

Pye Green Valley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124217
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328082
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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)	377
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	Kevin Smith
Headteacher	Kevin Butlin
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rosehill Hednesford Cannock WS12 4RT
Telephone number	01543 512490
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The school has been awarded Active Mark and the FA charter. The school provides Early Years Foundation Stage provision through its Nursery and two Reception classes. It runs a before- and after-school club for its own pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pye Green Valley is a good school which has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection, significantly improving all areas of its work. This has been achieved because of good leadership and management, particularly the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. His high expectations and caring approach have established a 'can do' culture which is warmly embraced by both pupils and staff. Parents are delighted with the improvements and are enthusiastic about the dedicated and caring staff. Many parents report that their children 'thoroughly enjoy school' and say they have come on 'in leaps and bounds'. This is a consequence of an outstanding curriculum where learning is made relevant and fun. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel very safe and secure. They are looked after well and this underpins their good academic achievement and outstanding personal development. The pupils' desire to meet the high expectations of staff is reflected in exceptional standards of behaviour and good attendance. The curriculum ensures that pupils develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. When they join the Nursery class their skills are close to the expected levels for their age. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 they have achieved well and are reaching above average standards, particularly in mathematics. Pupils who are finding learning difficult, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are now identified much earlier and provided with effective support. As a result, they are making the same good progress as their peers. Achievement is good because of good teaching and learning. Most lessons are very well planned and delivered in a lively and engaging way. Occasionally, pupils sit and listen to the teacher for too long and this slows the pace of learning. The majority of teachers have good questioning skills but every now and then questions are not as probing as they might be and provide insufficient challenge. While many teachers provide helpful academic guidance through talking to pupils in lessons, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Some pupils benefit from valuable feedback but others are given limited guidance about how to improve their work. While all pupils have learning targets, their knowledge of these targets is variable and many are at the early stages of evaluating their progress towards these targets.

- The reinforcement of basic skills, including reading, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) through exciting topic work has proved extremely successful. Very interesting topics that have an immediate relevance to pupils have motivated both boys and girls to write at length and pupils are now making good progress in their writing. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community, where they actively try to make life better for each other and the wider community. Topics such as 'Where have all the miners gone
- ' have helped pupils to understand how the local area has evolved and has developed mutual understanding between older and younger members of the local community. This reflects the school's good contribution to community cohesion. The school's good capacity to improve even further is demonstrated through rising standards that have resulted from important improvements to teaching and learning and the curriculum.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of good teaching. They make good progress across all areas of learning. Their progress in communication, language and literacy is particularly good because of the strong and effective emphasis given to this key area of learning. Relationships between adults and children are very positive and all children benefit from very high quality care and support. Children enjoy school and each other's company. They quickly settle into school as a result of good quality induction procedures and they grow in confidence and independence. Teachers plan lessons well and the teaching is energetic, captures children's interest and is well tailored to meet their needs. All areas of learning are addressed and there is appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and those children choose for themselves. Occasionally, children in Reception sit and listen to the teacher for too long and they sometimes require more focused intervention from adults to make the most of the learning opportunities provided. The leadership and management of the provision are good. The staff work hard to do their very best for children. There is effective teamwork and staff benefit from well informed guidance that is helping them to further develop their skills.

The before- and after-school club provides good quality care for all those children who attend, including those who are under 5-years-old. The very effective links between the school's provision and the club help to ensure that the curriculum is successfully addressing the needs of young children. Relationships between children and staff are warm and supportive and there is very good communication with parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' understanding of how to improve their work, focusing particularly on their knowledge of their learning targets and the quality of teachers' marking.
- Ensure that introductions to lessons are not too long and that questioning is always used effectively to extend pupils' understanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The new strategies for teaching reading and writing are successfully accelerating achievement in literacy in Key Stage 1. The national assessments at the end of Year 2 improved in 2008 and were just above average with more pupils reaching the higher Level 3, particularly in mathematics. Standards are also improving at the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 an above average proportion of pupils reach the nationally expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils made particularly good progress in mathematics. The school was aware that pupils in Key Stage 2 were making slower progress in writing in comparison to their progress in reading and mathematics. As a result, the school has focused on boosting progress and improving standards in writing, particularly for the most able and boys and this is clearly paying dividends. Many pupils are now producing high quality extended pieces of writing containing interesting words and lively phrases, reflecting the way topic work has fired their imaginations. Although the content of the boys' writing is often as good as the girls' and the presentation of their work sometimes lets them down.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and their cultural development is good. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and are able to empathise with others. They work extremely hard in lessons and want to succeed. Not only do pupils work well on their own, they like working together and collaborate very effectively. Pupils know they are valued and that their achievements are celebrated and this boosts their confidence. Attendance rates are rising and are now above average, reflecting pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school. Pupils make a very effective contribution to the school community. Older pupils are excellent role models and are especially good at supporting younger pupils. The school council has been very active, particularly in promoting a strong anti-bullying message. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They make healthy choices of food and participate well in sports and after-school clubs. Confidence and positive attitudes to learning combined with good standards in basic skills ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, particularly the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and there is some outstanding teaching in Years 2 and 6. Lessons are carefully planned and activities are matched well to pupils' needs. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them because teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and precise. Teachers want to see the best, both in terms of academic achievement and standards of behaviour. They effectively share their good subject knowledge with their pupils. Many teachers challenge pupils well through penetrating questions but occasionally questions lack depth and do not test all the pupils. Now and again, across the school, teachers talk for too long and this can slow learning because pupils have limited opportunities to contribute. Well briefed teaching assistants make an important contribution to learning during the introduction of lessons and through successfully delivering intervention strategies and supporting small groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is innovative, exciting and constantly evolving as the school strives to ensure that topics enthuse pupils and help them to understand their place in the world. Exciting and pertinent visits, including very good use of the immediate locality combined with interesting visitors, bring learning alive. Many areas of the curriculum interest boys without alienating girls and this has boosted the achievement of boys. A good range of carefully targeted support mechanisms ensure that pupils at risk of underachieving and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in many areas of the curriculum. Parents particularly appreciate the way French is taught. The curriculum also provides extremely well for pupils' personal development by promoting opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community, and the understanding of complex spiritual and moral issues such as the Holocaust and the need to protect the environment. A very good range of extra-curricular opportunities such as sport and music adds even more to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a caring and harmonious community where staff know the pupils well. Pupils feel safe and know that staff will listen to them if they have any problems. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after at Pye Green. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current requirements. The school works well with external agencies to provide support for vulnerable pupils when this is required. Pupils' attendance is closely monitored and very effective action is taken to reduce unnecessary absence; this contributes to rising levels of attendance. Pupils benefit from effective personal support and useful academic guidance which are reflected in their good achievement. Nevertheless, there is scope for improvement. The quality of guidance provided through the marking of pupils' books is variable with some pupils provided with comprehensive guidance about how to improve but others receiving mainly congratulatory comments with no clear indication of how to make their work even better. Although all pupils have learning targets, their knowledge of these targets is uneven and many are not skilled at assessing their progress towards them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's vision and determination, combined with the hard work and commitment of the whole staff team and effective support from the local authority, have transformed the school and significantly improved outcomes for pupils. Governors have contributed significantly to these improvements by providing effective support and challenge. Precise monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, particularly by the headteacher, ensure that the school is fully aware of where its strengths and weaknesses lie. Consequently it has been able to draw up and implement plans that have had a positive impact on key areas of the school's work. Senior managers use data to identify where pupils are at risk of underachieving and to hold staff to account. However, they are not always easily accessible or used to full effect to measure the progress of different groups of pupils. The school has been extremely successful at reaching out to its own community and effectively promotes equal opportunities including helping pupils to understand and value those of different faiths and ethnicities. Although there are few opportunities for face to face meetings, pupils are able to make good contact with those that have different backgrounds from themselves through letters and emails.

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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?	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
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?	2
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**

13 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pye Green Valley Primary School, Cannock, WS12 4RT

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. It is obvious that you have a brilliant time because of all the exciting things you have to do.

It was clear that Year 3 pupils learnt lots about keeping fit during the 'Alive and Kicking' topic. The 'Expedition Everest' topic in Year 6 sounded wonderful and it was great to hear that you enjoyed your physical challenge day so much. We know it has been very hard for you, not being able to play out for so long because of the ice and snow. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour in such difficult circumstances. You have good manners and make visitors very welcome indeed. You told us that your teachers look after you well and that they always try to help you. We noticed that you try to lend a hand to other children and we liked the way older pupils are so good at helping younger children. We think you all make a super contribution to your school because you are so proud of it. You are right in thinking this is a good school.

Your lessons are interesting and lots of fun. That is because the quality of teaching and your learning are good and you make such good progress. In fact, by the end of Year 6 you are reaching standards that are above those reached by many other children, especially in mathematics. Your writing is really improving and we were very impressed by some of the brilliant writing about your visits to the theatre and your topic work. The writing was so lively and exciting it was a pleasure to read. The content of the boys' writing is often as good as the girls' but some boys need to make certain that the presentation of their work does not let them down.

Managers at your school are doing a good job. They have made sure your school just gets better and better. There are still a few things to improve on so we have asked your teachers to make sure you do not have to sit on the carpet and listen to them for too long. We also asked them to make sure they ask you questions that make you think hard and to give you more guidance about how you can improve your work.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector