

Poolsbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112628
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	289353
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Cook HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Colley
Headteacher	Miss F Cowan
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Cottage Close Poolsbrook Derbyshire S43 3LF
Telephone number	01246 472540
Fax number	01246 472540

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is in the village of Poolsbrook which was once a colliery village. The number of children on roll is much smaller than average for primary schools. The proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals is almost double the national average. There are no children who speak English as an additional language. All children are from White British backgrounds. The school has identified a lower than average number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The proportion of children with statements of special educational need is average. The school has won an award for teaching basic skills in English and mathematics and has also won a silver award for the environmental work children have done.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which is improving and has a number of good features. For example children's personal development is good. Children enjoy school, have good attitudes and behaviour and grow in confidence because of the support and encouragement the school gives them. Relationships between adults and children are very good and the school serves the small community of Poolsbrook well.

Standards are low, but improving, and achievement is satisfactory. From a below average start, children make satisfactory progress. In some lessons the progress they make is good but there are still some year groups where progress slows down and does not build on what has gone before. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress because the support they are receiving is good.

Teaching is satisfactory but there are a number of good lessons being taught. When teaching is good, children enjoy what they are asked to do, they are challenged and helped to learn new things. Although there are some good examples of teachers encouraging children to talk about their learning, there is not a clear focus on developing speaking skills. Teaching assistants, some of whom also work as learning mentors, are very important members of the teaching team. They have been effectively used to challenge more able children and support those who need extra help.

The level of care and guidance children receive is good. Children are kept safe and know that they are looked after. The curriculum is improving because more is done to match what is taught to children's different needs in mixed year group classes.

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She is determined and focused on improving the school. She has brought about a number of improvements and there is good evidence that standards are rising. The capacity for the school to improve further is good.

The education provided by the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and is good for those children in the Reception year. Children start to attend the nursery just after their third birthday and quickly begin to enjoy the well organised activities that are on offer. Although children are keen to get involved, the activities they are given do not always ensure children learn as much as they could. This is reflected in the teaching plans which are focused on the detail of what children have to learn in literacy and numeracy but only list what children will do in other areas. By the time the children reach the end of the Foundation Stage, many have achieved well because of the accelerated progress they make in the Reception/Year 1 class. In this class they benefit from good teaching and high expectations.

Children's behaviour is good and they make good progress in their personal development. Children are kept safe and encouraged to be healthy. The headteacher has taken on the responsibility of leadership and management of the Foundation Stage in the past but is slowly handing this over to the Reception/Year 1 teacher. This transition stage is not completed and so it is not always clear who is responsible for what. The impact of leadership and management is satisfactory because there is more to be done to improve provision in the nursery.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of progress children make so that it is consistent across the school.
- Ensure that all activities in the nursery are focused on how to help children learn.

- Create more opportunities for children to talk about their learning to develop their speaking skills.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory because, by the time children leave in Year 6, they have made at least satisfactory progress. However, the amount of progress children make varies across the school. In some year groups, it is satisfactory; in others it is good, helping children to catch up to where they should be. Because of the small number of classes in the school, what happens in one class can make a big difference. The school has taken a very sensible approach in measuring every child's individual progress. This information is shared with parents, which is a good way of letting them know how well their child is doing. The school recognises that standards still need to improve as they are below average. However, the school can also prove that children with learning difficulties make good progress because of the extra support and help they get.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's behaviour is good and they enjoy coming to school. They work and play together well and appreciate the wide range of activities they can do in class and at break times. There is a very positive 'vibe' around the school which helps children feel safe and cared for. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is very effective in building children's confidence and is doing this very well through activities for the more able and for those who need help with school work. Children are often polite and helpful. Attendance is satisfactory and the school is always encouraging and rewarding those children who attend every day. Children know about how to keep healthy. They enjoy eating fruit and healthy school dinners, many have joined sports clubs and they all get plenty of physical education lessons. They also enjoy the fenced playground outside and the various climbing frames which are well used and help children keep active. Learning mentors get involved in teaching children how to manage pressure so that they can have positive feelings about themselves.

The school council is well run and children get a chance to make changes in the school. Children from the school also get involved in the local community; for example they have published and distributed leaflets on environmental matters. The gains children make in their confidence and the range of skills that they build up, including those with computers, mean they have a good chance to do well in their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching varies. In some classes it is often good, resulting in children's better progress. For example in the Reception and Year 1 class, teaching is very effectively matched to children's different abilities so that children are challenged and made to think. Likewise, in

the class with the oldest children, lively teaching keeps children engaged in what they are doing and very good relationships underpin a positive learning environment. However, on some occasions teaching does not recognise when children are ready to move onto the next stage of their learning. When these opportunities are missed, then children do not make as much progress as they could.

Teaching assistants are an important part of the teaching team. In class lessons they support groups and individuals well and are able to follow teachers' plans and know what children are expected to do. Some teaching assistants are also learning mentors for small groups and give one-to-one help for some children which is very effective. For example, those children in the 'bright sparks' groups get extra opportunities to work on more challenging activities. This work allows them to make choices and work independently, which successfully builds up their skills. Other children who have talents, for example in football or cricket, are sometimes given coaching and encouraged to join local teams. Children who need extra help with their work are also given good support. One-to-one sessions with a learning mentor follow carefully thought out programmes of work, often leading to children making good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is improving. In most classes, the curriculum on offer is helping children to make progress in literacy and numeracy. The school has begun to teach using topics, which is effectively helping teaching to match the range of abilities across a number of year groups within each class. The use of computers has improved and children confidently use them as part of their learning. The range of school clubs is good and children have opportunities to get involved in football, dance, ocarina playing and much more.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The level of care, guidance and support children receive is good. All necessary safety checks are made. The school works well with other agencies when there is a need to make sure children are safe and looked after. Relationships around school between adults and children are very good. Good systems are in place to identify children with learning difficulties or disabilities and effective support is then put in place.

There is a good system in place for giving children individual targets for literacy and numeracy. Children understand their targets and know when they will check to see if they have reached them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

These aspects of the school are good. In this small school, many of the leadership and management responsibilities are dealt with by the headteacher who is doing a good job. She knows the school well and has a strong commitment to making it a good school. Having said this she is supported by all of the staff and governors who are effective because they work as a team.

The school has been very honest in evaluating how effective it is. For example the headteacher has very recently re-evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school judging it to be satisfactory, because she is aware there are some issues still to resolve to make teaching even more effective. This accurate appraisal is a very good feature of the leadership of the headteacher.

Even though some areas of the school's work are currently only satisfactory, leadership and management are good because much has been done already to put the school back on course to becoming a good school. For example, areas where teaching is satisfactory have been closely monitored and action has been taken to improve matters. Achievement has also been closely monitored and this information is being used to deploy learning mentors and teaching assistants who are improving the rate of progress children are making.

The chair of governors is very involved in the work of the school and along with other governors provides satisfactory support and challenge.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Poolsbrook Primary School, Poolsbrook, Derbyshire S43 3LF

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed visiting your school and finding out how well you are doing. Your school was a very happy place to be in because all of the adults are making sure you are safe, looked after and have exciting things to learn. When I talked with your headteacher, I realised what a good job she is doing. I also realised how well all the other adults help her because they all work together like a team.

I was very impressed with your good behaviour and the way you were kind and helpful to each other. Those of you who work with learning mentors are getting really good extra help.

I asked your headteacher if she could get all of the children and adults to work hard to do three things.

- Make sure that all of you make good progress in whatever class you are in. You can help with this by always trying your hardest.
- Make sure that if you are in the nursery you have lots of activities that will help you learn.
- Make sure that you get plenty of chances to become confident speakers.

Your school is an important part of Poolsbrook village and so I hope you will always do your best to make it an even better school in the future.

Yours Sincerely Andrew Cook - Her Majesty's Inspector