

Pye Bank CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133324
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	316082
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Martin Snow
Headteacher	Mr Paul Hopkinson
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Andover Street Sheffield South Yorkshire S3 9EF
Telephone number	0114 2760472
Fax number	0114 2784730

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Nine out of ten pupils at this average-sized, inner-city school are from minority ethnic families, the largest groups being Pakistani and Somali. Most speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very high. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. More pupils than is typical join and leave the school at other than the usual times. There has been considerable upheaval in staffing over the past two years, with 19 teachers joining the school during this period. A new headteacher started six months ago.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.

The school has had some major barriers to overcome since the previous inspection in 2004. The most significant has been the disruption to pupils' learning caused by a very large number of staffing changes. Standards and pupils' progress have suffered. The new, but very experienced, headteacher has quickly established an effective working partnership with the deputy headteacher and, with the support of all staff, is tackling the legacy of underachievement with determination. A policy of 'no excuses' has been agreed resulting in a secure platform on which to build.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Pastoral support is a strength and makes a significant contribution to pupils' good personal development. A large network of staff provides specialist and sensitive support for pupils' very diverse range of needs. This support helps pupils feel secure and better able to learn. Pupils enjoy school, feel valued, have good relationships with each other and positive attitudes towards their work. Academic support and guidance has been strengthened. The assessment of pupils' progress is more accurate and challenging targets are set for pupils in literacy and numeracy.

Children enter school with skills that are much lower than expected, largely due to the difficulty experienced by most in speaking or understanding English. The provision for the large number of pupils who have English as an additional language is very well organised, helping most to learn English quickly, but pupils' overall progress is inadequate. By the end of Year 6, standards remain very low in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' achievement is inadequate. In 2007, only a very small number of pupils attained above average standards in any of these subjects: skills in writing and mathematics are particularly weak.

Despite the discontinuity of staffing, the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. The recent improvements in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy and some exciting, stimulating activities are beginning to help pupils to make better progress. Pupils' involvement in helping to create their own curriculum is a positive innovation. However, teachers do not always match the work closely enough to pupils' needs. More able pupils are sometimes given tasks that are too easy for them, while others are given tasks that are much too hard to complete successfully. Nevertheless, early signs of improvement are evident in the school's assessments of current progress for each year group. The targets for Year 6 pupils are much higher than for those who left in 2007 with 25% more pupils expected to reach the level typical for their age.

All staff have clearly defined responsibilities, although many are still settling in to their management roles. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher there have been significant improvements and leadership and management are now satisfactory. There is a good team spirit amongst staff and their involvement in an intensive support programme with the local authority is bringing a sharper focus to the work to raise standards. There are clear signs that

collective efforts are beginning to make a difference. Although the staffing turbulence means that there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection, the impact of recent developments demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Nursery and Reception children work together in a well-planned unit which provides many interesting opportunities for activities both led by staff and chosen by the children themselves. Children enjoy these activities and find learning fun. Positive relationships make children feel secure and happy. They often concentrate on a task for long periods of time. All activities are planned with a clear purpose, aimed at promoting learning, but there is not always sufficient challenge for more able children. Teachers join in children's role play and use the opportunity to initiate discussion, to develop language skills, broaden children's experiences and strengthen their understanding. However, teachers do not always focus sharply enough on the precise skills the children are trying to develop. Good use is made of the outdoor areas to promote a broad range of learning. All staff make a contribution to assessing and monitoring children's progress. This is particularly effective for the development of communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills for older children but is more variable for younger ones. Children make satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage overall, although standards remain well below national expectations by the time they leave the reception year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that tasks are closely matched to the differing needs of pupils to accelerate their progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Until recently, the very high turnover of staff contributed to pupils' poor progress because it led to inconsistencies in tackling underachievement, especially for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There was a small improvement in 2007 in the Key Stage 1 assessment results in writing and mathematics, although there was a slight drop in reading. Although there was also a slight increase in results in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, standards remained very low. Standards in writing and mathematics are especially weak. Following the appointment of the new headteacher and greater stability in staffing, there are now signs of improved progress for all pupils but there has not been time for this to show in test results. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from well-organised support but they, like most other pupils, underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' above average attendance is a reflection of their enjoyment of school. They feel part of a caring family. All are polite and considerate towards each other. They believe they are safe and free from bullying, helped by the close relationship the school has with their parents. 'Staff work so well with pupils' was typical of comments by parents. Most pupils behave well. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are effectively supported by the school inclusion team and this limits disruption to their own and others' learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social

and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and world religions. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school community through the school council, but this is led by staff rather than by pupils, limiting the opportunity for pupils to develop independence and responsibility. Pupils successfully raise funds for several charities and are involved in religious and other community events. Although pupils leave school with positive attitudes to learning and sound computer skills, the development of skills for their future economic well-being is significantly restricted by their low standards in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils are learning satisfactorily because teaching is now satisfactory. Learning has inevitably been adversely affected by past disruption to staffing. New staff have been well supported by external consultants from the local authority in an effort to improve the quality of teaching. Initiatives are helping to make teaching more effective, particularly in ensuring that planning takes account of the different ability levels within a class and that the purpose of lessons is clear to staff and pupils. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent which limits pupils' learning across the school. In the best lessons, pupils are provided with tasks that are challenging and interesting. Teachers make good use of modern technology, such as the new interactive electronic whiteboards and laptop computers, to enhance pupils' learning. Teaching assistants support pupils well, with bi-lingual staff providing effective support for those learning to speak English. Higher attaining pupils do not learn as well as they should when their work is not sufficiently challenging. Other pupils are sometimes not sure how to achieve what is expected of them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Some important steps have been taken to improve the curriculum. Through a pilot project pupils are helping to design their own curriculum and the whole school is excited by this innovation. There is a strong focus on developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and science. Links between the different subjects are beginning to be made to increase relevance for pupils. There are French, Spanish, Urdu and Somali lessons. Some activities, however, are not sufficiently creative or imaginative to hold pupils' interest and some are much too easy for the more able. The curriculum is successfully enhanced with an interesting range of visits, visitors and out of school activities including some unusual ones such as the Dr Who club. Many of these are held at lunchtime so that children are able to attend the mosque school in the evening. Pupils' personal development is well promoted.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All aspects of care, guidance and support, including those for safeguarding pupils, are good. They are strengthened by links with the community, the local church and a range of outside agencies. Adults have overlapping responsibilities to ensure that those pupils with acute learning needs are well supported. Staff tackle their responsibilities enthusiastically and their efforts have successfully improved pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance. As a result, the staff

are now concentrating on forestalling problems. The inclusion team organises a wide range of support programmes for aspects such as anger management and raising self-esteem. The learning mentor concentrates on supporting those pupils who are experiencing particular difficulties with learning. The behaviour intervention worker is now focussing on consolidating good behaviour rather than responding to negative incidents. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils and these targets are reviewed termly. In addition, the systems to track pupils' progress have been fine tuned so well that the school is spotting underachievement and taking steps to deal with it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Following the period of extreme staff turbulence, the headteacher has quickly raised staff morale and is working closely with the deputy headteacher to provide a clear and shared sense of educational direction. The establishment of a strategic leadership team and good lines of communication means staff are feeling increasingly valued and empowered. Hence they are committed to ensuring the school improves. School improvement planning, which is sharply focused on issues arising from the close monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' progress, identifies appropriate priorities for development and gives all staff a strong sense of purpose. However, it is very early days and, although there are some encouraging signs, the school recognises that there is a long way to go to ensure all pupils make the progress expected of them. The governing body has overhauled its structure significantly so that it gathers and shares information about school improvement, and challenges and supports the school more effectively. Through the new chair of governors, the school has successfully sought to recruit governors who are representative of the community and who bring specialist knowledge and expertise. The few parents who returned the questionnaire expressing their views of the school are very supportive of it.

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?	4
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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	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	4

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?	2

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	4
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?	Yes

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for talking to us during the inspection and for being so friendly and helpful.

We judge that your school is doing well in some areas and not so well in others. It needs a lot of work to make some things better. We have given it a 'Notice to Improve'. Another inspector will visit you again in about six to eight months to see if things are improving.

There are some good things about your school. We were pleased to see how well children in the Nursery and Reception Unit worked together. You enjoy school, behave well and attend regularly. We can see why you like school so much. The staff look after you very well, especially those of you who are finding it hard to learn English.

We have asked the school to try and make sure all lessons are interesting and to give you work that helps all of you learn well. For those of you who find learning quite easy, this means giving you work that makes you think really hard. For others it means giving you work that isn't too hard or making sure it is explained well so you understand what to do. We are sure you will enjoy the challenge.

Your headteacher, governors and staff are all working hard and have plans firmly in place to make school more enjoyable and effective for all of you. We have asked them to concentrate on improving the standards you reach and the progress you make in English, mathematics and science. We think it is a great idea to let you help to plan what you are going to learn.

Thank you again, for helping us with this inspection. I hope that you will carry on trying your hardest to do even better in your lessons.