

Pokesdown Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113726
Local Authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	311349
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Blinkhorn
Headteacher	Vivienne Miller
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2002
School address	Livingstone Road Bournemouth BH5 2AS
Telephone number	01202 428982
Fax number	01202 429348

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils join this large primary school with skills and abilities that are wide ranging but are mainly below average. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The substantive headteacher has been seconded to another school for four days a week for over a year. The deputy headteacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher. The secondment ends in April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pokesdown is a satisfactory school. It has a friendly, caring ethos and strong provision for pupils' personal development and pastoral care. Parents are pleased with the good level of care their children receive. As one parent said, 'It is a warm and friendly environment where children are happy and enjoy learning'. Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of the supportive and stimulating learning environment created. Across the school, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. However, in one area, writing, standards are not high enough and pupils are underachieving. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage. In all classes, lessons are well organised and managed; there are good relationships and teaching assistants are effective. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. However, work is not always well matched to their needs, resulting in a lack of challenge, particularly for the more able. Additionally, teachers sometimes do not plan lessons well enough to maintain a good pace to learning. Pupils' personal development is good. They are friendly and welcoming, enjoy school and work well in lessons. Through the school council, pupils feel that they have a strong voice and school councillors talk enthusiastically about the improvements they have made to playground provision. Attendance has improved following the school's efforts and is now satisfactory. The curriculum is appropriately planned to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and is enriched well by a range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs. However, there is not sufficient emphasis on the skills needed to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Consequently, pupils feel safe from bullying and are confident of adult support should they have any worries. They also find the 'Friendship Stop' invaluable in enabling them to take care of one another when unhappy. Where needed, pupils receive well-structured additional support. Academic guidance is satisfactory. There is sound and improving tracking of pupils' progress, which is beginning to raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, targets and their use are more variable. Although helpful in mathematics, in literacy they are not sufficiently precise. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher is managing the school well during the secondment of the headteacher. Senior leaders have created a good team ethos and a caring school, but the school improvement plan has too many strands and there is not a sharp enough focus on the key areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is not based firmly enough on pupils' academic achievement. Recently, a more rigorous approach to tracking and monitoring pupils' progress has been implemented and is beginning to improve pupils' achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school has worked hard to bring about satisfactory improvement in standards, attendance and the roles of senior leaders since the last inspection. It has a sound capacity to improve further. 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.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and achieve well. They benefit from a wide range of relevant and interesting activities and there is a good balance of child-chosen and teacher-directed activities. However, staff do not always use questioning effectively to ensure children of differing abilities are fully challenged. Frequent assessments of children's learning enable staff to plan work that clearly meets their needs. Children know the routines well and feel secure in their learning

environment. Good relationships ensure they enjoy learning and are happy in school. Planning, organisation and management are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in writing across the school.
- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching, especially with regard to the pace of lessons and the level of challenge for more-able pupils.
- Identify the most important areas in the school improvement plan with greater clarity and ensure that actions and outcomes are rigorously evaluated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Children make good progress across the Foundation Stage to reach average levels in literacy and numeracy on entry to Year 1. They mainly exceed expectations in all other areas of learning. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and typically attain average standards by the end of Year 2. However, provisional results of 2007 teacher assessments show that standards in writing are below average. Over several years, pupils have made satisfactory progress across Key Stage 2 to attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. The provisional national test results for 2007 show a dip in standards in English and at the higher Level 5 in both mathematics and English. Pupils did not meet their targets in writing and achievement here is unsatisfactory. Higher-attaining pupils did not do well enough and this is because work is not always sufficiently challenging for them. Weaknesses in phonic knowledge, sentence construction and grammar have contributed to this underachievement in writing. The school has taken steps to tackle this and this is already improving pupils' progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory and sometimes good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a happy and harmonious community where pupils get on well together. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive, and pupils feel valued and know that staff have their best interests at heart. Pupils' behaviour is good and they usually concentrate well on their tasks. Occasionally, their attention wanes because they have to listen to their teacher for too long and are not actively involved in their learning. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn, and this is reflected in their improving attendance. The school has worked hard to achieve this through effective actions, but there are still too many parents who take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. They respond positively when given responsibility, for example, as members of the school council or when acting as playground carers for other pupils. Pupils are safety conscious and concerned for the welfare of others. They have a good awareness of the need for healthy eating and exercise. Pupils enjoy fruit and vegetables at break times, and many take advantage of the good range of afterschool sports activities provided by the school. Pupils have a strong social and community awareness, and are keen fundraisers for good causes such as Comic Relief. They work together well and make satisfactory academic progress overall. As a result, they are soundly prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Across the school, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, know what they expect pupils to learn and explain tasks clearly. Consequently, pupils are usually confident about tackling their work. Good teaching enables children to do well in the Foundation Stage and some lessons are taught well in Key Stage 2. In the good lessons, teachers motivate pupils very effectively. They know exactly when to provide pupils with support and when to let pupils work things out for themselves. However, in other lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, some common weaknesses restrict pupils' progress. Teachers do not always use questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding, and the most capable pupils sometimes mark time because their work is too easy. In addition, the pace of some lessons slows because teachers talk for too long. Marking is mainly used well to improve pupils' learning but opportunities are sometimes missed to use assessment data to inform the next steps in pupils' learning, particularly for the most capable pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, overall, for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language. It is good in the Foundation Stage, where children benefit from a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. In Key Stages 1 and 2, provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. However, the development of pupils' skills in sentence construction and punctuation requires a more sustained and effective emphasis in order to raise standards in writing. The introduction of a new phonics scheme and regular extended writing for small groups is beginning to have some impact. In some cases, the excessive use of worksheets with low-level tasks hampers pupils' progress. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through good attention to health and safety, for example, cycling proficiency for older pupils and 'Kerb Craft' road safety lessons in the Foundation Stage. Pupils also benefit from good provision for their artistic development, and the school has achieved the Artsmark Silver Award. A good range of school clubs, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. These are very popular with pupils. After reflecting on a visit to Hengisbury Head, a pupil remarked, 'I learnt so much about the Romans and the Celts. It was so much better than from learning just in the classroom'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Staff know pupils' individual needs well and provide good support, including good induction arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage. All arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety, including risk assessments and child protection, are fully in place. There are very few incidents of bullying, and when they occur pupils say they are dealt with promptly. Golden rules and class rules help to promote good behaviour throughout the school. The school maintains good links with parents, other schools and external agencies. For example, the good links with Bournemouth Grammar school enable the school to offer lessons in modern foreign languages. The nurture group and learning mentor provide effective support for those experiencing emotional problems. Pupils' efforts and achievements are celebrated and this helps develop their self-confidence and encourages a culture in which pupils

are polite, kind and care for each other. Assessment procedures have recently improved and are beginning to have a beneficial impact on pupils' progress. However, inconsistencies in the use of targets across the school alongside only very general literacy targets mean that academic guidance is not always fully effective. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and those who are vulnerable is regularly monitored and they receive clear and helpful guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's secondment has been managed well, ensuring the continued smooth running of the school. Senior leaders ensure a good supportive ethos where pupils' pastoral care and personal development instil a strong sense of self-worth. Parents are fully supportive of the work of the school and the level of care given to their children. All senior leaders are committed to bringing about improvement in pupils' achievement and are beginning to address the issues involved. The timely improvements in monitoring of pupils' progress through more rigorous target-setting and intervention programmes have ensured that pupils' rates of progress are beginning to accelerate, particularly at Key Stage 2. Phase and subject leaders are supporting this drive for improvement and are working very closely as a team. There are several new initiatives in place to improve writing. Although it is too early to show a clear impact, there are encouraging signs of improving progress in some year groups in Key Stage 2. The school monitors teaching regularly and gives support and guidance where needed. However, there are still inconsistencies across aspects of teaching, which are impeding progress. The school has a more favourable view of several aspects of its work than inspectors do. This is because self-evaluation is not sufficiently focused on what pupils achieve. The school improvement plan has too many strands and these are not appropriately prioritised. However, the school has started to use action plans to support some of these strands and this is helping it to be more realistic in terms of what it achieves. Governors are fully committed to the school, have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and are active in their support.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

- 21 October 2007 Dear pupils Inspection of Pokesdown Primary School, Livingstone Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH5 2AS I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We really enjoyed talking to you and appreciated the help you gave us with the inspection. We think that Pokesdown is a satisfactory school. Here are the things we like about your school:
 - You get a good start in the Foundation Stage.
 - You behave well and really enjoy your lessons.
 - You are well cared for and are given many opportunities to go on visits, which you enjoy.
 - You enjoy being school councillors and playground helpers as you can make things better for everyone. These are the things we think your school could do better:
 - Improve your writing.
 - Make teaching better by ensuring the work you get fully challenges you and helps you to make faster progress.
 - The senior staff of the school need to decide the most important things they need to do to help you improve, make a plan and then ensure everyone carries out the plan fully. You can help by making sure you work hard and do your best. Yours sincerely Janet Sinclair Lead Inspector



21 October 2007

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You can help by making sure you work hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair
Lead Inspector