

# Pocklington Community Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117863
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Riding of Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326703
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Scott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ann Hodgson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Carole Fulstow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	65 Kirkland Street Pocklington York East Riding of Yorkshire YO42 2BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01759 302224
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large junior school serves the town of Pocklington, where socio-economic conditions are broadly average. The eligibility for free school meals is quite low. The pupil population is fairly stable, and almost all pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school is currently celebrating its centenary year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school has made satisfactory progress in recent years, having overcome some drawbacks. The unavoidable absence of the headteacher, other staffing issues and a budget deficit have all limited the school's development to some extent. Nevertheless, the school is a happy, productive place where pupils enjoy their learning. The good quality of care ensures that pupils feel secure and valued, and gain self-confidence. Parents are supportive of the school and feel their children gain good benefits. Their children leave school 'well mannered, well adjusted and well educated', said one, echoing others.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards by Year 6 are usually average, but vary slightly. Results of national tests show performance in mathematics was, for example, above average in 2007. Early indications are that pupils' performance was similar in 2008, although not so successful in mathematics. Nevertheless, there are strong indications that pupils in the current Year 6 are doing better. There are some differences between the performances of groups of pupils because of inconsistencies in teaching, but there is no pattern of underachievement. The school responds quickly to such issues. For example, it has improved support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who were not all achieving well enough last year so that they now make satisfactory progress.

Teaching is essentially satisfactory with some that is good. The most effective lessons have a lively atmosphere, a snappy pace and good expectations of all pupils. Although the content of the curriculum includes a variety of ideas teachers do not engage their pupils with interesting activities or put learning in practical situations. Resources are sometimes mundane or inappropriate for the learning. Teachers are increasingly aware of pupils' progress through good tracking systems, but work is not routinely matched enough to pupils' capabilities. Teachers' guidance for pupils is satisfactory but inconsistent. On occasions, it gives specific, helpful advice; at other times, it is terse or comprises undue praise for modest efforts. The curriculum overall is satisfactory; the school is rightly keen to enrich it to boost pupils' interest and their standards.

Pupils respond well to the school's care and their personal development is good. Behaviour is good, and most really enjoy their learning, only switching off when lessons are uninspiring. They look after one another thoughtfully and get on well; paired activity in class is lively and business-like. They are responsible around school and in leading a healthy lifestyle. Attendance is usually good. The school has done well to develop pupils' community spirit in the school and the locality, but the development of national and international understanding is less well developed.

The headteacher, well supported by governors and the local authority, has tackled some barriers to progress well. For example, the budget deficit has been reduced drastically in the past year. The school recognises that large class sizes are still a concern for parents, although funding limits the number of options available to improve this. Its priorities are mostly the right ones, but the pace of change is not swift enough because action plans are not rooted in skilful analyses and are quite complex. Senior leaders and governors do not check the school's progress rigorously enough. However, there are distinct signs of improvement that show promise for the future.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by providing work that fully challenges pupils of all abilities.
- Ensure a greater pace to the school's improvement by more critical analysis of known weaknesses, more streamlined plans and more rigorous monitoring by all levels of management.
- Establish a more creative curriculum that will motivate pupils more, broaden their horizons of cultures other than their own and strengthen their basic skills.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

The achievement of all pupils is satisfactory and standards are average. When they enter Year 3, pupils' attainment tends to be above average but this varies from year to year. In 2008, for example, the school's assessment indicates that it was closer to average. Results of national tests in Year 6 slipped in 2006 but recovered in 2007 to average levels in English and science; results in mathematics were above average. Early indications are that pupils' performance in 2008 was similar, not better partly because of the number of pupils who started and left the school during the year and a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this age group.

There are some disparities in the progress made between groups of pupils. For example, in 2007 some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did not achieve well, and girls did better than boys in English. In 2008, more able pupils fared less well than others in mathematics and science. This is because the quality of teaching varies; some teaching in the past has not been effective enough, a situation now largely resolved. The school's records show that pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach higher standards in 2009.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils develop well as individuals. Their good attendance clearly shows how much they enjoy school. They are mostly attentive in lessons and are keen to learn new things. They participate well in activities at lunchtime and after school. Some become restless if lessons are not especially interesting. Overall, they behave well and, despite occasional lapses, relationships are generally good. They look after one another without fuss, and the playground is a lively but safe place. They are adopting a sensible approach to a healthy lifestyle; good quality school lunches help them make informed choices in their diet. Many pupils respond well to the opportunity to take responsibilities, for example, as playground buddies, assembly and resources monitors. School council members are enthusiastic about their role, and enjoy helping and representing other pupils. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community. The many activities they carry out include working with a local hospital to provide Christmas gifts for patients on the children's ward, designing a flower bed for the Pocklington in Bloom competition, performing for elderly persons in a local care home and contributing gifts for the harvest festival.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Assemblies motivate pupils, so they readily reflect on issues and gain confidence in expressing themselves. They certainly gave a rousing and tuneful rendition of 'The Conker Song' in an assembly. Cultural development is satisfactory, but pupils are not sufficiently aware of the diversity of the world beyond Pocklington. Pupils' basic skills show that their preparation for their next phase of education is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. In the better lessons, relationships are good, learning objectives are clear and the pace is good. Teachers make good use of assessment to match their expectations to pupils' capabilities. Effective questioning develops pupils' thinking and keeps them motivated. For example, Year 6 pupils inspired by a haunted house in a literacy lesson, were moved to give a vivid description of its atmosphere. Good learning was evident.

However, lessons are not consistently good. In these lessons, progress is at best satisfactory because the tasks are not sufficiently challenging for all pupils. Whole-class sessions are often lively but sometimes last too long; the subject matter does not always stimulate pupils. As a result, their interest wanes and the pace of learning slows down. In the weakest lessons, relationships between pupils and staff do not foster positive attitudes towards learning. Marking is satisfactory, good in some cases, but it lacks consistency.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has concentrated particularly on English, mathematics and science, but this has meant that other subjects have not been promoted sufficiently well. It is keen to do so through a more creative curriculum to allow pupils more scope to apply their learning in diverse contexts. Music is a strength of the school. For example, all Year 4 pupils learn a stringed instrument; the active choir, including a large group of pupils from Years 5 and 6, is shortly to perform in the Royal Albert Hall. Added enrichment through educational visits and other activities enhances learning. For example, Year 3 pupils used a visit to a sculpture park to plan a new sculpture for the school.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Sensitive support in lessons boosts their confidence but is not sufficient for them to make good progress in their learning. New leadership in this area is already making some good changes. Provision for pupils' personal and social education and the nurturing programme develop pupils' self-esteem and social awareness well.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of its pupils. Staff are well aware of vulnerable groups and pupils' individual needs, and work effectively with parents and external agencies to address them. Good levels of attendance are a testament to this. Procedures to safeguard pupils are fully in place and effectively managed. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and secure, and parents

are appreciative. 'There has never been a day when my daughter hasn't wanted to go to school', wrote one.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Good systems track pupils' progress and these are beginning to inform teachers where to target support. However, as these systems are in their infancy, they have not yet had a significant impact on standards. New individual targets have given pupils a sharper focus for their learning, especially in literacy, but teachers do not always refer well enough to them in lessons or when marking pupils' work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear and appropriate vision for the school. She has created a caring and positive atmosphere in the school that pupils, staff and parents appreciate and respond to. Recent staff appointments and new systems are beginning to have a positive impact. Staff morale is good. There is a cohesion and a willingness to learn among staff, especially the new management team.

The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate. School leaders understand its strengths and weaknesses, and have produced some improvements, for example, in attendance. However, there has not been sufficient impetus to move the school forward decisively. Analyses of the provision and test results are carried out but are not as incisive as they could be; as a result, action plans are not finely focused enough. Furthermore, the senior leadership team and governors do not check regularly enough on the outcomes of their actions to see if their plans are effective.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and are developing their subject links with the school. The school is beginning to move forward, having mainly overcome various setbacks, especially its financial constraints. There are strengths in its care and in pupils' personal development, and there are signs of improving standards. Therefore, it has sufficient capacity to improve further and offers satisfactory value for money.

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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

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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	2
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	2
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**

24 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pocklington Community Junior School, East Riding of Yorkshire, YO42 2BX

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. Mrs Havard, Mr Lowes and I enjoyed our time at your school. Your comments really helped us to get to know your school.

We feel that your school gives you a satisfactory education. The standards of your work and the progress you make are as they should be for pupils of your age. Some of the work you are expected to do is stimulating and challenging. In these lessons you concentrate intently, work hard and learn well. Other lessons hold less interest for you and the work does not always expect the best from you. We would like the school to make sure that your lessons are routinely interesting and that all your work is closely matched to your individual abilities. We believe that you would find this rewarding and be motivated to make better progress.

Your personal development is good because staff are caring and are good role- models. Your behaviour is good and you know that, if problems arise, staff will quickly deal with it. Therefore, you are right to feel safe in school. You also develop good self-confidence and social skills which will stand you in good stead for the future. You are leading an increasingly healthy lifestyle and you support the school's development well through the school council. You have some awareness of the outside world but are not aware enough of the many different cultures in modern Britain and overseas.

You headteacher and governors have done a good job in overcoming a few problems in developing your school. They have been working hard to improve the school and there are signs that standards are beginning to rise. However, it is important for the school's improvement that all plans are carefully devised so that they have the maximum benefit for your academic and personal development. We have asked senior staff to keep a closer eye on how well such plans are going; I am sure that they will welcome your thoughts on how it is doing.

We wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott, Jean Harvard and Doug Lowes

Inspectors