



Pinchbeck East Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120550
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 298899
Inspection dates 28–29 November 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Sutton HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fennell Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Pinchbeck, Spalding
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lincolnshire PE11 3RB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01775 723841
Number on roll (school)	268	Fax number	01775 768015
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Miss Valerie Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2004		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school serves a large rural village in Lincolnshire. The number on roll has fallen substantially in recent years. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of children from minority ethnic heritage is lower than found nationally, as it is also for those who speak English as an additional language. The number of children entitled to free school meals is low and the socio economic background of families in the area is better than average.

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 an effective school which gives children a satisfactory standard of education. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school has been through a troubled two years with weak teaching, frequent staffing changes and falling numbers on roll, the main barriers to raising standards. The headteacher has created much greater stability by tackling the right issues. Poor teaching has been eliminated, the budget is now balanced and staffing has been restructured to match the current numbers of children on roll.

The school now has a permanent senior management team which provides the platform to embed and continue the improvements already made. Subject leaders have an adequate understanding of how well their subjects are doing but their improvement plans vary too much in quality.

The most crucial improvement the school has made has been in gathering and analysing information about children's progress. Using this information the school has accurately identified the subjects and year groups where children's progress is not good enough and started to put matters right. The measures taken have had most effect in science and mathematics. Reading too has improved but there remains more to do to raise the standard of children's writing which for the older children is still inadequate. Because it now knows itself well enough to rectify the weaknesses, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Standards are improving. Children in the Reception and Year 1 and 2 classes are making good progress overall, particularly in the Reception class. By the end of Year 2 they are starting to push beyond the standards typically seen at this age in reading, writing and mathematics.

Progress seen in Year 3 to Year 6 classes is satisfactory overall but it varies considerably between year groups, subjects and across the school year. Standards are broadly in line with the national picture by the end of Year 6 but are significantly higher in reading, mathematics and science than in writing.

The assessment of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities does not distinguish sufficiently between those who find some aspects of learning difficult and those who are underachieving because of previous weak teaching. The help provided by the teaching assistants enables these lower attaining children to make broadly satisfactory progress but the next steps needed in their learning are not sufficiently clear for them to make more rapid progress.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. The school's judgements on teaching are in close agreement with the quality seen by inspectors. Secure planning, good marking and better use of assessments result in lessons which have clear objectives. Teachers need to raise further their expectations of what the children can do and how much they should accomplish in lessons especially in writing.

The children's approach to learning is positive. They mostly engage well in lessons and particularly enjoy some of the more exciting new initiatives like the 'science day' and 'cultural week'. Behaviour is good and relationships at all levels are harmonious. The school has clear well established systems to handle inappropriate conduct.

The day to day care of children is very good. The staff know them well and children feel safe and well supported. Better systems of checks on progress and effective marking now ensure that individuals have clearer guidance on how well they are doing and what they still need to do to improve. The exception is the guidance to children on the special educational needs register because the information on how to improve is not sufficiently detailed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of children's writing and increase the opportunities children have to use their writing skills across a wider range of subjects.
- Improve subject leaders' skills in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, standards of work and in action planning.
- Improve the management of children who have learning difficulties and disabilities, including clearer identification and better target setting.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From broadly average starting points, children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average in mathematics but slightly better than this in reading and writing. The trend in recent years is upwards.

In Year 3 there is clear evidence that standards are maintained. In writing they are good because of precise, high quality teaching of writing skills which is stimulating and builds on the skills learned in previous classes.

The legacy of underachievement lingers on in older age classes. Standards of reading, mathematics and science are secure and consistently at the level expected for children at the end of Year 6. Writing continues to be the school's Achilles heel and standards are low. The effect of this is to pull the overall standards of English down to the low end of average.

From the data the school has gathered, children's progress over the last year is patchy. But in the lessons seen and from the work in children's books, progress is better because teachers plan and mark children's work thoroughly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. The school has improved substantially the children's knowledge and understanding about cultural diversity through specific events such as 'cultural week' and through visits such as to a local

Mosque. These activities have proved popular and have raised this aspect of provision to a satisfactory level.

Levels of attendance are satisfactory and behaviour is good. Children are polite, helpful and trustworthy. They work and play well together. They enjoy the levels of challenge given to them in some classes and some subjects and enter readily into discussions particularly in practical work. But the older children do not attack writing activities with much enthusiasm. Most teachers do not make enough use of subjects other than English to provide a wider range stimulating and challenging writing tasks.

The children take part with enthusiasm in the many after school activities that are on offer. They contribute well to the life of the school and wider community through the work of the school council and by supporting outside organisations, notably through the local church.

Children show good levels of independence in Reception and have increasing opportunities for using initiative and being self reliant as they get older, particularly through the work of the school council. Children leave at the end of Year 6 with good social skills and with sufficient academic skills to be successful in their next schools and beyond.

Involvement with the Healthy Schools Award and the strong focus on physical development in out of school activities has helped to ensure that children know how to keep healthy and safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. The management of children in classrooms is good and the strong relationship between children and their teachers sets the right atmosphere for learning.

There are good systems, recently established to help children know what they need to do next to improve their learning. Some children are starting to make use of this information but more needs to be done to make this a consistent feature in all classrooms. Work is marked regularly with helpful comments to guide children. Planning is now systematic and consistent and shows what it is children should learn during the lessons.

Teaching assistants provide very good support in all classes. They work very well with teachers and make use of the teachers' plans to help assess how much has been learned by individuals. They do not work with a wide enough range of ability groups.

Teachers' expectations of writing are not high enough. Time allowed for high quality extended work is insufficient and teachers do not make sufficiently clear exactly what is expected in the time allowed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The work children undertake is sufficiently wide and varied with the exception of opportunities for writing where the full range of the subjects is under-used. There is good provision for personal development and teaching aspects of health education. Good use is made of visitors and visits out into the community to broaden educational experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school has secure systems for ensuring children's safety and well being. All statutory checks on existing and new staff are in place. The school is alert to the few incidents of bullying or racism which occur and records show that these are dealt with well.

Children have specific targets for improvement but do not yet evaluate their own written work sufficiently because the teachers do not establish clearly enough what a good piece of work should look like. The children with learning difficulties and disabilities do not always have sufficiently clear and precise guidance in their Individual Education Plans.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has managed the necessary changes extremely well. Difficult decisions have not been shirked. The numbers and deployment of staff is now much better aligned to the numbers of children on roll. Communications generally have been improved and the school takes account of parents' and children's voices through regular surveys. Good use has been made of outside support particularly in taking tough management decisions. The systems to check on the quality of teaching and on children's progress are now secure and accurate. The school takes stock of its performance with much greater accuracy and sets challenging but attainable targets for improvement.

The leadership and management at subject level are in need of improvement. The teachers with key subject responsibilities are beginning to analyse the information they have on children's standards. But the resulting improvement plans which feed into the school's strategic development plan do not all have sufficient precision, clarity and rigour. Some subject leaders lack the training and the time to carry out the checks which are needed to provide clear guidance to other staff on how to improve standards, particularly in writing.

Governors have played a very supportive role as the school has strived to improve. They understand more precisely the issues that still face the school. School finances in particular have been put on a sound footing and they have a much better grasp of

the standards achieved by the children. But they are not challenging the school enough about its remaining weaknesses.

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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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	3

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	3

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?	3

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

30 November 2006

Dear Children

Pinchbeck East Church of England Primary School, Fennell Road, Pinchbeck, Spalding,
Lincolnshire, PE11 3RB

Thank you for the warm and friendly reception you gave to me and my colleagues Marina Gough and Roger Sadler when we visited your school recently.

Your school has been through a tough time. Two years ago it was not doing nearly well enough but I am very pleased to tell you that it has improved a great deal. It no longer needs me or one of my colleagues to check up on things every few months.

Your mathematics, science and reading have all improved but I am afraid I have to tell you that your writing still needs to be much better. We have made some suggestions to help your teachers with this. We think they need to give you more opportunities to write, other than in literacy lessons. So you should expect to have more interesting writing tasks in subjects such as history geography and science. We were very pleased to see that you have started to learn more about people from other cultures and religions.

But many of you can do better still in all your subjects. So we have asked the teachers who are in charge of different subjects to do much more to help all your teachers understand how to improve your work still further. Similarly we have said that those of you who find learning a bit difficult need much clearer steps set out to help them improve.

Your behaviour is every bit as good as on previous occasions when I have visited and there is a lovely atmosphere in your school. Your teachers care for you well and they do all the right things to keep you safe and learn how to stay fit and healthy.

Your headteacher has done a very good job of improving your school and some of the things she has had to do have not been easy. But they have been the right ones. She and all your staff know that more work needs to be done, but they now understand what has gone wrong in the past and how to put it right in the future.

I have every confidence that if you all work hard and work together, that Pinchbeck East can become a very good school.

My best wishes to you all.

Mike Sutton

Her Majesty's Inspector