



# Pirehill First School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124164  
**LEA** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 281648  
**Inspection dates** 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Lois Furness AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Tilling Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		Stone
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 9		Staffordshire ST15 0AA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 354041
<b>Number on roll</b>	197	<b>Fax number</b>	01785 354041
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Sally Parkin
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 December 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Deborah Breeze

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 3 May 2006 - 4 May 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281648
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pirehill is an average-size first school. There are eight ethnic backgrounds represented in the school, the majority of which are White British. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils entitled to a school meal free of charge. Children's attainment on entry in Reception is broadly average. An acting headteacher was in post for one term until the appointment of the existing headteacher in January 2006. The school, in partnership with a private company, offers before- and after-school care for children.

## 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 a good school that provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with most of the school's evaluation. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Reception-age children settle quickly, make good progress and are ready to start National Curriculum work earlier than usually expected. However, the lack of a secure outdoor area and good quality resources means the outdoor curriculum is not as good as it might be. Pupils' achievement and progress in Years 1 and 2 is good. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge but some weaknesses in mathematics and writing in Years 3 and 4 have adversely affected pupils' achievement. In these classes, teachers have not always provided sufficient challenge for more able pupils, but action taken to remedy this is now showing good improvement. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour and attitudes to school are outstanding. The excellent range of enrichment activities is a strong contributory factor towards these attitudes. Pastoral care is outstanding and pupils feel very safe in school. The use of assessment information is satisfactory. Although lots of information is available, it is not easy to access. Systems to track pupils' progress and check the effectiveness of teaching are not as efficient as they might be. Leadership and management are good. Good direction for the school's work is provided by the new headteacher and since this appointment, improvement has been faster than it was and is now good. There is good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- In Years 3 and 4, continue to improve teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics and writing, and raise their expectations of what pupils are able to do so that improvement continues.
- Establish a secure outdoor area for use by the Reception-age children and improve the quality of outdoor resources.
- Refine existing assessment and tracking systems to make them more efficient and easier to access.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement overall is good. Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are better than expected nationally in all six areas of learning and achievement is good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress. Over the past five years, by the end of Year 2, pupils have attained standards that are significantly above average overall. Reading continues to be a strength, although in 2005, writing performance was stronger, being exceptionally high. More able pupils were challenged well, resulting in many pupils reaching higher standards than expected for their age (Level 3). Pupils currently in Year 2, although not attaining as high as in the past, are achieving well.

However, good progress has not continued in Years 3 and 4 and in 2005, a significant number of Year 4 pupils did not achieve as well as they should in mathematics and

writing. Achievement was unsatisfactory, with the exception of reading, where progress was good. The new headteacher quickly identified that lack of teacher subject knowledge and insufficient challenge for more able pupils were factors negatively affecting progress. Effective action was taken, resulting in progress that has improved significantly in both mathematics and writing. Currently, the Year 4 pupils are achieving well and are on course to meet their challenging targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good, targeted support, which enables them to achieve success with their work and results in good achievement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

It is very clear that pupils love coming to school and pupils' personal development and well-being are good. This is reflected in good attendance and outstanding behaviour and attitudes. Pupils try hard to aspire to the 'Pirehill Principle' by which the school aims to develop in children a love of learning and of life. Children of Reception age work happily together, willingly sharing ideas and resources.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility. For example, members of the newly established school council speak proudly of their part in improving playground games. Pupils are supportive of one another and older pupils are very protective of younger ones. They have a good insight into other faiths and cultures of the world, but do not have as good an understanding of the different cultures of people who live in Britain today. Pupils' good awareness of safety and healthy living is reflected in the acquisition of the healthy school award. Many pupils enjoy the numerous physical and sporting activities offered to them. They understand the importance of living in a community through effective links with the town council and their environmental work. Pupils develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively and are well prepared for life in the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Hardworking and enthusiastic teachers are keen for pupils to do well. In Reception and in Years 1 and 2, teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to plan interesting and effective lessons. Although there is some good teaching in Years 3 and 4, there have been weaknesses in subject knowledge of mathematics and writing, but this is being remedied well. In the past, teaching has not always been adjusted to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. However, this is now improving. Throughout the school teachers use ICT effectively to make lessons exciting and involve pupils well. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson the use of the interactive whiteboard generated enthusiasm to check how 'Mr Bear'

responded to pupils' ideas while also enabling them to check the accuracy of their answers.

The school has been slow to react to national initiatives such as setting learning targets and ensuring that the feedback given to pupils shows them clearly why work is good and how they can make it better. However, the headteacher and key subject leaders are making determined and positive efforts to put this right. Good teaching enables pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to join in all activities, and to make good progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. As achievement is improving, so the curriculum is better matched to pupils' needs and capabilities. The curriculum for the Reception-age children is good overall, but the lack of a secure outdoor area and quality resources limits opportunities for teachers to develop the outdoor curriculum as well as they would like. There is a strong emphasis on equipping pupils with life skills through an effective personal, social and health education programme.

Curriculum enrichment is outstanding. An extensive range of visits and visitors contributes significantly to pupils' personal development, as do the very good opportunities for performance. The range and number of extra-curricular clubs, including many for sport and music, are excellent, and help to increase pupils' enjoyment of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Although the school offers outstanding pastoral care and support, the academic guidance provided is less effective. Extensive assessment procedures are in place, but assessment information is not used sufficiently well to track pupils' progress.

Throughout the school each child is valued and parents rightly say that the school is a safe and caring place for their children. Pupils are very clear that there are trusting adults to turn to if they have concerns. One pupil summed up the views of many, saying, 'We don't have any bullying here.' Child protection procedures are very secure and understood clearly by all staff. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by the careful deployment of support staff or 'teaching partners.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. In a short time the headteacher has made a considerable difference to the school's work. Working closely with the new 'strategic leadership group,' which includes the chair and vice chair of governors, relevant issues have been identified and effective actions implemented to rectify the underachievement

of Years 3 and 4 pupils. The English, mathematics and Foundation Stage leaders provide good direction. Governance is good. The governors are very supportive whilst maintaining their role of challenge.

The monitoring and evaluation of performance is satisfactory. The leadership is aware that more efficient checking systems, in terms of tracking pupils' progress, need to be embedded in the school's work to ensure that dips in pupils' performance do not reoccur and any weaknesses in teaching are rectified. The new draft school improvement plan provides a good start to managing school improvement.

The school benefits from close links with other agencies, including the school nurse, a football club and a cluster group of local schools. The opinions of parents are valued. Parents say the school listens to their views and acts quickly in response to any queries or suggestions that they have.

Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Although provision has improved in ICT, there are still issues remaining with outdoor provision for Reception children. However, considering the improvements made in recent months, the commitment of all the staff team, and the clear direction provided by the strategic leadership group, the school has good capacity to improve.

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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	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

<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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	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	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	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

<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	No
<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**

As you know, we visited your school last week. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so helpful when we asked you questions. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about the things you enjoy doing.

What we like most about your school

- Your new headteacher has already made your school a much better place to be.
- Children in the Reception classes settle quickly into school, feel happy and safe and make good progress.
- You think that learning is fun. Many of you spoke very enthusiastically about the visits you make and the visitors you meet. You particularly enjoy the many sporting and music activities.
- Your behaviour is excellent and we like the way you are very willing to help each other.
- The staff take great care of you and everyone is sure there is someone to talk to if you are worried or concerned.

What we have asked your school to do now to make it even better is

- Most of you achieve well but we have asked your teachers to make sure that all children in Years 3 and 4 make the best progress possible in mathematics and in writing.
- Although Reception children do exciting things in the classroom, we think that the school should improve the outdoor area so they can learn much more outdoors.
- We want your teachers to check carefully that you are all learning as much as you can and this means improving some systems the school uses to gain information.

Thank you again for helping us so much with the inspection of your school.