



# Picknalls First School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124142  
**LEA** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 281644  
**Inspection dates** 13 July 2006 to 14 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Anthony Dobell AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Oldfields Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Uttoxeter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9		Staffordshire ST14 7QL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01889 256416
<b>Number on roll</b>	315	<b>Fax number</b>	01889 256421
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Rodger Mann
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Dave Shooter

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 9	13 July 2006 - 14 July 2006	281644

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Picknalls is a large first school serving an area to the south and west of Uttoxeter. The school occupies a spacious and very attractive site. Some 15% of pupils come from outside the immediate area because their parents choose this school. Levels of understanding and learning skills cover a wide range but are average overall when children join the Nursery. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Most but not all pupils come from White British backgrounds.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Picknalls is a good school with the potential to become outstanding. Costs per pupil are unusually low and the school gives good value for money. It judges its own effectiveness generally in line with inspection findings but in some respects too modestly as satisfactory. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because they are well taught. They benefit from an outstanding curriculum with a wide range of stimulating and imaginative learning activities and opportunities for enrichment. In spite of this, too few pupils attain the higher Level 3 in writing in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of education and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Pupils benefit from good levels of care. However, they do not understand clearly enough how they can improve their work. Their personal development is good and they are confident and secure in the school. They and their parents are rightly proud of their school.

Leadership and management are good. Effective teamwork between the headteacher, other staff and governors ensures that their vision for the school is realised. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. Effective leadership has enabled the school to improve well since its last inspection and issues identified then have been dealt with effectively. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing for higher attaining pupils by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Use marking, assessment and targets more consistently and rigorously to help pupils to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Most children will reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year and about one third will exceed these levels. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. For the last four years, standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have been significantly above average overall. However, standards in writing have generally been lower than those in reading and mathematics. The school has introduced strategies to raise standards in writing and these are beginning to be effective. However, too few pupils attain the higher Level 3 in writing in the national tests. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and standards are above average when they leave the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because they are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants. The school enables all groups of pupils to achieve well overall because they are given challenging but realistic targets

in most areas. However, not all pupils are sufficiently clear about how to use these targets to raise their standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn the value of prayer in thoughtful assemblies and have a clear appreciation of the difference between right and wrong. They have good social skills, behave well in class, and play well together. Good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) equip them well for their future lives. Older pupils' involvement with the 'Kate's Bits and Bobs' scheme, in which they plan, make and sell craft items is also good preparation for the real world. Their cultural development is very good and is fostered by arts and musical activities and with links with another school which gives them an early insight into our culturally diverse society.

Pupils readily take on responsibilities and are involved in decision making in the school through the work of their 'ECO committee'. They support the local community, for example, through a recent sponsored walk, and raise funds for a range of charities. They care for their environment through their gardening club, the 'Uttoxeter in Bloom' scheme and through recycling. They are fully aware of the need for regular exercise and healthy eating and know how to keep safe. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed school and this is reflected in their above average attendance.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and pupils learn at a good pace. In the Foundation Stage, children are provided with a wide range of stimulating learning activities which systematically enable them to become independent and to grow in confidence. As a result, they achieve well. In Years 1 to 4, learning activities are varied, and often imaginative, so that pupils build effectively on their previous learning. Their work is marked regularly and conscientiously, and targets are set for them to make further progress. However, they do not always understand how to interpret these targets so as to improve their work and opportunities are not always taken in marking to point out to pupils how they can make their work better.

Teaching is often lively and a good pace helps pupils to concentrate and maintains their interest so that their learning is secure. Teachers use ICT well to introduce lessons and learning is reinforced when pupils use the interactive whiteboards. Relationships are good and work is carefully graded so that pupils at different stages of learning are suitably challenged. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few with statements of special educational need are identified early, supported sensitively, and achieve at the same rate as other pupils. Throughout the school, pupils work with interest and often with enthusiasm so that they achieve well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which is well matched to the needs of all pupils. Highly effective planning links subjects skilfully so that work in one area supports learning in another. This makes the curriculum meaningful and relevant to all pupils. Bright and stimulating displays of pupils' work around the school illustrate the range of work that they experience in their daily lessons, and the imaginative approaches adopted by their teachers. Their learning is enriched by visits and visitors and by an impressive range of activities outside class. For example, there is an archaeological dig on site which helps pupils to appreciate how we learn about the past. A major strength is the school's annual 'Arts Week'. Pupils speak enthusiastically about how they enjoyed the experience – 'we learned a lot and it was great fun'. There is also a good emphasis on the performing arts and music. For example, recent events include 'Little Red Riding Hood' by Years 1 and 2, and a Music Soiree by pupils learning instruments. During this, some 25 pupils, the youngest aged six, confidently performed a range of solos, duets and ensemble pieces on string, brass and woodwind instruments. This illustrates the richness of the school's curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for in a happy and safe learning environment, and parents appreciate this. For example, one parent wrote 'Coming to the Nursery is the best thing that's happened to my son. He's grown up such a lot and really enjoys learning'. All pupils feel safe and secure because good relationships mean that they are confident to approach adults with any concerns. They know that they will be listened to sensitively. Bullying is rare and racist incidents unknown. Child protection procedures are rigorous and well known to staff. Pupils' health and safety are a priority and all risk assessments are securely in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the very few who speak English as an additional language are very well supported by teaching assistants and by outside agencies where necessary. They are fully included in all that the school offers. Pupils' academic progress is carefully tracked but they are not always clear about their learning targets or how they might improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's commitment to the progress and well-being of all pupils means that, with colleagues, he ensures that all pupils are valued as individuals, and all pupils have access to all that the school offers. This commitment means that the school has improved well since the last inspection. The management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding and parents appreciate the support their children receive and the progress that they make.

Teamwork is a key element in the school and there is a clear unity of purpose. Subjects are managed effectively. The senior management team discussed the school's strengths and potential for development knowledgeably with inspectors, but the recently reorganised team does not yet meet often enough to be fully effective.

The school uses parents and the local community well to support learning. The parent-teacher association is a major strength and, in addition to arranging a range of social activities which promote a 'family' ethos in the school, raises substantial funds to supplement resources. The school's income per pupil is unusually low, and these extra resources contribute significantly to its provision. The school makes excellent use of its resources.

Governors are a valued part of the team. The governing body is effective and has some real strengths. It has an excellent grasp of strategic planning and helps to ensure that the school's planning of its future developments is realistic and reflects key priorities. Governors are effective in helping the school to evaluate its performance. Evaluations are rigorous and realistic, but judgements are sometimes too modest. For example, teaching and learning have been judged to be satisfactory when they are of good quality. Many governors are in school regularly and so bring real understanding of its provision to their discussions. Effective teamwork between the headteacher, staff and governors has enabled the school to improve well and puts the school in a good position to improve further.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 into your school, being so friendly and polite to us, and talking to us about your work and your lives in the school. We think that yours is a good school in many ways.

You make good progress because you are well taught.

The school provides an excellent curriculum so that you benefit from a very wide range of learning activities. The school makes excellent use of its resources to help you to learn.

Relationships are good, you look after each other well, and you are rarely absent.

You are all treated equally and valued for what you can do.

There is excellent provision for those of you who have individual needs.

You know that it is important to exercise regularly and to eat healthy food.

Your headteacher leads the school well and plans to make it even better.

All these things mean that you grow into confident young people and are happy to say what you think in class and in assemblies.

We think that two things would improve your school further.

More of you should reach Level 3 in writing in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1.

You need to be clearer about your targets and how they will help you to improve your work.

We enjoyed our two days in your school very much and wish you well for the future.

Best wishes

Mr A J Dobell Lead Inspector