

Pickering Community Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121356
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327465
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Mr Bernard Jones

The 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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Wilson
Headteacher	Mr K Baines
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	Middleton Road Pickering YO18 8AJ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at documents provided by the school, including records of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed 81 returned parental questionnaires.

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

- pupils' attainment, progress and learning, particularly in writing
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of different groups of pupils, especially boys and lower attaining pupils
- how the school uses information about the attainment of pupils to inform teaching and promote improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving a widespread rural community centred on the market town of Pickering. Pupils, almost all of whom are of White British heritage, come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. Few pupils are eligible for a free school meal. A number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the proportion is below the average for primary schools and few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The new headteacher took up his post in September 2008.

The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People, the Activemark, Artsmark and Ecomark.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness 3

Capacity for sustained improvement 3

Main findings

The school is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. The quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and pupils' academic achievement are satisfactory. The school has strengths in pastoral areas. Good care, guidance and support have a clear impact on the personal development of pupils. This is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and mature and warm relationships with each other and their teachers. All pupils are valued equally and they are known very well by the staff. Pupils with additional needs receive further, well-targeted support that helps them participate fully in school life. The school enjoys the full support and confidence of its parents, reflected in the above average attendance levels. A strong feature of the school is the rich variety of extra-curricular provision, particularly in sport, which has a positive impact on pupils living healthily.

The standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average, reflecting their satisfactory achievement. After a dip in standards in 2007, effective action was taken to raise boys' attainment in English and the overall standards in science. However, standards in writing are still below average, particularly among boys and especially among low attaining boys.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching and much of the satisfactory teaching has good features. Typically, classrooms are well ordered, pupils behave well and relationships are positive. Where learning is good, teachers are very clear about the progress they expect different groups of pupils within the class to make and match the content of the lesson accordingly. However, too often, teaching does not focus enough on raising achievement among different groups of pupils. Here, information about pupils' progress and levels of attainment are not used effectively. Teaching is not yet of a consistently high quality to ensure that pupils make good progress. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and recent changes have found success in engaging boys more so that they have a greater interest and enjoyment in their learning. However, planning is not precise enough to ensure meaningful links are made between subjects to reinforce basic literacy and numeracy skills. Similarly pupils' learning about other cultures is not planned well enough to ensure consistency in provision.

School leaders including governors are committed to improving the school. The new headteacher provides clear leadership and enjoys the support of staff in the drive to improve standards and raise achievement. Already there is evidence of impact being made, for example in boys' recently improved standards and in raising achievement among pupils with learning difficulties. However, staff who manage and coordinate

subjects do not have the skills to monitor the impact of changes made in their areas. Partnerships with parents and with other schools are good, as are the school's partnerships with outside agencies that provide additional support. The leadership has a clear view of the school's strengths and the areas that need further improvement. Its self-evaluation, made on the basis of these judgements, is accurate and realistic. The headteacher has started the process of improving the skills of middle managers and involved all staff in using information about pupils' attainment and progress more effectively. In both areas there is more work to do, but the school is well placed to raise standards with sound capacity for sustained improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing to help raise standards and accelerate progress in all subjects by:
 - improving sentence construction
 - focusing on improving general writing skills of lower ability pupils, particularly boys.
- Raise the proportion of good and better teaching to meet the different learning needs of all pupils and accelerate progress by:
 - identifying and extending the best practices in teaching and learning that are present in the school
 - ensuring that teachers plan clearly to show what they expect different groups of pupils to attain in their lessons
 - making effective use of the information teachers have about pupils' attainment levels to tailor work more precisely to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders to monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes they make
 - planning meaningful links between subjects, particularly to reinforce basic skills in literacy and numeracy
 - ensuring a planned programme is in place for pupils to learn more about other cultures.

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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, most pupils pay full attention and participate with great enthusiasm when tasks are interesting, for example in designing and making cardboard racing cars in design and technology. Where pupils are not fully engaged in lessons, they tend to adopt a passive approach; inspectors saw no evidence of disruptive behaviour. In lessons where teaching is good and work is well-matched to their needs, pupils progress well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often learn well when

they are receiving specialised, specific support in small groups or when teaching assistants are on hand to help.

Pupils start Year 3 with levels of attainment that are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6, the most recent test results show standards in reading, mathematics and science are in line with the national average, including the proportion of pupils who gain the higher Level 5. However, standards are below average in writing. Current standards as seen in lessons and pupils' workbooks are also broadly average other than in writing where standards are also lower. There are weaknesses across all aspects of writing, but particularly in sentence construction. Boys' writing is of a lower standard than girls and is an area of particular weakness among lower attaining boys. Recent actions taken to improve writing, including choosing teaching materials to engage boys more effectively are beginning to have a positive impact. In recent years, pupils with learning difficulties, including those who are vulnerable to underachievement for any reason, have not made the progress they should. This has been successfully tackled and these pupils now make satisfactory progress, in line with their peers. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school.

A real strength of the school's provision is seen in the way pupils develop into mature, responsible and well-behaved young people. They bring these qualities to their learning and their play. Relationships with each other and with their teachers are very positive. Pupils have an outstanding knowledge and understanding of how to live healthily. They understand the importance of good diets and exercise and most take advantage of the rich variety of sporting activities on offer during and after school. Pupils know staff care for them and they respond by showing respect to each other and to staff. When given responsibility, for example serving on the school council, pupils respond very well. The good quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education reinforces and helps to consolidate these good personal qualities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹The 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?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. A very positive feature is seen in teachers ensuring pupils' good personal development. Teachers do not capitalise sufficiently on this to challenge pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. For some time pupils and teachers have accepted satisfactory achievement where pupils are capable of more. There is not enough focus on planning lessons to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and it is often not clear what teachers expect different groups of pupils to achieve in their lessons. In such lessons, higher-attaining pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable because they are given the same work as other pupils, or asked to do more of the same rather than work that makes greater demands on them. Where teaching is good, assessment is used well to inform both teachers and pupils of the level at which they are working and the next steps pupils need to take to improve further. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is often not clear what teachers expect pupils to achieve in a lesson and pace slackens as pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Marking of work is informative and where practice is good, targets for improvement are used well. This good practice is not widespread through the school and there is not enough emphasis on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning on the basis of the progress pupils make.

The curriculum promotes the satisfactory acquisition of basic skills. There has been a recent move to make more meaningful links between subjects to consolidate basic skills, but it is too early for its full impact to be assessed. Information and communication technology is used very effectively and is much enjoyed by pupils. Similarly French is learned with great enthusiasm. The use of education visits locally and visitors to the school add breadth and interest. The curriculum is enriched significantly by extra-curricular provision in sport in particular, and in music and the arts. A weakness lies in the lack of planning for aspects that deal with multicultural aspects of life here and abroad or learning about business and enterprise.

All pupils benefit from the good level of pastoral care, support and guidance provided by the school. Support systems are very effective when pupils, for whatever reason, need additional help, and parents are particularly appreciative of this.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher has given fresh impetus to a drive for improvement. The good provision for pupils' personal development is acknowledged by the leadership as a strength upon which to build. Plans are in place to use this as a firm foundation on which to improve pupils' achievement and raise standards. The governors are

providing good support for this move and a high level of challenge to help keep proposed improvements on track. There is a greater emphasis on measuring, checking and tracking the progress pupils make. This has not been in place long enough to assess its full impact. Thus, it has not yet led the school to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning on the basis of the progress expected and attained by pupils in lessons. Teachers in charge of subjects have not yet developed the skills necessary to assess the impact of actions to improve provision in their subjects. However, staff throughout the school share the leadership's ambition to succeed; morale is high and improvements are taking place.

This is an inclusive school where pupils are known well by staff and share equally the chance to make a success of their school life. Recent underachievement by lower ability groups has been identified and tackled successfully to close the gap in their achievement compared with others. Links with parents are good and the school works closely with relevant external agencies, where appropriate, to ensure pupils' needs are met. All procedures relating to safeguarding pupils are in place and ensure their health and safety through good quality care and a considered approach to the analysis of risk. Leaders ensure the pupils make a positive contribution to the wider local and global community. Pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of community cohesion through the school's teaching of respect for all people and its active promotion of charity and aid work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires returned by parents were very positive. Where comments were included, there was good match to the strengths of the school evident to inspectors, mostly relating to the good quality of pastoral care and parents' satisfaction with the dedication of the staff for the welfare of their children. There were no significant concerns expressed and no other concerns expressed with any degree of consistency.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pickering Community Junior 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 81 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 222 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	53	26	2	0

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.

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pickering Community Junior School, Pickering, YO18 8AJ

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleague and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for taking the time to talk to us. We enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you.

I would now like to tell you my findings about your school. I like the way you take responsibility, and how well you are taught to take a pride in your surroundings. Classrooms and corridors reflect this with their interesting and vibrant displays. These displays also show that you study a wide range of subjects. I appreciate how your school helps you learn how to live healthily and safely so that you develop into mature young people, ready to progress to the next stage of your education at secondary school.

I found that your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education, because the quality of teaching and the curriculum provided for you are satisfactory. This means you achieve as expected and the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average. You obviously enjoy coming to school and this shows in your good behaviour in classrooms and around the school. You told me that you like your teachers and the way they take good care of you. You are keen to do well and you work hard in lessons. You particularly enjoy practical activities.

To make things even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help all of you to raise your academic standards and make even better progress. Among the ways to achieve this, you need to make improvements in your writing skills. In particular, you need to improve the way you construct sentences and become more accurate with spelling and the use of punctuation. You need more practise in using your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects too. The school also needs to ensure that there is more good teaching and that the curriculum helps you to learn more about other cultures both in Britain and abroad. You can help by continuing to work hard.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well for the future.

Bernard Jones
Lead inspector

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