

The Pinchbeck East Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120550
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327307
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	295
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	Mrs Cherry Harpham
Headteacher	Mrs Pam Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fennell Road Pinchbeck Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 3RP

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2009
Inspection number	327307

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school serving a large rural village in Lincolnshire. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. The school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes, one of which also has some Year 1 pupils. The current interim headteacher is to be replaced by a permanent headteacher from April 2009. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Activemark for sport.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has shown significant improvement over the past year. The interim headteacher has been the driving force behind a number of key initiatives that have led to a significant improvement in a short time. With the effective support of the chair of governors and the deputy headteacher, she is building a well-focused team who share her determination to raise standards and ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. Standards are now broadly average in English, mathematics and science, although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in science and mathematics is not as high as it could be. Further work is needed to bring about the necessary improvements, particularly in quickening the rate of progress for the more able pupils and improving the consistency of teaching and learning.

Until recently, some pupils underachieved, particularly at Key Stage 2. This underachievement is being tackled successfully, so that pupils are now making satisfactory progress and reaching average standards overall. A key element of the school's success in raising standards is the staff's hard work to ensure that teaching is satisfactory and improving. Many of the teachers are developing their expertise well, and there is an increasing amount of good practice. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have risen. The level of challenge, especially for the more able, has increased accordingly, although there is further work needed in this area. Parents are pleased with recent improvements and make comments such as, 'The school has made good progress since the arrival of the new headteacher,' and, 'The school has been through turbulent times in recent years; however, we are confident that the school is united once more. There is subsequently a much happier feel to the school.' The school has good liaison with a range of other agencies, including the local authority, and the school is using their support well to bring about required improvements.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has rightly prioritised the development of writing skills and has been successful in raising standards by focusing on improving the quality of writing in subjects across the curriculum. Nevertheless, further work is needed, particularly in the development of planning in science to ensure that the curriculum builds on pupils' previous knowledge in a more systematic way. In addition, the level of challenge for more able pupils is not as consistently high as it could be. The school has a good understanding of its priorities and is putting appropriate plans in place to tackle them.

This year has seen an increase in the use of information from the tracking of pupils' performance and senior leaders and staff meet regularly to discuss pupils' progress. Although pockets of underachievement have not been addressed quickly enough in the past, this work is now helping staff to understand how well pupils are doing and enabling them to plan more effectively. Marking is affirming and encouraging, but does not effectively tell pupils what they should do to improve their work. The school takes good care of pupils' social and emotional needs and ensures that they know about how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils say that they know how to keep themselves safe and that they are well looked after. Effective strategies achieve good standards of behaviour and pupils have a clear understanding of healthy living. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although more work is needed to raise pupils' understanding of the customs and beliefs within society. Pupils enjoy many aspects of school life, particularly the wide range of visits and visitors, and they participate in a good range of extra-curricular activities. Their good personal development and satisfactory academic progress prepare them appropriately for the next stage of education and their future lives.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the school with standards broadly in line with national expectations. They make sound progress in all areas of their learning and enter Year 1 with the skills and abilities expected for children of their age. They settle quickly because of the good transition arrangements and the effective partnership with parents. Personal development and well-being are good because staff support children well in a safe and secure environment and relationships are good. Children behave well, learn to share and make choices. They have good attitudes to learning and enjoy being in school. They listen well and become confident speakers. They learn through a wide range of activities based on a theme. For example, following the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, there is a role play area and activities involving seeds, measuring footprints and considering materials to make a bag for Jack's coins. Staff extend learning through careful questioning and assess progress through planned observations. Leadership is satisfactory, and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has accurately identified areas for improvement. These include developing the outdoor learning environment so that children have a wider range of opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that standards continue to rise by improving the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels:
 - in mathematics, by providing them with consistently challenging work
 - in science, by effectively planning for the progression of skills across each key stage.
- Develop pupil participation in marking and feedback so that pupils have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Develop pupils' multicultural awareness and understanding of the customs and beliefs of society in this country.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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

Unvalidated results for Key Stage 2 tests in 2008 and current evidence in class show that attainment is now average overall. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been above average in recent years. Data indicates that, in the past, some pupils underachieved by the time they left the school. This was mainly due to previous inconsistencies in curriculum and teaching. Furthermore, weaknesses in assessing pupils and tracking their progress meant that underachievement was not being addressed effectively. The school is successfully tackling these issues and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Rates of progress across the school are improving. A good example of this is in writing, where increased opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills this year have led to marked improvements. Pupils who need additional support or those who find learning more difficult make satisfactory progress. When pupils are given targeted support in lessons, they make faster progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They feel physically and emotionally safe and they have a good grasp of the need to keep themselves safe and to adopt healthy lifestyles. They say lessons are fun and all adults encourage them in their learning. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs, visits and special events, such as World Book Day and International Children's Day. They understand the importance of caring for others and they develop a sense of responsibility by raising money for charities. They are involved in school decision making, for example by participating in the appointment of their new headteacher. Pupils develop their awareness of their role in the community well through close links with the parish church and their involvement in a wide range of village events, such as singing carols in local shops. They develop a sense of responsibility by becoming monitors. Although pupils understand the need to treat everyone equally, and develop the qualities that will help them to contribute to the community when they are older, they do not have a strong enough awareness of Britain as a multicultural society. Their good personal development, together with the improving acquisition of language and mathematics skills, makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good relationships between staff and pupils help ensure that lessons run smoothly. Teaching is often enthusiastic and pupils say that they enjoy learning more when teachers make their lessons fun. Teachers are beginning to share and celebrate good classroom practice with one another and they are using an increasing range of strategies to improve learning. In the better lessons the pace is brisk and well-structured activities are used to enthuse and involve pupils. Teachers explain tasks clearly and challenge pupils appropriately. They use questioning to good effect, promoting thinking and developing understanding. In these lessons, pupils learn well. However, this quality of teaching is not consistent across the school. Some lessons do not hold the interest of pupils enough for them to be stimulated to work hard and learn well. In others, expectations of the more able pupils are too low and hence these pupils are not challenged to achieve the standards of which they are capable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school now has a clear vision about what it wants the curriculum to achieve, and how to do this. Managers have been tackling legacies of underachievement in English and mathematics, especially at Key Stage 2, as a priority. Staff have taken decisive action to improve the provision for writing, typified by the successful introduction of the 'Big Writing' project. This has improved academic standards and the confidence of both teachers and pupils. Provision in information and communication technology has improved and the new interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Provision in other subjects is more variable. For instance, planning to develop the skills of scientific enquiry lacks structure, resulting in long gaps between practising skills so pupils do not build effectively on previous knowledge. The curriculum is enriched by a good programme of educational visits, visitors and after school activities. The school uses the local village as a resource to support learning, such as the recent

visit by younger pupils to learn about people who help us in the community. Pupils are regular visitors to the church, where they celebrate festivals alongside members of the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures in place for safeguarding pupils are robust. Pastoral guidance is very good and both teachers and support staff engage very well with pupils. Support for pupils, both as they move from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and on to secondary school, is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who are learning English as an additional language are supported well so that they make the same progress as their peers. Marking is mainly affirming and encouraging but, although better developed in writing, does not, in most subjects, provide pupils with enough information about how to improve. Teachers are beginning to make good use of tracking of pupils' progress. For instance, they are now using data more effectively to set realistic and more ambitious learning targets for pupils. Nevertheless, the school recognises that more could be done to better involve pupils in assessing their own progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although further development is needed, the school has recently taken effective steps to improve achievement and raise standards. Parents are rightly complimentary about the role of the interim headteacher in driving the school forward and improving provision. Staff are becoming more accountable for pupils' achievement and progress. The headteacher has identified where improvements are needed and has rightly prioritised the need to develop standards in writing and mathematics. Challenging targets have been set to support this. The senior management team share the headteacher's vision. Although some subject leaders are relatively new to their post, they are developing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities well. Overall, achievement and standards are improving and the school is committed to further improvement. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily through the good links with parents and outside agencies. However, the school needs to promote more effectively pupils' understanding of United Kingdom and global communities. Governors are increasing their involvement in school improvement work. They understand the school's strengths and are aware of what action is needed to improve. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

9 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pinchbeck East Church of England Primary School, Pinchbeck, PE11 3RP

Many of you will remember our visit to your school a little while ago. Thank you for making us so welcome. I was pleased to find how keen you were to share your thoughts about your school. This letter is especially for you to tell you what I found out about it.

I think that Pinchbeck is a satisfactory and improving school. Your teachers help you to make satisfactory progress and you achieve standards that are broadly average by the time you leave in Year 6. Many of you work hard to help others and improve your school and you carry out your tasks well. You behave and work together well and you take a pride in the school. Many of you make a good contribution to school life and you enjoy school and try your best. Your parents are pleased with the school and they can see how well Mrs Curtis and your teachers are working hard to make Pinchbeck even better.

To help you do even better I have asked the school to:

- make sure that lessons are consistently good across all subjects
- provide greater challenge for those of you who are more able in your mathematics
- create a better plan for teaching key skills in science
- involve and inform you more in marking so that you know how to improve
- improve your understanding of the different customs and beliefs of people living in Britain.

You can help by continuing to work hard and always trying your best.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Ian Jones

Lead inspector