

Pawlett Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123693
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314673
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Isobel Randall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	49
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	6
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Atillio Palumbo
Headteacher	Anne Goodison
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gaunts Road Pawlett Bridgwater TA6 4SB
Telephone number	01278 684151
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils who attend this much smaller than average sized school come from the local village and surrounding area. Pupils are of predominantly White British heritage. The proportion of boys to girls is very uneven in some years. The proportion of pupils joining the school other than at the normal times is above average. A larger than average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). These pupils have a wide range of learning needs, with a significant minority having moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in the same class as pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Parents expressed positive views about the way in which the staff care for their children and help them to enjoy their education. One parent noted how 'my son really enjoys coming to school every day. There is a real sense of belonging here.' Parents are right; there is a caring atmosphere in all parts of the school, with staff catering sensitively for pupils' needs. Pupils' achievement overall is sound with all pupils reaching nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. However, despite recent work by the school to improve pupils' writing, standards remain too low in this area. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make sound progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and reach the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Across the school, teaching is satisfactory. It has improved in recent times and is now good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in the EYFS and Key Stage 1. The good teaching and associated good progress now evident in Key Stage 2 mean that pupils are rapidly catching up on past underachievement. Systems to assess pupils' progress have been recently improved and are now satisfactory. This development has been instrumental in bringing about improvements in teaching. For example, staff are now making effective use of the assessment information gained to ensure that work and support provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully matched to their needs. However, this assessment information is still not always used effectively enough to ensure that activities provided for higher attaining pupils present them with enough challenge. The curriculum is satisfactory, and enhanced by a rich offering of clubs and extra activities. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in different subject areas. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils say that they enjoy school, and they behave well in class. They like both the lessons and the wide selection of activities at breaks and lunchtimes. In this small school pupils feel confident and secure because they know that they matter as individuals. They feel safe in school. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities flourish because of the care that the school takes for their welfare. Teachers form positive relationships with pupils, and this ensures all individuals feel encouraged to work hard and do their best. Teachers provide pupils with targets, but these are not always precise enough to let pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve. Satisfactory leadership and management place appropriate emphasis on raising standards and this is beginning to make a difference to pupils' achievement. However, the overall targets set for pupils' performance in end of year national tests are insufficiently challenging. Community cohesion is satisfactory, with pupils benefiting from the school's position at the centre of the local community. The school's satisfactory record of improvement over the last three years, coupled with sound self-evaluation that has clearly identified areas for further improvement, gives the school satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory. Over the past year it has improved. Children settle in quickly due to close liaison with the local playgroup and positive relations with parents. Children start school with attainment that is broadly in line with the expected levels. Sound teaching ensures they make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the time they start Year 1. The school has an extensive and attractive outdoor area that is well used to get children to explore the environment. There is a satisfactory range of equipment for purposeful play, so that the

children enjoy learning. However, too often, activities are too closely directed by adults and this limits the opportunities for children to learn by exploring and investigating with independent activities. The EYFS leader plans enjoyable activities for the children, but these do not challenge children sufficiently to help them reach their full potential. Children's personal development is satisfactory. Adults and children relate well to each other. The children are confident, with positive attitudes to the school. They have settled down well, but they are sometimes over-dependent on adults. Children's welfare is well promoted by good safety procedures and the development of a strong sense of community. Leadership of the EYFS is satisfactory, with improvements in assessment over the past year leading to more effective planning for lessons which has helped to boost the progress that children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure that teachers make full use of assessment information to inform their planning and target setting to improve the standards and achievement of all pupils and particularly the higher attaining pupils.
- Raise expectations for the standards that pupils can achieve, and provide appropriately challenging targets for pupils' performance in the end of year national tests. 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

Pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory. The legacy of previous slow progress in the EYFS and Key Stage 1 is being successfully overcome with increasing signs of pupils making better progress throughout Key Stage 2. Standards throughout the school vary from year to year, with pupils currently reaching average standards by the time they leave.

The school exceeded targets set for the Year 6 2008 national tests. Whilst this is good news in terms of indicating the school's improving standards, it is clear that the school does not currently set the expectations high enough with targets set. Staff rightly recognise that writing is still an area of weakness throughout the school, especially at Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable are well supported, so that they progress at the same rate as others. Higher attaining pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable. There is still work to be done in planning opportunities so that the most able pupils are always challenged at the highest possible level on a day to day basis.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding about the need to keep themselves fit and healthy. They put their knowledge into practice by enthusiastically participating in sports activities, and starting each day with a popular 'wake and shake' exercise programme. They take pride in their successful participation in local sporting events. Pupils relate well to each other in class and at play. Their behaviour is satisfactory in the main. However, occasionally a few pupils argue with each other in the playground, although others report that

they know how to calm these individuals down so that everyone feels safe. There are signs that attendance is improving from its below average level last year and that it is now broadly average. Pupils enjoy being in a small school. The school council stressed that pupils look after each other 'like a family'. They appreciate close links with the local community, enjoying local activities such as the village fete in which the school takes part. Their contribution to the community is satisfactory. Pupils have only a limited knowledge and understanding of life in multicultural Britain. School plans are in hand to address this. Although pupils develop mainly sound skills to ensure they do well in the future, weaknesses in writing slow them down in this area.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching has improved in recent times as a result of the school's initiatives to develop better use of assessment information. This has had the most impact in Key Stage 2 where much good teaching is now seen. However, there remains more to do to improve teaching further in this way, especially in Key Stage 1. While all teachers now record pupils' attainment and progress regularly, they do not yet all make precise enough use of this information to plan lessons with activities that match the needs of all pupils closely enough, especially higher attaining pupils. Throughout the school good relationships with staff help pupils to enjoy learning. Work set is interesting because teachers use themes that pupils enjoy. Teaching assistants successfully help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to learn, with a good emphasis placed on encouraging these individuals to discuss their ideas and understanding. Staff are fully aware of the need to improve pupils' writing. Teachers promote the learning of literacy in history, geography and science, but tasks set in such contexts are not always demanding

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with particular strength in the range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The curriculum is well matched to local circumstances, with activities linked to local organisations such as the church and the village hall. The school has sound links with other organisations to boost learning. For example, the local secondary school provides specialist support for courses such as music and German. As a result of its good provision for health education, the school has been awarded an Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award. Although there are some useful links made between different subjects, there are not enough demanding opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. In addition, curriculum plans do not always provide activities that match precisely the needs of all groups of learners, particularly the higher attaining pupils. However, ten hours of challenging enrichment activities are provided for higher attaining pupils each term, and mixed-age classes give higher attaining pupils some chances to work with older pupils on more difficult tasks. There is good attention paid to promoting pupils' personal, social and health education, with a strong focus on involving pupils in a wide range of sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

While the school cares for and supports pupils well, academic guidance is satisfactory. All procedures to ensure pupils' safety are secure. Staff care well for pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They collaborate well with outside agencies to help such pupils to develop. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported so that they make progress in line with others. The school communicates well with parents, encouraging them to support their children's learning. Systems to record pupils' attainment and progress have been improved in recent times and this is increasingly helping staff to focus in on providing the right kind of support for pupils. However, there remains more to do to improve this area, with teachers not always making full use of assessment information to inform target setting. As a result, targets set are not always precise enough to give pupils a clear picture about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has put some sound initiatives in place to help the school move forward. For example, she has implemented good quality systems to record pupils' progress. However, these are not yet used to full effect across the school, for instance in target setting and in lesson planning. She has moved forward appropriately with improving the school's resources. The headteacher has instigated sound procedures for self-evaluation so that all staff have a satisfactory understanding of what works well and what needs improving in the school. However, the targets the school sets itself for pupils' performance in the end of year national tests are not sufficiently challenging. The headteacher has also rightly identified that liaison between teachers is not always as effective as it could be to ensure continuity of work between year groups. Recent action taken to improve liaison has not had time to have had a clear impact. The school forms good links with parents, with other schools and with outside agencies to help support pupils' learning. Parents support the school strongly, appreciating its good communication with them through the weekly 'Friday flier' and contact books. Governors carry out their roles satisfactorily in the main. While they have undergone training, they do not yet offer enough challenge to leaders in terms of questioning the school's current initiatives to promote improvement.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pawlett Primary School, Pawlett, TA6 4SB

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to your school. We think you are very friendly, polite and helpful. You told us how much you like coming to school. We could see that when we watched your morning 'wake and shake'.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. That means that it does some things well and that there are other things that could improve. Your parents told us how well you all settle in when you start school. Your teachers make your lessons enjoyable and you get a good range of extra activities. You told us how much you enjoy sports. The school keeps you very safe and looks after you well when you are having trouble with your work.

We have asked the school to:

- help you improve your writing by giving you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in different subjects
- ensure that teachers make full use of information about how well you are progressing to make lessons even better and to provide you with clearer targets for improving your work, especially those of you who find some areas of work easy
- Set more challenging and accurate targets for your performance in the tests that come at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

You can help the school by doing the best you can in all of your work, especially in writing!

Yours sincerely

Isobel Randall Lead inspector