

# Picklenash Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115733
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312045
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bernadette Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	A J Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Ross Road Newent GL18 1BG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01531 820589
<b>Fax number</b>	01531 822723

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized school serves the community of Newent and shares an extensive site with an infant school, an Early Years Centre and a playgroup. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory.

Standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Last year, there was a dip in performance and not all these pupils achieved as well as they could, particularly in mathematics. The school has taken action to deal with this by introducing new teaching materials to address weaknesses in mathematics and by providing additional support for lower attaining pupils. A key reason why pupils do not always achieve at a consistent rate is the lack of a comprehensive whole-school tracking system to indicate pupils' progress. As a result, the impact of teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, because work set is not always well matched to what pupils need. The school recognises the need for more detailed assessment information to inform lesson planning and has already started to make improvements

Over time, progress has been more robust in literacy than numeracy, because English has been a particular priority and pupils have been supported by well established target setting and focused marking in this subject. These strengths have yet to be fully developed in mathematics. In addition, pupils with the lowest standards have not always received sufficient support, so they have not made enough progress. The school has tackled this shortcoming by engaging additional staff, who have been told what it is that these pupils need to achieve. This approach is helping pupils, including those with identified learning difficulties, to make up any lost ground. In mathematics, changes have been made to ensure that pupils get even more opportunities to apply their skills. Pupils themselves recognise that 'many children learn in different ways' and they are particularly engaged by lessons where they are actively involved. This underpins the strength of science, information and communication technology (ICT) and music within the curriculum.

Senior leadership is effective. The school runs smoothly and has the capacity to move forward and make further improvement. The school's evaluation of its performance is broadly accurate. However, the school recognises that, although it has identified accurately where improvements are needed, remedial changes need to be implemented at a faster pace. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school's work and know that they must now do more to challenge the school to increase the pace of change. The majority of parents are supportive of the school. A significant minority feel that there have been shortcomings in the way the school communicates with them. They do not think that their views and wishes have been taken into account. Governors accept that they have a major role in resolving these perceptions and in strengthening the partnership with parents.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in the emerging cross-curricular links and the good range of extra-curricular activities. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with pastoral aspects well established. Pupils generally enjoy school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils attend regularly, behaviour is good and they have a clear understanding of the need to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the pace of pupils' learning in mathematics.
- Make effective use of assessment information to plan lessons that are matched to pupils' needs and enable all pupils to make good progress.

- Take remedial action swiftly to ensure that improvement takes place at a much faster pace.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards and achieve satisfactorily. Currently, standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils are making satisfactory progress, with some emerging strengths in writing in Year 6. Following a fall in last year's national test results at Year 6, and the underperformance of some of these pupils, the school has made a number of improvements. New teaching materials have been introduced to tackle areas of weakness in mathematics and there is now additional support for pupils with the lowest standards.

English has been a priority area for some time and pupils' progress is more robust in this subject because target setting and marking are more highly developed than they are for mathematics. Pupils make stronger progress in science, too, where the work is focused on well judged practical activities that engage pupils' enthusiasm. For similar reasons, pupils achieve well in music and make particularly good progress in developing their ICT skills. There are still underlying inconsistencies in pupils' progress because although the school has tracking information, it is not sufficiently detailed to help teachers identify quickly enough those pupils who are in danger of falling behind. This shortcoming also means that teachers do not always plan sufficiently challenging work in order to move learning on at a rapid pace.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Children feel secure in school. Most feel that teachers are caring and will help them when they have difficulties. Pupils are generally attentive and keen to participate. Behaviour is good and pupils conduct themselves safely around the school. Some parents expressed concerns about bullying, but pupils feel that there is no bullying and that the school manages their safety well. Pupils show good commitment to the school council, and its members perceptively identify areas where the school could make improvements. While some parents feel that the school does not always take account of pupils' views, pupils say that 'teachers take note of your opinions'. Pupils learn satisfactorily about other cultures through religious education and through the school's involvement in the Comenius project, an initiative that establishes links between schools in different European countries. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, although good intentions are not always followed through in their choice of packed lunch. Nevertheless, many pupils take part in extra-curricular sport. Their involvement in activities such as running the tuck shop helps to give them skills they can develop for use in their adult working life. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through initiating fund raising and their involvement in local events, while Year 6 pupils have many responsibilities within school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching has a number of strong features, but is not consistently good because of shortcomings in assessment. Relationships are good in most classes and teaching is often stimulating and challenging, with well judged questioning and effective use of ICT. Pupils

respond and learn particularly well in subjects where there is a strong practical bias. However, the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement has been constrained because teachers have made inconsistent use of available data on pupils' progress and, consequently, work has not always been matched closely enough to pupils' needs. This has particularly affected lower attainers and those with learning difficulties because teaching has not always expected enough of them. Recent improvements to assessment practices are beginning to provide teachers with better data, but the school is aware that further development is needed to increase the pace of learning. Marking is generally rigorous, but less so in mathematics than in English. As a result, pupils tend to perform better over time in English.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and effectively enriched by visits out of school. The extra-curricular programme is good. It is well supported by pupils and this makes a strong contribution to their enjoyment and personal development. Residential trips for pupils in both Year 5 and Year 6 enrich their experience of history and geography, enable them to take part in outdoor activities and successfully promote their independence. Effective cross-curricular links are already established between mathematics and science and the school is seeking to extend links between other subjects. This approach enables pupils to consolidate their mathematical skills. ICT skills are much better developed than at the previous inspection. Pupils are particularly well motivated and make good progress when activities have a high level of practical involvement. Good access to instrumental music tuition and extra-curricular musical activities successfully extends pupils' learning opportunities and their cultural development. Satisfactory provision for personal and social development helps pupils learn about their feelings and responses. Talented pupils are supported well through extra-curricular opportunities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Adults promote pupils' health, safety and welfare well, while academic guidance is satisfactory. Most pupils say that teachers are caring and that they are confident that there is an adult to whom they can turn. Some parents do not share this view and feel the school could do better. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and carefully monitored. The school has good links with external agencies, which ensures effective support for pupils with learning difficulties. Assessment practices have recently been strengthened, but they are still relatively new and have not yet had a full impact. For example, pupils' progress is not yet systematically tracked right across the school. That said, pupils are increasingly confident in evaluating the quality of their work. There are improvement targets for individual pupils in literacy and pupils have a good knowledge of these. Marking is generally referenced to pupils' targets, so that these have an increasing impact on achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The day-to-day management of the school is efficient and provides a secure and safe environment where pupils behave well. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Subject leadership is effective because pupils' progress in ICT has accelerated, science teaching is a strength and standards in writing have risen. In addition, recent

improvements in the support for pupils with learning difficulties and changes in the teaching of mathematics are also helping to increase academic achievement. The school knows that improvement needs to take place at a faster pace, particularly in establishing a cohesive system for tracking pupils' progress over time and providing staff with the information they need to provide activities that challenge pupils to do their very best. Overall, the school has a clear understanding of its effectiveness and has accurately identified where it needs to make improvements. Governance is satisfactory as financial management is effective, supporting developments such as the new ICT suite and enhanced staffing to support lower attaining pupils. Governors are aware of the need to take a major role in securing a stronger partnership with parents, particularly through improved communication. They also know that they must provide the school with further challenge to increase the pace of change.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

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

21 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Picklenash Junior School, Newent GL18 1BG

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. You were keen to talk to us and we appreciated our conversations with you. We were impressed by your interest, your care for each other and your evaluation of your school and how it could be improved. We found that Picklenash is a satisfactory school.

The main things that we found are:

- You behave well in lessons, generally work hard and attend school regularly. Your teachers give you clear guidance about how you can improve your work in literacy.
- The teaching is never less than sound and you make satisfactory progress.
- Most of you reach the standards you should at the end of Year 6 and you especially enjoy lessons with lots of practical things to do.
- You support the clubs well and many of you learn a musical instrument.
- The school runs smoothly and the school leaders know what to do to make things even better.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that it is even more effective.

- Make sure that every one of you makes the best progress you can in mathematics.
- Make sure that all the information the school has about you is used to plan really challenging work in lessons that will help you move on quickly.
- Make sure that the school puts its plans into action as quickly as it can so that improvements happen swiftly.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

- George Logan
- Lead inspector