

Pollyplatt Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120472
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327291
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Henry

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	101
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Boatman
Headteacher	Mr John Beaven
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Lane Scampton Lincoln Lincolnshire LN1 2TP
Telephone number	01522 730393
Fax number	01522 730393

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school situated on the Royal Air Force base at Scampton. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with half from military families and half from civilian families. Many live in accommodation on the base. Due to regular postings, many pupils stay at the school for less than two years, with others joining classes at various times throughout the year. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and those whose first language is not English is low. At the time of the inspection, the percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities was higher than the national average. Children enter school with abilities slightly below that expected, especially in reading, writing and number skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Due to improvements since its last inspection, this is now a good school which is led and managed well. The strong and effective leadership and management of the headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors, have been decisive in moving the school forward. This is a school that has a good awareness of its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher has accurately identified the need to further improve community cohesion by increasing pupils' knowledge of the diversity of different British communities. The school's track record of identifying and tackling any weaknesses indicates a good capacity to improve further. Parents and pupils rightly recognise and value the improvements made over time. One parent wrote 'Both my children have come on really well since arriving at the school. We are happy to know our third child will receive the excellent standard of learning the school offers'. The good attention given to pupils' personal and social education ensures that they understand how to stay healthy and safe. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting activities and the outdoor residential visits offered by the school. These enhance the good curriculum that is being improved further by the work that is in progress in developing themes that link different subjects. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. The school is very successful at settling and introducing pupils to the school, especially given the high level joining and leaving throughout the year. The caring ethos and good relationships throughout the school help to develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are well behaved, work well together and warmly welcome the pupils who join the school throughout the year. An effective school council contributes well to the school community through representing pupils' views and opinions. Pupils' involvement in their community is shown by their plan to grow vegetables and sell them at reduced prices to parents. Money raised will then be used to develop the school garden.

Good teaching results in pupils enjoying their lessons and playing an active part in their learning. Teachers plan in order to meet the needs of the different ages taught in the same classes and they assess pupils' progress regularly. However, while the quality of marking is consistent, pupils do not have enough opportunities to assess their own work and consider how they could improve further.

From slightly lower than expected starting points, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most enter Year 1 at the expected level for their age. Overall, pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 and those that remain in the school reach standards at least in line with the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and or disabilities are quickly identified at whatever stage they enter the school. As a result, they are effectively supported to meet their needs and make good progress. Pupils' progress in writing is often slower than in the development of their reading skills because of some weaknesses for example in spelling and vocabulary. Pupils make good progress overall across Key Stage 2 and the majority that remain constantly in the school attain above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards overall at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. They fluctuate from slightly above to slightly below the national average, mainly because of the small number of pupils taking the national tests and the constant movement of pupils in and out of the school. Results over time show that standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are higher than reading and writing. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics is lower than English and science. This is because pupils' ability to

interpret, investigate and solve mathematical problems, especially in word form, is a weakness across Key Stage 2.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are slightly below those expected, especially in reading, writing and number. They make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all children reach the expected goals in most areas of learning. The learning environment is pleasant, welcoming and friendly, with the welfare of the children a high priority. For example, when children arrive in the morning they put a happy or sad face on a tree allowing staff to respond appropriately to children's needs. Effective induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly in school and that good relationships are established with parents. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good, as shown by their good social interaction with their peers and adults. Teaching is good, with all staff working well together. Children's progress is effectively assessed on a regular basis and this assessment is used to inform further planning in the different areas of learning. The well-balanced curriculum uses themes that link both indoor and outdoor classrooms, with children acquiring new knowledge and skills through adult initiated and child led activities. For example, an opportunity to study the life cycle of a frog was taken when a child brought frogspawn into school. Provision is well led and managed and particular care and attention is given to children's transition into Year 1 through joint activities between classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing skills, especially their spelling, punctuation and use of vocabulary
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics across Key Stage 2 by developing their investigative skills, especially when solving word problems
- Enhance opportunities for pupils to increase their understanding of the different communities in the United Kingdom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

While standards are broadly average, pupils' achievement is good. Given their differing abilities, pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1. The high number of pupils entering and leaving the school and the small numbers taking the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 results in fluctuating standards. Results over time at the end of Year 2 show that standards in mathematics are higher than in reading and writing. Evidence from school data indicates that standards in 2009 will be slightly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils entering the school at different stages across Key Stage 2 make good progress, given their often-low starting points. In 2008, standards by the end of Year 6 were below the national average, especially in mathematics. Across Key Stage 2, pupils lack the ability to investigate and solve mathematical problems, especially when presented in word form. School data from 2009 assessments indicate that at the end of Year 6 standards have risen in mathematics, English and science to be above the national average. Nevertheless, across the school, some pupils' writing skills do not match their reading capabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are eager to come to school and enjoy their education, despite the regular changes in the school population. When asked about what school was like, one pupil commented 'Brilliant, this is the best school I've been to, and I've been to three!' Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good although the school has rightly identified the need to increase pupils' awareness of a culturally diverse British society. Pupils are respectful of each other's feelings, especially when supporting pupils who join the school at various stages throughout the year. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities such as becoming school council members and friends for younger children. Behaviour is good both in class and generally around the school. As a result, pupils feel safe in school, have positive attitudes to learning and work well with each other and their teachers. Those pupils who stay at the school until the end of Year 6 are well prepared for their future education. The school has achieved the Healthy School award, reflecting pupils' good understanding of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. This is enhanced through regular opportunities to participate in physical education and personal, social and health lessons. Attendance is in line with the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall standard of teaching is good, with teachers producing detailed planning and teaching that develops and re-inforces pupils' learning over time. This was evident in lessons where teachers were making effective use of drama, based on a novel from a popular children's author and a fairy story, to generate pupils' enthusiasm for their learning. Due to teachers clearly explaining the purpose and key features of lessons, pupils are able to review how successful they have been. The effective use of technology, such as the interactive whiteboards, engages pupils and motivates them in their learning. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils who find learning difficult. Teachers mark work in a regular and consistent way, giving pupils areas for improvement. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to assess their own written work in order to independently consider how to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The breadth and balance of the curriculum is reflected in the wide range of subject displays in classrooms and around the school. Enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors, the curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes while avoiding repetition. The transition from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1 is well managed through joint curriculum projects. These help ensure that children develop the confidence to move on to their next stage of education. The school is working towards developing a curriculum that links different subjects but this is not yet fully embedded. Where needed, a modified curriculum caters well for those pupils who find learning difficult, thus ensuring they make good progress. The wide range of sporting and creative extra-curricular activities has a high level of participation and effectively adds to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils who join the school other than at the usual times are made to feel very welcome both by fellow pupils and by members of staff. The school has established good links with outside agencies to support programmes for individual pupils where necessary. There is a strong commitment by staff to all aspects of pupils' health, welfare and safety. Child protection and safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are reviewed and updated regularly. Academic guidance is good. The school has an effective system for tracking pupils' progress that meets the challenge of a constantly changing pupil population. Pupils understand their targets. Teachers make effective use of these in their planning for mixed age classes and often refer to them during lessons. Pupils are not yet actively involved in assessing their own work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school very well. He has a strong focus on raising standards and is committed to ensuring that pupils do as well as they could during their often-limited time in the school. He has been instrumental in bringing about improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher is well supported by senior colleagues, each of whom has a wide variety of responsibilities due to the relatively small size of the school. Senior managers are involved in monitoring pupils' progress and in self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This self-evaluation is accurate and reflects the good progress made over the past three years. Due to effective self-evaluation, the school has precise targets for the future and good capacity for further improvement. Through an effective balance between support and challenge, the governors effectively hold the school accountable for its overall performance. Community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan to improve pupils' understanding of different cultures and communities is in place. However, progress is more advanced in the development of links with other schools locally and internationally than with the diversity of the wider national 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?	2
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 ¹ 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

¹Grade 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

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	3
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**

22 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pollyplatt Primary School, Scampton, LN1 2TP.

I am writing to thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed watching you work hard for your teachers in lessons. The headteacher and all the other staff help you to make good progress, look after you well and work hard to help you learn and enjoy school. The school gives you a good education and, by the time you leave, most of you reach standards that are expected or better. Here are some of the good things that I found out:

- You enjoy school and being with your friends
- You welcome and help new children who join the school
- You behave well and are keen to learn and to do your best
- You treat each other with respect and are always willing to help around school
- You enjoy taking part in the activities that the school offers.

To help make sure you do even better, I have asked teachers and other adults who look after you to do three things:

- To tell you more about what you can do to improve your writing.
- To help those of you in years 3 to 6 to better investigate and solve word problems in mathematics.
- To give you more opportunities to learn about the different people, and communities, in this country.

I wish everyone good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jim Henry

Lead Inspector