

Pakefield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124637
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	314996
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Bunkell
Headteacher	Mr Imant Ladusans
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2004
School address	London Road Pakefield Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 7AQ
Telephone number	01502 574032
Fax number	01502 513955

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. There are fewer children with learning difficulties than the national average, including a lower percentage with statements of special educational need. However, in some year groups there is a high proportion of children who find learning difficult. There are far fewer children from minority ethnic backgrounds than average, and very few for whom English is an additional language. Children attend the nursery from the age of three and join the reception classes in the September, January or April before they are five. Although children's abilities vary from year to year and within year groups, most children join the nursery with fewer skills than expected for their age group.

The headteacher has been in post for two years. Since his arrival the school has achieved the Investors in People Award and begun to work towards the National Healthy Schools Award.

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 a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputies and the chair of governors, is successfully raising expectations of standards and achievement. Most importantly, he has established effective procedures for checking how well each child is doing which informs staff expectations and increases accountability. Following a fall in 2005, standards have gradually risen. Most children in the school make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 and reach expected levels by the end of Year 4. The school strategically prioritised improvements in reading and writing and consequently this is where they have had greatest success.

The headteacher's drive for continued improvement means staff and governors recognise the need to consolidate these green shoots of improvement. They also appreciate that the next step is to make similar gains in mathematics. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall because governors and subject leaders are still developing their skills in using and analysing the information the school generates. Their willingness to support the headteacher's endeavours means the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. A third of parents completed questionnaires, giving their views of the school. Most were supportive of its work and commended staff for helping children to settle quickly, enjoy school and make progress. However, a few expressed a variety of concerns, mostly related to communication.

Much of the school's work is guided by new procedures and approaches that are already showing signs of improving provision for children. Nevertheless, it is too soon for improvements to have had a sustained impact. This is a contributory factor in children's personal development, teaching and learning and the curriculum being satisfactory rather than good, although there is good teaching in the school on which to build. Recent developments in the way activities are planned have ensured that the needs of different groups of children are routinely met, and so have contributed to improved standards. The school recognises the need to develop this further now, so that children are challenged even more, and in all parts of the lesson. While the curriculum is increasingly interesting and relevant, there is further to go in actively engaging children by making stimulating links between subjects and giving them far more chances to work independently. Nevertheless, children behave well in school, enjoy learning and undertake special jobs or roles sensibly. Attendance is satisfactory and authorised absence is decreasing.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's learning and development are good throughout the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly because expectations are clear and routines helpful. Teachers and support staff share a good understanding of how young children learn. They use their expertise well to plan a good range of stimulating activities that enhance learning and enjoyment. Consequently, children develop the ability to work independently and concentrate well for good periods of time. They also respond positively to activities which are more closely directed by staff and those that encourage them to work together.

Nursery staff harness children's imaginations to develop their speaking, listening and writing skills well. This is particularly effective in the outside 'garage', for example in encouraging boys and girls to write 'job sheets' after 'repairing' vehicles. Key skills are also developed well in more formal sessions which help Reception children to identify letters and the sounds they

make. Whilst Reception staff ensure good opportunities for children to learn outside, managers recognise that this area needs further development. Good management and leadership are reflected in the high aspirations and expectations of staff. Good teaching and well chosen activities mean children achieve well. Many reach the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on recent success in raising standards in reading to raise standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Share the best practice seen in lessons to raise the quality of teaching to consistently good.
- Enliven the curriculum with increased links between subjects and more activities that encourage children to work independently.
- Extend the school's communication with families so that more parents have a full understanding of the school's priorities and successes.

A small proportion of 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

Children of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, make satisfactory progress. Because of recent improvements in checking what children can do and what they need to do next, children's progress and standards are accelerating in some areas. In 2007 children made good progress and reached above average standards in writing by the end of Year 2. This year's assessments indicate that children are on track to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics having made satisfactory progress. Children currently in Year 4 are on track to reach above expected levels in reading and writing, having made good progress in reading since Year 2. The proportion of children reaching expected standards in information and communication technology (ICT) for Year 4 has doubled this year. All these are positive and encouraging early signs of improvement, which have not yet stood the test of time to become established and consistent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Children have a clear understanding of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and what they should do if it occurs. They say they feel safe and there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. Nearly all children enjoy school, make friends easily and play together well. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to live healthy lives, which is beginning to influence their choices in what to eat and what to do. They contribute to the school and wider community satisfactorily by taking part in the school council, undertaking responsible jobs around school and raising funds for charities. They are quite passive learners, dependent on adults to move their learning on. This is because few opportunities are planned for them to work independently and use their initiative in lessons. Nevertheless, children develop confidence as they move through the school and are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Relationships between adults and children are good so children want to please their teachers and are ready to learn. Improvements in using assessment information to plan for the differing needs within a class are increasing learning and enjoyment. Teachers routinely tell children what they are going to learn, making sure this is understood at the beginning of the lesson. Taking this further by sharing precise expectations for a small group working together is rarer. This limits children's opportunities to drive and judge their own learning. When teaching is good activities are well matched to children's differing needs throughout the lesson, so each child learns at a consistently good pace. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to children's learning when their skills are used fully. This does not always happen when the teacher is addressing the whole class. Marking is satisfactory: there are examples of helpful comments encouraging children to think about their work, but children seldom respond because there is not a clear expectation that they will do so.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is in the process of making activities more interesting and relevant. New learning materials and tasks are beginning to improve standards and progress in reading and writing. New programmes to support pupils who begin to fall behind with their work are also proving effective. Staff have recently increased practical science work and problem solving in mathematics. There are more chances for children to use ICT in other subjects. There is still a way to go to make sure all lessons fully engage pupils through, for example, linking subjects together to make learning more relevant. In Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy learning French. The effective use of specialist sports coaches is helping to develop skills in cricket and football and raise fitness levels. Pupils enjoy the good range of activities that enrich the curriculum, including theme days, special weeks, visits and visitors that help them to understand through first hand experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Required procedures to ensure children's safety and welfare are in place. Staff have children's best interests at heart and pastoral care is good. This is reflected, for example, in the good level of care taken to prepare children for the transition into the middle school. The new systems for tracking how well children are learning are increasingly used to kick-start extra support for those at risk of not doing as well as they could. The school is increasingly effective in meeting the needs of those children who find learning relatively easy, but the level of challenge is not entirely consistent. Using learning targets and sharing them with children is a development which has progressed further, and is consequently more useful, in literacy than with mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A good start has been made in improving the school. The headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and what it needs to do next. Judgements for some aspects of its work in the school's self-evaluation documents are aspirational and reflect where the headteacher wants the school to be very soon. They reflect his passionate commitment to continued school improvement. He has introduced systems and procedures, including sensible school development and subject action plans, to support continued improvement. Targets set for children's progress are realistic and increasingly challenging. Staff are in a secure position to continue their development and play an increasing role in driving the school forward. Governors are well placed to use their increasing understanding of the school to extend their involvement in checking how well it is doing.

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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 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?	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	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	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 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	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

25 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Pakefield Primary School, London Road, Pakefield NR337AQ

Thank you very much for being so friendly when we visited recently, and for sharing your work and your ideas with us. We are glad that you enjoy school and like your teachers. Here are some of the good things we found in your school.

- Your work is getting better in reading and writing and ICT.
- Children do well in the nursery and reception classes.
- You behave well in lessons.
- You are friendly and helpful with each other.
- Your teachers plan slightly different tasks for you according to what you can cope with, which is helping you to learn.
- You are doing more practical work in science and solving problems in mathematics which is making work more interesting for you.
- Mr Ladusans is doing a good job of helping the teachers to help you and helping the governors to understand how well the school is doing.
- All the adults involved with the school are working hard to make it even better.

We have asked Mr Ladusans, the teachers and governors to:

- look at what has worked well in literacy and see if it would help you to do better in mathematics
- share their best ideas so that all lessons are as good as the very best
- give you more topic work and more chances to use and develop your own ideas in lessons
- try some more ideas to help your parents and families really understand what the school is doing to help you.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to behave so well and being happy to try new ways of working as they come along. We wish you every success in the future.

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector,