

Pilsley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112605
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325643
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Angela Lowe
Headteacher	Mr David West
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 June 2006
School address	Station Road Pilsley Chesterfield Derbyshire S45 8EU
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and groups of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school data, governing body minutes, various policies including those for safeguarding and anti-bullying, and 76 parental questionnaires

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the use of assessment and challenging expectations in lessons to ensure all high attainers were making the same progress as other groups
- the quality of care, guidance and support
- the impact of governance on the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Pilsley Primary is a slightly smaller than average primary school. Nearly all pupils are of White British backgrounds with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. There are 33 children aged three to four years who attend the nursery part-time and 23 children in Reception. Attainment when children start school is close to expectations in some areas of learning; it is below that expected for their ages in language and communication skills, calculation and personal, social and emotional development. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools Standard, Sportsmark, the International Schools award, the ECO Skills Silver award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Derbyshire Anti-bullying Commitment award. The school is also part of the Excellence in Cities Cluster and the Behaviour Improvement Programme. A privately run after school club known as the Pilsley Pirates makes use of the school's sports hall after school.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education and outstanding care guidance and support for its pupils. Pupils' make good progress from relatively low starting points, attaining standards above national averages by the end of Year 6. Historically pupils' progress is slower in Years 3 and 4 because expectations are not always high enough and assessment is not used consistently well to challenge pupils in their learning.

Good leadership and management have led to significant development since the last inspection. All areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been effectively addressed. There have been notable improvements in aspects of the schools' work, including, achievement, teaching, assessment, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are now detailed and excellent systems in place to track pupils' progress. Outstanding provision for improving behaviour has led to significant improvements in pupils' behaviour, which is now good.

The school is aware that the provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is limited. Plans are already in place to enhance the outdoor area, along with improvements to the school buildings. Governors have an excellent relationship with staff, parents and pupils, listening carefully to their views. However, they do not always take sufficient action to address parental concerns. They challenge the work of the school at meetings, but do not gain a good enough understanding of the school's work through first hand observation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the role of the governing body to become more fully involved in determining the school's strategic direction by:
 - establishing a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, including through first hand experience
 - taking greater account of the views of parents.
- Work closely with the local authority to ensure that the plans for improving the quality of the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are fully implemented within the agreed time frame.

- Raise standards of attainment, especially in Years 3 and 4, by
 - increasing the level of challenge in lessons
 - ensuring pupils receive consistent feedback on the progress they are making.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' good behaviour, particularly in lessons, enables them to focus on learning and make good progress. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress, with some achieving average standards by the end of Year 6 as a result of the good support they receive. The very few most vulnerable pupils rapidly gain confidence as learners and make outstanding progress. In nearly all lessons the vast majority of pupils, including the most able, learn effectively and make good progress because good use is made of assessment to match tasks to their different abilities. Pupils also attain high standards in subjects such as information communication technology (ICT) and physical education.

Pupils make a good contribution to their local community through the work of the school council and eco council. Strong links with two Spanish schools reflect the good contribution the pupils make to the global community. Pupils also raised funds and corresponded with pupils in their linked school in Malawi, helping them to develop a greater understanding of the economic plight, traditions and culture of the Malawi people. As a result of their good progress and learning, and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Excellent relationships, effective teamwork with teaching assistants and brisk pace in nearly all lessons keeps pupils focused and engaged in their activities. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and understanding of their pupils to plan tasks which are matched well to the individual pupils. Consequently, more able learners are challenged and tasks are broken down into smaller steps for pupils who find learning difficult. Good use of well chosen resources, including ICT, with interesting and varied activities makes learning enjoyable. Teachers' skilled use of questioning ensures that all pupils understand what they are learning. Pupils who find learning difficult are effectively guided and supported so that they learn as well as others. Assessment is used well and any underperformance is quickly identified. Effective strategies are put in place to support these pupils. Detailed and ongoing assessment is used to plan and review individual education programmes for those pupils who find learning difficult. Marking is usually good and helps to move learning forward.

The good curriculum is enriched through highly effective sports partnerships and links with other schools. The strong emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy, personal social and health education, and citizenship has a positive impact on enjoyment, achievement and pupils' good spiritual moral social and cultural development. Well conceived theme weeks help pupils to understand and appreciate diversity within the national and global communities. Outstanding care guidance and support ensures that the few vulnerable pupils are served well and that behaviour rapidly improves as pupils settle into school. Excellent relationships enable pupils to show outstanding confidence in the staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides strong leadership. As a result, all staff have the determination, ambition and drive to continually improve. The quality of teaching is monitored effectively and the school has an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. Good arrangements for safeguarding are in place and are carefully monitored. Appropriate training for staff and thorough checks on the suitability of staff are in line with requirements. Pupils of different abilities and aptitudes enjoy full access to the curriculum ensuring equality of opportunity. The school promotes community cohesion well, through effective links with parents, outside agencies, and the local, national and international communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has strengthened the links between the school and home, enabling children to settle quickly into routines and to feel safe. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development and in their communication skills. Children develop their skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and number through a range of well chosen practical activities. Children have good access to computers to develop their skills in ICT. The indoor accommodation provides an environment that enables children to develop their ideas and learn through a range of worthwhile experiences such as role play in the optician's surgery. Although children have ready access to the outdoor area, it does not provide the same breadth of opportunities for learning because it is rather bleak and stark. Nevertheless, the children and staff make the most of what is available and the quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide a good balance between directed activities and those chosen by the children. Systems for recording attainment and tracking progress are very effective. Information is used accurately to match tasks to children's abilities and needs. Consequently they make good progress towards meeting the expectations for their ages and many are in line to exceed them.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents who discussed the school’s work with inspectors and the high number of parents who returned their questionnaires praise all aspects of the school’s work. They highlighted the very effective procedures to improve behaviour, excellent relationships, very good leadership of the headteacher and good teaching which leads to good progress. A few parents were concerned that not all parents understood the phonics work or calculations given to pupils. However, the vast majority of parents were pleased with the information from the school. A very small number of parents were concerned about the lack of homework. The inspection found that, despite occasional lapses, homework is nearly always set to extend learning. A few parents do not agree with having mixed year group classes. Inspectors found that the school manages these classes well through good planning by teachers and the close matching of tasks to different pupils.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pilsley Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 145 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	61	15		

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



19 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pilsley School, Chesterfield, S45 8EU,

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school recently and for telling us how good your school is. I really enjoyed meeting you and seeing how hard you are working. We agree with you that you go to a good school and here are some more things we found out about it. Your behaviour is good and you focus on learning new things in lessons nearly all the time. This helps you to make good progress. Teaching is good and you say that teachers always help you when you get stuck. They know how well you are doing and nearly always check your work so they can help you to learn. There are many good activities and opportunities for learning different things in school, especially in sports where you exercise well and stay healthy, as well as the school trips and after school clubs. All staff provide excellent care guidance and support for you so that you settle into school, feel safe and enjoy all the school offers. You make a good contribution to your local community through the work of your school council and eco council. You also help the less fortunate children in Malawi through your fund raising. Mr West, with the support of his staff, runs your school well and is continually looking at ways to improve it even more. I have suggested some things to help him.

- Governors should visit your school more to find out for themselves how you are all doing, why you are doing so well and what might need to be done to help you do even better.
- The school must work with the local authority to make sure the outdoor area for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is improved.
- The teachers should help you do even better by providing even more challenging work in lessons and always showing you how well you are doing and how you can do better.

Keep trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Lead inspector

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