

# Pelsall Village School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104214
<b>Local Authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	323990
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	3
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Broadstock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Clark
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Old Town Lane Pelsall Walsall WS3 4NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 682073
<b>Fax number</b>	01922 682677

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This slightly above average sized primary is the oldest school in Pelsall, occupying its present location since 1916. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Just over 5% of the pupils are from Traveller communities. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A relatively large proportion of pupils join the school partway through their education.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage the school provides part-time education for 26 three-year-olds in its Nursery. The vast majority of Nursery children transfer into the single Reception class.

The school has an after-school and breakfast club called Pelsall Pirates for children aged four to 11, managed by the governing body. Pelsall Pirates also operates during most school holidays and offers 'wrap-around' places for eight Nursery-aged children.

Since 2007 the school has gained a Healthy School Award, Financial Management Standard in Schools and the status of being a Black Country Creative Partnership Enquiry School. An Activemark award was regained in 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is improving rapidly and has a number of outstanding features. The most notable strengths are: excellent leadership and management by the headteacher; rising standards and achievement; improved teaching; pupils' excellent behaviour; and an outstandingly innovative curriculum which provides memorable learning experiences. In the light of the considerable improvements made since the last inspection, the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body are very ambitious and have skilfully and effectively eradicated the financial deficit, gaps in working processes, low staff morale and declining parent confidence, which they inherited in September 2006. Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the school's performance, which is based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures and highly accurate tracking of pupils' achievement. However, whilst many teachers make effective use of this detailed assessment information, it is not used consistently enough in some cases to accelerate pupils' progress. The quality of teachers' marking also varies and they do not always make pupils aware of the next steps in their learning.

Pupils' achievement, although it varies throughout the school, is good overall. Children's attainment on entry is below national expectations, especially in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to good teaching and most children attain the expected standards on entry to Year 1. Pupils' progress varies in the rest of the school, but with accelerated progress currently in Key Stage 1 and in upper Key Stage 2. In a very small minority of lessons, pace is slow, work is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities and teachers' questions do not probe learners' knowledge and understanding sufficiently. Senior leaders are not complacent and continue to work relentlessly to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Over the last three years, with a belief that enjoyment should be at the heart of pupils' learning, senior leaders and staff have successfully transformed curriculum planning and delivery. Outstanding curriculum planning skilfully encourages creativity, helps pupils develop a range of personal, social and emotional skills essential to their health and well-being and instills a love of learning. Pupils build meaningful links between subjects and speak proudly of their many achievements in music, sport and art. Not surprisingly, standards are rising rapidly and in 2008, Year 6 attained above average standards in mathematics and science, with an above average proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Standards are average overall at the end of Year 6, which represents good achievement, especially for the above average number of pupils with learning difficulties. Standards in writing are slightly lower than in other subjects, particularly in relation to spelling and sentence construction, and senior leaders and staff have identified this as the next area to improve.

A key reason for the pupils' good personal development and excellent behaviour is the outstanding pastoral care. Staff know pupils and families very well. Links with parents are excellent, many of whom comment on the way the 'school has changed and improved immensely over the last three years due to the huge commitment and dedication of the headteacher and her excellent staff'. Outstanding partnerships with external professionals provide additional support to all pupils. The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body form an impressive team whose various talents combine seamlessly to successfully complete the turbulent journey they have experienced over the last three years. Policies, effective routines and practices have

been swiftly established. However, leaders do not always formally record the actions they have taken to secure raised achievement in their subject areas, and the senior management team is aware of the need to address this concern. Senior leaders and governors have successfully raised parents' and the local community's perception of the school. Consequently, it is becoming a very popular choice of school.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The team spirit amongst the Nursery and Reception staff is good. They are all committed to providing high-quality education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Learning is based on an initiative called 'Success for All', which engages Nursery and Reception children in focused literacy and problem-solving activities. Consequently, the strong emphasis on the development of basic skills, such as letters and sounds, helps children's early reading and writing skills develop well. However, work sampling reveals that children are not always forming individual letters in the correct way. Staff are aware of the need to improve this area. Interesting role-play areas and enthusiastic adults, acting as play partners, enhance children's language skills effectively. Teaching is good and staff keep detailed records of children's progress to plan effectively the next steps in children's learning. The curriculum addresses all the areas of learning and the balance is satisfactory between those activities led by the staff and those that children choose for themselves. Children require more chances to investigate and explore both indoors and outdoors and staff correctly identify that the outdoor learning areas require improving to provide more interesting and inviting activities. From below average starting levels expected for children of this age, all children make good progress and most attain within the typically expected standards in all the areas of learning at the start of Year 1. An excellent partnership is quickly established with parents because the care and attention given to children's welfare is good. Parents and pupils also appreciate and speak highly of the excellent quality of care provided by the friendly, enthusiastic breakfast and after-school team who run Pelsall Pirates. The coordinator plans interesting activities such as preparing picnics, creating attractive butterflies and producing Punch and Judy shows which successfully cater for the various ages of pupils who attend. Good leadership and management are characterised by a shared sense of purpose, effective teamwork, good-quality policies and a constant drive to improve all aspects of the provision.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing, particularly with regards to pupils' spelling and the way they construct sentences.
- Make sure all leaders formally record actions taken to raise standards and achievement in their subjects and areas.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Test results and assessments indicate that all pupils make good progress and achieve well in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average overall and standards are above average in science, reading and mathematics at the higher Level 5. Good inclusion provision means that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive carefully planned support with their learning and behaviour. Pupils from

Traveller backgrounds also achieve well because of effective support. They achieve much higher standards than other Traveller pupils nationally, indicating at least good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say they like school very much, get on well with their friends and feel the staff are kind and caring. This enjoyment is reflected in rising attendance levels, which are now average. Behaviour is excellent and dramatically improved since the last inspection, where incidents of bullying were noted. Pupils show enthusiasm and perseverance in lessons. They say they feel very safe in school and are extremely confident in expressing worries with all staff and especially, they say, with the learning mentor. For instance, senior leaders took swift action when pupils voiced concerns about parents swearing at the school gate. Pupils also demonstrate a good knowledge and respect for fellow pupils and people, cultures and beliefs beyond their own. They confidently decide which charities to support, such as a recent initiative to send old school furniture to a school in The Gambia. Their awareness of keeping fit and of healthy eating is good. They enjoy daily nutritious school lunches with lots of salads and fresh fruit and a wide range of extra-curricular sports such as cheerleading, netball, cricket and football. A group of Year 3 and 4 pupils display improving coordination as a result of daily neuro-physiological exercises. All pupils also enjoy lunchtime sports activities organised by trained pupil play leaders. Pupils diligently carry out a variety of tasks and responsibilities around the school; they enjoy being school councillors and being consulted on many aspects of school life. For example, Year 6 pupils requested to learn Bhangra dances as part of a Hollywood/Bollywood topic. The school's new motto – 'Every child, every chance, every day' – is at the heart of its work and is reflected in a pupil's comment, 'This is a perfect school for learning and having fun. Everyone matters here.' Pupils leave school with sound academic skills and good personal qualities in preparation for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers and support staff work well together to provide interesting learning environments and classrooms contain many visual prompts and resources to aid learning. Relationships are warm and many staff make good use of humour to interest and engage all pupils. Teachers also use positive comments to manage behaviour well so there is normally a purposeful working ethos. Pupils say they particularly like lessons that are practical so they can be actively involved in their learning. However, in a small minority of lessons pupils spend too long sitting and listening. In addition, some teachers are more skilled at matching work to pupils' abilities and encouraging pupils to explain their thinking and are not content with just single-word answers. Where teaching is good or better it is because teachers have high expectations, excellent subject knowledge and use assessment information skilfully to accelerate pupils' learning. Teachers make expectations of what the pupils need to learn by the end of the lesson particularly clear. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated, hard working and engaged by energetic, inspiring teaching.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

In 2007, after careful research and in consultation with staff and pupils, senior leaders successfully redesigned the curriculum to make learning more creative, interesting and meaningful. Standards have risen considerably in reading and mathematics as a direct consequence of this improved provision. French is taught to all Key Stage 2 pupils who show considerable expertise in speaking another language. Throughout the year, a wide range of visits and visitors and after-school clubs inspire pupils and enhance the curriculum. Visits include excursions to Leicester Space Centre and the House of Commons and weekends in Bryntysilio. Pupils develop listening, concentration, musical and collaborative skills in a Rockit Music project led by staff from a local arts centre. Their recent achievement in a national music examination, where they gained a distinction, was outstanding. In addition, 40 pupils sing in the school choir and perform regularly in assemblies and at school and local events. Pupils describe their delight in participating in activities they have requested to learn about themselves. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils really enjoyed making stunning butterflies, birds and branches from recycled materials as part of a global gardens project. Year 3 and 4 pupils produced a fantastic clay wall mural based on an Aztec theme. Year 5 and 6 pupils described their fascination and newly acquired knowledge when they made an animated film depicting the story of Beowulf. Pupils also learn about community cohesion through studying aspects of Traveller life, African drumming days and visits to many different places of worship. Many pupils especially enjoy competing with other pupils all over the world in an on-line 'mathletics' program which has considerably improved their attainment in mathematics.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides excellent pastoral care and works very effectively to remove barriers to learning. For instance, the learning mentor is highly effective in assisting pupils with emotional and social needs to work alongside others. She provides valuable support to families as well. The school has established excellent links with parents to extend pupils' well-being and enhance community cohesion on a local basis. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements fully met requirements. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure pupils receive support when it is needed. For instance, through working closely with a consultant teacher, staff ensure that the specific needs of Traveller pupils are met, which enables them to achieve well in all aspects of their learning. Senior leaders effectively and accurately track pupils' academic achievements. Pupils know their learning targets in literacy and numeracy. However, teachers' marking varies and does not always inform pupils about how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is an excellent leader and working in close collaboration with her senior leaders has a very clear vision and relentlessly drives forward school improvement with steely determination and vigour. Together with the effective governing body, they have succeeded in overcoming considerable obstacles since the last inspection. They have developed an ethos of high expectations for all staff and pupils which has successfully raised standards and improved pupils' behaviour. They have taken effective actions to improve the teaching of mathematics

and reading, and know standards in writing are still not high enough. Because of the deficit budget which senior leaders inherited, and the fact that over half of the staff were newly qualified teachers in 2007, senior leaders have had to lead most of the subject areas themselves. Middle managers are now developing and senior staff recognise the importance of recording actions taken to raise pupils' achievement in all subjects and areas to inform whole-school development. The experienced and talented governing body effectively supports the school and plays a key role in questioning, challenging and monitoring the school's performance.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, especially in terms of its school and local communities. Pupils have a good understanding of the wider global community through developing links with children in a Gambian school. The relatively weaker area is pupils' knowledge and understanding of being part of the United Kingdom community.



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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

9 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pelsall Village School, Walsall, WS3 4NJ

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us. You are all polite and friendly and are a real credit to your school. Thank you to our tour guides, who did a brilliant job of showing us around. We especially enjoyed watching your Rockit Music and Year 5 and 6's brilliant playing of 'Halleluiah'.

We agree with your headteacher and your parents that you go to a good school, which has several outstanding features. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes do well and have a happy start to their school life. Teaching in the rest of the school is good, and you rightly say that staff make learning enjoyable so that you reach at least average standards in your work. Some of the Year 6 pupils reach higher standards in reading, mathematics and science. Like you and your parents, we think you have an excellent curriculum and agree with the pupil who told us, 'There is nothing we can't do here.'

You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. You are exceptionally well cared for at school and you receive good support in your learning and with your personal development. Pelsall Pirates staff take excellent care of children before and after school and in the holidays. Another strength, is the impressive way in which the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body lead the school and make sure it is a welcoming and happy place. You yourselves are another huge strength with your excellent behaviour, your hard work and your good contribution to school life and in the kind way in which you respect and care for each other.

The headteacher and senior leaders have many excellent ideas to make the school even better. We agree with all their plans and feel it would be helpful if teachers made sure you all do as well as you can in writing, especially with your spelling and the way you construct sentences. It would also be helpful if staff wrote down all the things they are doing to make sure you all do as well as you can in every subject. The headteacher and staff want the school to continue to improve. Having met you we are sure you will play your part as well by continuing to work hard and by keeping up your excellent standards of behaviour.

On behalf of the other inspectors, I wish you every success in the future. Joyce Cox Lead inspector