

Pinvin, St Nicholas' CofE Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116861
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312429
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	9–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Moore
Headteacher	Keiran M Saddington
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Main Street Pinvin Pershore WR10 2ER
Telephone number	01386 554196
Fax number	01386 556272

Age group	9-12
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pinvin St Nicholas is a smaller than average middle school and most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a lower than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pinvin St Nicholas is a satisfactory school, where pupils achieve to a satisfactory level academically and develop well personally. Most pupils make steady progress in English, mathematics and science but this varies in other subjects. While several make good progress, a few lose ground in one or more subjects. Sound leadership and management have led to improvements in assessment and teaching. This has recently begun to reverse the underachievement of some pupils, a trend particularly evident in mathematics.

The pupils enjoy school largely because the good curriculum provides a wealth of interesting activities and projects, which bring their learning to life and support their good personal development. Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive and they work hard. They also find most lessons interesting because teachers use resources well to provide relevant and engaging activities. The quality of teaching varies considerably and is satisfactory overall. Some lessons are of a high quality but some are not planned well enough to make sure all pupils learn at a fast enough rate. The school has recently introduced a system which sets challenging individual targets for every pupil and then regularly tracks their progress towards them. Some teachers use this information well to guide pupils in making good progress but in many lessons the link between these targets and lesson objectives are not detailed enough to ensure everyone is progressing well. This affects all ability groups but is particularly noticeable with the more able pupils whose work sometimes lacks pace and challenge. Subject leaders are not yet successful in securing consistent teaching that supports the most effective learning in their areas.

Pupils are kept safe and those who find learning difficult are well supported. Pupils' good personal development is particularly evident in the outstanding contribution they make to the school and wider community. The highly active school council and eco-committee make many changes, including improving playground activities. Pupils also pick up litter in the village, run fair-trade cafes and even sit on interview panels for new teachers. The majority of parents are very positive about all aspects of the school, appreciating the care and support given, the extra-curricular activities and the progress made, typically reporting that 'the children become confident and independent'. Several parents would like improved communication with the school, which senior leaders are planning to address. The main concerns of a significant minority are reflected in the findings of this report.

With their sound basic skills, good personal development and the responsible way they contribute to the smooth running of the school, pupils are well prepared for their futures.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve the progress pupils make in all subjects, particularly mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils' targets are used more effectively when planning lessons so that sufficient progress is made by all groups of learners.
- Improve the way subjects are led and managed so that there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.

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

Attainment on entry to the school and the standards reached by the time pupils leave are broadly average. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall. Due to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, the progress pupils make varies considerably within subjects and within year and ability groups. This means that although some pupils make good progress, for a few, progress is inadequate. In particular some more able pupils do not always progress as fast as they should. There is a gradually increasing rate of progress in all subjects.

Pupils enter the school with below average skills in mathematics and, although they make satisfactory progress overall, standards in this subject are low. There is some good progress being made in some aspects of mathematics and in writing following recent initiatives. This is most noticeable in Year 7.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' evident enjoyment of school is reflected in good attendance and a willingness to work hard and do their best. They have a good understanding of different cultures, and have strong social skills and moral understanding. Most pupils behave in a mature fashion and show considerable empathy for the needs of others. This is reflected in their exceptional contribution to the life of the school and community. Pupils are keen to help around the school and engage enthusiastically with decision-making through the school council. For example, the pupils' request for an improvement in the catering has led to healthier food being served. Although most pupils behave well and behaviour has improved, a few pupils still disrupt learning at times. Nevertheless, pupils feel safe at school and very few experience any bullying, which is usually quickly dealt with when it does occur.

Pupils work well in teams and are particularly proud of the committee which sets out to promote good values across the school. This group encourages pupils to care for one another and helps to run assemblies with themes such as tolerance and understanding. In this way pupils begin to develop the skills necessary for success in their next school and eventual careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In most lessons pupils understand what they must learn and are keen to do well. Relationships and behaviour are usually good and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Teaching assistants contribute skilfully to lessons. The quality of lessons, although recently improved, still varies greatly. The main weakness, in all subjects, is that lesson planning is not always linked closely enough to pupils' individual targets to ensure that everyone in the class makes sufficient progress. This results in variable achievement and a lack of challenge for some, particularly the most able. Lessons usually run smoothly. The disruptions from a few pupils, which occasionally slow the pace of the lesson, are most frequent when lessons are not matched well to pupils' needs. Teachers' good subject knowledge and a good variety of interesting activities however, lead to pupils typically commenting that 'teachers make lessons fun'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned appropriately to ensure that learning builds systematically. Good links with first schools support this work. The curriculum is also rich and provides a host of opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills, for example links with a Zambian school and Russia, as well as an international day, have raised pupils awareness of these cultures well. In addition, some effective work on healthy living means that pupils know how to eat well and take plenty of exercise. There is good attendance at the many and varied clubs with plentiful and good quality opportunities for sports and the arts. These include a dance and arts festival and sports played with local schools. Outdoor education is outstanding where pupils experience frequent, high quality residential visits. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is currently being developed and does not yet support progress for these pupils well enough. Pupils learn about the world of work, helping them to prepare well for the next stage of their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures to safeguard pupils are robust. The good support and guidance to promote pupils' personal development includes effective personal and social education and a strong pastoral system. The procedures for managing behaviour have led to improvements, although information about incidents is not used systematically enough to support this work further. Links with the necessary agencies to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are outstanding. The guidance to help pupils reach high standards is beginning to develop appropriately. Individual pupils' progress is assessed and monitored, and support is given to those falling behind. Pupils find the new system, where they can track their own progress, motivating.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There has been steady improvement in many areas of the school since the last inspection, including aspects of staffing, accommodation, behaviour and progress for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In particular, pupils' personal development and the curriculum have improved. This said, improvements in pupils' achievements have been slow. The school now undertakes thorough self-evaluation and seeks the views of all involved, including parents and pupils. As a result, senior leaders and governors have a much clearer view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and seek to act on them. This has resulted in some recent improvement in writing and in mathematics, particularly in Year 7. The capacity to continue improving is satisfactory.

Leaders, until recently, did not gather sufficient information about pupils' achievements to drive school improvement and ensure that all pupils were making enough progress. This has now changed and a well organised system with some challenging targets is beginning to support the process of raising standards. It is early days and the use of this data is not yet well embedded within the subject areas, which is why pupils' progress and achievements are inconsistent. Subject leaders are not yet sufficiently effective in ensuring that all lessons are of similarly good quality. The school recognises that the subject leaders' roles in securing consistency of teaching and learning is a vital next step in raising attainment.

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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 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	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	2
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	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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Pinvin St Nicholas C of E Middle School, Worcestershire WR10 2ER

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

Your school has a friendly and caring atmosphere. It is a satisfactory school, with many good things going on, just as you told us. Satisfactory teaching helps all of you to make at least adequate progress in your lessons, and good progress in your social and personal skills. Your lessons are usually enjoyable. Some of you make good progress but this varies within subjects and within all age and ability groups. We have asked the school to make all teaching as good as the best and to try to help you all to make more progress, especially in mathematics. We have also asked them to link all lessons more closely to your different individual targets, so that everyone is better guided to make faster progress, especially those of you who are quite quick at learning. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and doing your best to reach your targets more quickly.

Staff and governors do a satisfactory job in running the school and seeing that it keeps improving. There have been, for example, some good improvements in mathematics and writing, especially in Year 7.

We are impressed with the responsibilities that you take within the school and how much care you take in the local community. The Eco Committee and School Council achieve a great deal. Your behaviour is satisfactory because, although most of you behave well, a few of you still disrupt learning for others. It is pleasing to see that you take plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet. You have a good curriculum and your teachers see to it that you have lots of activities to keep you interested, particularly the amount of sport, artistic activities and outdoor education. The school keeps you safe and looks after you well.

You clearly enjoy coming to school. We think that this fact, alongside your good skills in working together, will help prepare you well for your next school and future lives. We would like to see you carry on with the good work you all do to help the school develop further.

Yours faithfully Patricia Potheary Lead inspector