

Pinxton Kirkstead Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112608
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	329862
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Travis Kemp
Headteacher	Mr Mark Scotton
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2007
School address	Kirkstead Road Pinxton Nottinghamshire NG16 6NA
Telephone number	01773 810337
Fax number	01773 811955

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Pinxton and families locally represent a broad range of social and economic circumstances. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those who have a statement for their special educational needs, is broadly in line with national averages. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average.

Following a school inspection in July 2007, the school went into a category of special measures. It has received three monitoring visits by Ofsted since then. In the Autumn term 2007, an acting headteacher was leading the school with three temporary assistant headteachers. Prior to the first monitoring visit in January 2008, a permanent substantive headteacher was appointed. From April 2008, two of the temporary assistant headteachers were made permanent. There have been two new class teachers this term, one who is the appointed special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and it has some good features. Issues arising from the last inspection have been tackled well and the school has made good progress.

The leadership of the relatively new headteacher is good and he has been instrumental in bringing about many positive changes. The pace of improvement has been rapid since the last monitoring visit. With the new structure in place, the management of the school is effective and there is a good capacity to improve. The school accurately evaluates its effectiveness. All pupils make good progress in their personal development. The school gives effective support to vulnerable pupils and those who find learning difficult. It recognises it has still more work to do with the more able boys, who are not always given work that sufficiently challenges their thinking quickly enough. Staff have already begun work to address this. Good relationships exist throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and often exemplary. There is a positive atmosphere within the school, indicative of pupils enjoying their education and wanting to learn and get better.

Further staffing changes this term, and improved consistent approaches to teaching and learning are making a difference. There is no inadequate teaching across the school and only a very small percentage of satisfactory lessons. Teaching throughout the school is now good overall, with frequent examples of outstanding practice. Better quality lessons, with clear learning objectives and targets for pupils to aim for, have successfully raised pupils' achievement and rates of progress. The careful monitoring of pupils' progress in core subjects has also contributed to the planning of lessons to build successfully on pupils' prior achievement and to consider where they need additional support. However, the legacy of inconsistencies in teaching in the past means that standards across the curriculum, and for some year groups, are uneven. Standards in mathematics and in reading are weaker than standards in writing and science overall. The whole school focus on writing has begun to bear fruit and better achievement is seen in this area. Although standards are getting closer to national expectations for all core subjects in Year 6, given their starting points, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory overall. These pupils have made up for some of the lost ground in previous years and made sound gains more recently.

Core subject leaders are all monitoring and leading their subjects well. Less emphasis has been given to the management of the foundation subjects. The school has recognised the need to now prioritise improving the quality in other curriculum areas and making more of utilising pupils' core knowledge and skills across the whole of the curriculum. More use is now being made of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subject areas due to the improved facilities in this area and increased staff confidence in using this to facilitate teaching and learning. Support from the local authority, including high quality staff training and development, has contributed effectively to whole school improvement. The governors fulfil their roles well; they are knowledgeable of the school and the importance of monitoring the school carefully. The formation of new committees assigned to key issues identified at the previous inspection and recently added key issues prioritised by the school, has made a significant impact on the quality of monitoring and evaluation and ultimately to assisting in school improvement. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation procedures are firmly embedded in the work of all subject leaders, so that they are able to contribute fully to the continued drive for improvement.
- Raise the attainment of pupils across the school, and especially the most able boys in English and mathematics.
- Develop the consistent use and application of basic skills across all subject areas.

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

The results of the national tests for Year 6 in 2007 were well below average in English and science, and broadly average in mathematics. These results represented significant underachievement when standards on entry are taken into account. Unvalidated results for 2008 show a sharp rise in the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 4, particularly in English where results rose markedly. This rise in performance is the result of improvements in teaching and learning together with more effective tracking of pupils' progress. Taken overall these results represent satisfactory achievement, particularly for pupils who find learning difficult, and reflect the intensive work that is being done to raise their attainment. There was also an improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5, but at this level in English and mathematics, girls outperformed boys by a wide margin. The school has correctly identified raising the achievement of higher ability boys as a priority for improvement. Inspection evidence indicates that the improvement in achievement and standards seen in 2008 is being sustained and the early indications are that the school is on track to achieve the challenging targets that are now being set. Pupils are making at least satisfactory progress over time and in some lessons they are now making good progress. Progress in writing across all year groups has more recently been good, due to the emphasis placed on this by the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral and spiritual development is good. Their cultural understanding is satisfactory. Pupils played a significant part in setting out the school's new vision and, as a consequence identify with its core values closely, which is helping them to become successful learners. They happily volunteer that they 'Try our best in everything by aiming high'. Pupils show respect for others and form caring relationships. They are able to reflect on their learning and about their place in the world and show empathy for others. They know that racism is wrong and should be challenged. However, they are less secure about the influences shaping their own culture and have fewer first hand opportunities to encounter other cultures. The behaviour of the majority is consistently good and often exemplary, with pupils displaying a good understanding of right and wrong. One volunteered that 'Everyone is kind here and people share'. They talk about the positive impact of anti-bullying work they have done and particularly remember the positive impact of 'Blue Friday'. Pupils certainly show that they enjoy being at school and work hard in their lessons. Attendance rates have improved significantly and are now satisfactory following some hard work in developing the partnership

with parents. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through willingly taking on many roles that help the smooth running of the school, for example as litter pickers and mini sports leaders. The school council is having a real impact on school improvement, for example through its initiatives to encourage friendship and healthy eating, and through direct involvement in staff appointments. The whole school community participates fully in charity fundraising for local and global causes. Pupils have a good theoretical understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and participate happily in the many sporting opportunities offered to them. They have successfully learnt how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances, for example when using the internet or using electrical appliances. Their good personal skills and their satisfactory basic skills ensure that they are prepared suitably for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, at times outstanding and never less than satisfactory. This represents rapid and considerable improvement since the last inspection and indeed since the last monitoring visit. Teachers have responded positively to measures taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including the input of local authority advisors and consultants and a valuable contribution made by the school's own advanced skills teacher. The cumulative impact of this consistent level of good teaching explains why pupils' progress can now be seen to be quickening in lessons. Across the school, relationships and behaviour management are good. Many pupils shared with the inspection team that teachers were at the top of their list of what they like best about the school. Teachers have embraced the effective use of interactive tools and a wide range of more practical and hands on learning opportunities. They have established learning environments which enthuse pupils and provide good quality support for them, particularly in English and mathematics. For example, working walls, the high visibility of objectives for learning at different levels of challenge and particularly the 'aiming high' criteria really motivate pupils to work hard and do well. In the best lessons, expectations are high, the pace of learning is brisk, and there is a good balance between teacher instruction and pupil input and many opportunities for them to find out things for themselves. Teachers use their good subject knowledge when asking probing questions that extend learning further. Teachers make learning fun but still set regular challenges which pupils respond enthusiastically to, self-assessing and evaluating the outcomes for themselves. This model of good practice now has to be consistently applied across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and has focussed well on promoting the development of pupils' basic skills. It has been improved through the introduction of more active and practical learning, which engages the pupils well. An increasing number of themed days and weeks, which involve teaching a range of subjects together, has obviously provided lasting memories. Pupils enthuse about these and say they would like more of them. There is a carefully thought out programme of personal, social and health education, which ensures that pupils know how to lead safe and healthy lives. Some unique enrichment opportunities are offered, for example the whole school participation in Tai Chi sessions and the healthy 'fundamentals' sessions led by midday supervisors which promote health and good behaviour also. Pupils in Year 3 to 5 are

also offered the opportunity to learn French. Many pupils choose to play the guitar or drums. Visits from artists, drama groups and writers enhance the curriculum further. Provision for ICT has shown good improvement since the last inspection and use of the new interactive technology adds to pupils' enjoyment. However, though pupils' basic skills are improving, they do not have enough meaningful opportunities to apply these skills across the other subjects in the curriculum. In addition, the school does not know as much about how well all groups of children are doing in these subjects as they do about how they are doing in English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra curricular activities, where levels of participation are good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care of pupils is good. Staff demonstrate high levels of dedication to ensuring that pupils are happy and enjoying their time at school. Pupils themselves say that they are confident that staff will help them to resolve any issues or worries they may have, so that they feel safe and well looked after. Procedures to ensure that pupils are safeguarded meet requirements. Those who may be vulnerable or who need extra help with their learning are identified swiftly and supported effectively to ensure that they make similar progress to their peers and they are included in everything that the school has to offer. Teaching assistants play an important role in this, for example through their work to discourage bullying or to encourage positive play and in the effective way that they provide additional learning support for individuals and groups of pupils. Leaders are successfully enhancing the role that parents play, for example through vision assemblies and other extended schools opportunities. The school now has a calm, warm and purposeful feel to it and children feel valued. Academic guidance and target setting for English and mathematics are considerably improved since the last inspection and are now comprehensive. The consistent application of rigorous procedures ensures that pupils are clear about their targets for learning in English and mathematics and how to go about achieving them. Teachers are also clearer about how well pupils are doing. These systems have yet to ensure that the most able children are consistently well challenged to make the best progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is ably led by a dedicated headteacher and two assistant headteachers who, collectively with other staff and governors, have a new shared vision for the school and are committed to its improvement. The subject leadership roles in the core subjects are now embedded and are continually improving, which is making an impact on achievement and progress overall and on sustainability over time. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion and promotes equality of opportunity effectively. It is well resourced and resources, including support staff, are used to good effect.

Governors are supportive and discharge their responsibilities well. They have taken on more acknowledgement and ownership of their role in terms of monitoring and quality assurance. The school has mostly effectively addressed all of the points for improvement from the inspection when it was placed in a category of concern. It is beginning to address raising standards through the higher expectations of staff and pupils. The school now sets itself more challenging targets and accurately measures pupils' performance against these. The extensive monitoring of literacy, numeracy and science provision has successfully identified areas for improvement. It

acknowledges that whilst handwriting and presentation have improved across the school, that there is still more to do to raise standards in reading overall. The school continues to investigate the underperformance in mathematics, although throughout the inspection some good quality learning was taking place in this area. The school has mostly evaluated itself accurately and has an appropriate improvement plan with sensible and achievable priorities for development. With its new leadership and direction, and its recent record of accomplishment, the school now has a good capacity to improve.

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	2

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?	2
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

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	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**

17 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kirkstead Junior School, Pinxton, Derbyshire NG16 6NA

You will know that an inspection team has been in school again recently to monitor how well the school is doing. Since our last visit, we think it is doing very well indeed under the leadership of Mr Scotton and the two assistant headteachers. The school is a very different place from when we first visited you in January this year. We no longer think that your school is of cause for concern and agree with you that it feels like a happy place to learn. Thank you to everyone who talked to us in lessons or came to us in small groups to share their views. We thought you were very sensible and honest and we took your opinions seriously. We think you all make a good contribution to the school community and join in well.

All of the staff and governors have worked very hard to turn this school around. The Derbyshire local authority will continue to support the school for some time yet, but the school is increasingly proving that it can run itself well. Staff know what they have to do to help you learn better and they are tracking your progress very carefully. To make sure that the school continues to work on the right priorities, we have left them with some more things to think about. We want staff to:

- Ensure that they check all subjects as well as they do in English, mathematics and science to make sure you improve in other subjects as well.
- Help the boys who find work too easy in English and mathematics to do as well as they possibly can and achieve higher levels in the end of year tests.
- Develop your reading, writing, numeracy and ICT skills across all of the other subject areas.

You can help by continuing to always do your best and to keep 'aiming higher'. Do remember to tell your teachers if you finish quickly or find the work too easy. In addition, boys - remember - the race is on to try to do as well as the girls!

I wish each one of you personal success and I wish the school well in the future. It has been a privilege to see your school improve and I will miss visiting.

Kind regards,

Jane Melbourne

Her Majesty's Inspector