in different styles or for different purposes in subjects other than English, and they are not always encouraged to do so. The school successfully meets the challenging targets it sets for English and mathematics. However, the target set for more capable pupils is lower in English than in mathematics because it is accurately based on pupils' prior attainment in writing. This means that the school is not yet doing everything it can to bring writing up to the same standard as reading and mathematics. It is beginning to tackle this issue, although a systematic approach to doing so has not yet been adopted. Clear, measurable targets, based on their learning needs, help pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to make good progress. These pupils are supported well by teaching assistants and external agencies working with the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills from the moment they start school. They like coming to school and attendance is good. Pupils are polite and well behaved in and out of class. They feel safe in school, confident that adults will always listen to and help them. One pupil commented spontaneously that 'the school is a happy place and our teachers help us'. Pupils know that their views are valued and they readily accept responsibility, for example, as school councillors. They like being class monitors but want the opportunity to support other pupils more. There are few opportunities for this to happen at present.

Through activities such as helping to establish a waste recycling system, and by raising money for various charities, pupils contribute well to the life of the school and the wider community. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and why it is important to eat healthily and exercise regularly. All of this benefits their learning and personal development, and contributes to their overall good achievement. It ensures that by the time they leave school, pupils are well on the way to becoming confident, responsible citizens who are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good throughout the school. In all age groups, it results in effective learning that leads to pupils' good overall achievement. Skilled questioning and the effective use of well-briefed teaching assistants ensure that all pupils are fully included in whole-class sessions and effectively supported in group work. This was particularly evident in a mathematics session where the teacher successfully used the outcomes from a recent test to consolidate pupils' understanding of two-dimensional shapes. Teaching assistants often work effectively alongside external support staff as they help pupils with learning difficulties. This ensures that learning is continuous for these pupils, in or out of class, and contributes effectively to their overall good progress.

Assessment information is used well throughout the school to inform planning and set targets. Teachers plan well for the pupils' different ages and stages of learning. Marking is usually perceptive and helpful to the pupils. However, it is better in English than in mathematics, and some teachers set clearer targets for the pupils than others. Nevertheless, pupils know their targets and understand what they have to do to reach them. The vast majority respond well to their teachers' high expectations of their learning and behaviour. Within this overall positive picture, however, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to promote writing in different subjects. This contributes to the relative weaknesses evident in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum, which includes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties, encourages and supports learning effectively throughout the school. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of the Reception children, who are taught alongside some of those in Year 1. A wide range of out of school clubs, sports activities and residential visits successfully promotes enjoyment of learning and enhances pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils talk enthusiastically about visits to, for example, an activity centre and places of historical interest. The teaching of French from Reception is improving pupils' language skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, the curriculum does not include enough explicit guidance for teachers to show how writing might be promoted in other subjects. As a result, opportunities are missed to do this effectively. The provision for information and communication technology, a weakness at the last inspection, is now good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils contributes well to their enjoyment of school, their good achievement and their good personal development. Parents are very pleased with the school and they support it well in meeting their children's needs. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and are regularly reviewed by governors. Lunchtime supervisors manage pupils well and support those who are more vulnerable.

Academic guidance is good. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress and use the information well to set targets and plan the next stages of pupils' learning. The school makes good use of external support services to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, thereby ensuring their good progress. However, opportunities are missed to enable pupils to help each other in a more formal way. For example, the youngest pupils say that they would like more time to meet with the older pupils and to get to know what happens in the rest of the school. The school does not have systems to allow this to happen on a regular basis. The 'house' system provides for friendly competition and assemblies are used well to commend and reward achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management by the headteacher and governors have resulted in effective teamwork amongst the staff and a strong and successful focus on raising pupils' achievement. The headteacher has worked closely with the school council to translate the aims of the school into child-friendly language. This, and the school's good links with parents, has successfully developed a true sense of shared purpose throughout the school community. It has contributed in great measure to pupils'

learning and personal development, and is evident also in the school's good response to the issues raised by the last inspection. The staff very successfully ensure that all pupils, whatever their background or ability, are fully involved in everything that the school has to offer. Everyone is equally valued and helped to do as well as they can in this successful school. All of this demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement.

The school knows its strengths and where it needs to improve. Its evaluation of its work is perceptive and accurate, and closely matches the findings of this inspection. Teaching is regularly checked, including through conducting joint reviews with external providers. Identified areas for development are followed up rigorously thereby ensuring that teaching benefits pupils' learning. The monitoring of the curriculum, however, has been less successful in identifying explicitly how writing might be better promoted in all subjects. The school recognises this and has begun to address the issue through its improvement plan. The plan is a well constructed working document that aids future planning.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly to your school. It was a delight to talk to you and to find out how much you enjoy school and appreciate what your teachers do for you. We agree with you and your parents that this is a good school. Here are some of the highlights in what we found:

You make good progress because your teachers teach you well and you want to learn.

Your behaviour is good. You are always willing to help your teachers and each other and you want to do so even more than you do now.

You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, and of why it is important to keep fit and healthy.

You are well cared for and the school makes sure that you are safe and secure at all times.

Your headteacher leads and manages the school well. The governors and your parents help him to do this and they all want the best for you.

We have asked your school to help you to learn faster by:

helping you to do even better at writing by ensuring that you are given more opportunities to do so in all subjects, not just in English.

We wish you well and hope that you will continue to enjoy learning more and more as you grow up.