

# Pirton Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109574
<b>Local Authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	337321
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joseph Peacock

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	530
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Byrne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Debbie Thompson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Butely Road Luton Bedfordshire
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils and spoke informally to parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at policies and documentation, pupils' work and assessment data, internal and external monitoring records and the school improvement plan. They also scrutinised 104 responses by parents and carers to the Ofsted parents' questionnaire, as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

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

- how well pupils learn and make progress particularly in English, mathematics and science
- the quality of pastoral care and the impact on pupils' personal development
- the quality of teaching and the curriculum
- assessment procedures and the use made of assessment information
- the capacity of the school's leaders and managers to secure sustained improvement since the amalgamation of the two schools
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

## Information about the school

The infant and junior schools were amalgamated in September 2008 making a primary school which is much larger than average. Six out of ten pupils travel from outside the catchment area and a similar proportion are from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. One in five has English as an additional language with 29 different languages being spoken. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The number of pupils identified as needing additional support is high and there is significant movement of pupils, with many leaving or joining during each school year. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of three classes for children of Reception age. There is a breakfast club and after-school care, which are both provided and managed by the school.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school with some aspects that are clearly stronger and more developed than others. The headteacher has been a major driving force in joining the two schools and relies heavily on the support from the senior leadership team, who share her vision for the new primary school. Much has been achieved in a short space of time. Despite some fluctuating results at Key Stage 1 and a legacy of underachievement at Key Stage 2, there is convincing evidence to show that the school is improving as a result of effective self-evaluation. Staff who responded to their questionnaire gave their full support for the headteacher and the direction that the school is taking. Given the recent track record of the skilled senior staff and headteacher, the capacity to maintain momentum and improve still further is good.

The outstanding level of care, guidance and support and secure safeguarding procedures are at the heart of all improvement. Most pupils feel valued and important. The majority are confident, very polite and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They enjoy coming to school. However, there is still a very small minority who find it difficult to match the school's high expectations of behaviour. Some learning in lessons is adversely affected when teachers do not deal effectively enough with some pupils' challenging behaviour. The school is a cohesive community and pupils thrive on the responsibilities with which they are entrusted. They acknowledge the changes made at the school recently with comments such as 'Behaviour is much better than last year' and 'Our teachers make lessons fun'.

The majority of children enter school with skills which are well below those typical for their age. Effective, well-managed provision in the Reception year ensures all settle in quickly and make good progress. The behaviour of most children is outstanding. However, many still have lower than expected skills levels when they join Year 1, in key areas such as language and literacy and mathematical development. Pupils' good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 with most achieving the expected standards. In Key Stage 2, there is a history of low attainment by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and a range of effective strategies are in place to counter this issue.

In the first year since the amalgamation, the school set about improving teaching and learning by a number of means, including creating four sets of pupils from the three Year 6 classes and grouping them by ability for English and mathematics. The impact of these measures was very noticeable. The current Year 6 are now on course to meet their targets but standards are still below average overall. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory, but there is some variation in the quality, limiting the amount of progress pupils make in some lessons.

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Senior leaders recognise the need to develop the roles of subject leaders and ensure that they too, play their part in further improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Governors are very supportive of the school but they are insufficiently involved in monitoring provision and outcomes.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science by:
  - making teaching, learning and the curriculum more consistently good or outstanding
  - ensuring that all teachers manage pupils' behaviour in lessons more effectively.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels have a positive impact on raising standards and improving teaching by:
  - closely monitoring the quality of teaching and learning as it happens
  - ensuring governors collect sufficient first-hand evidence to enable them to hold the school to account for the quality of its provision and outcomes.
- – About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The overwhelming majority of pupils are keen, enthusiastic learners. They value the support that they receive and enjoy lessons. However, some teachers are not as successful as others in controlling disruptive behaviour and this has a detrimental impact on the quality of learning and the progress pupils make.

Although standards are below average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6, school data for the last two years clearly show that most pupils are making satisfactory progress from their starting points. The rate of progress made by pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good, reflecting the more consistently good quality of teaching and learning in these classes. Improved attainment in English and mathematics by Year 6 was apparent in the year following the amalgamation. Records show that the improvement is continuing with eight out of ten pupils making satisfactory progress. A strong focus on improving standards in mathematics last year has successfully raised achievement and the school's attention is now firmly focused on improving standards in English. Pupils' skills in writing are still well-below average. In science, the curriculum has been modified to give pupils more first-hand learning experiences in order to raise standards.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to ensure their own safety. Parents' questionnaires show that the vast majority agree that this is true. Behaviour is satisfactory. A small minority sometimes make things difficult for other

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pupils but effective strategies are in place for any pupils to express their feelings and concerns not only to staff but to their peers. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and the school has gained the Healthy School Award. Pupils play an active part in the school community, for example as school councillors, 'talk partners' or librarians, but they have relatively few opportunities at present to contribute to the wider community. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are knowledgeable about different cultures and most are keen to live up to the code of conduct in each class. The respect shown in the Remembrance Day assembly made it a deeply moving occasion for all.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

At present, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching and learning and as a result, pupils' make inconsistent progress as they move through the school. During the inspection, a higher proportion of good or better lessons was seen in Key Stage 1 and the Reception year than in Key Stage 2, but there were examples of inadequate teaching in both key stages. Overly long introductions, a slow pace and inattention that

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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is not managed effectively enough are the main characteristics in these inadequate lessons. This is slowing pupils' progress. Where teaching is good or better, planning for pupils of different abilities is thorough and well-chosen activities successfully capture pupils' attention, making them concentrate well. In these lessons, there are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and most pupils are too busy to have the time to think about misbehaving. As a result, all the groups represented in the class make good progress. In one outstanding lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm was infectious and created a buzz of excitement as pupils re-wrote a traditional story, with Cinderella as the villain. Assessment procedures are improving and are providing more accurate information for staff to identify underachievers. Some staff make more effective use of this information than others when planning their lessons and this accounts for some of the variation in the quality of learning opportunities.

The curriculum is being overhauled to make it more creative, interesting and relevant to pupils. This is a positive development but it has not yet had time to make sufficient impact on standards by Year 6, particularly in English and mathematics. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support for those who have English as an additional language is readily available in each class from teaching assistants. The curriculum is further enriched with a good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy attending the after-school club. They are cared for very well and have a broad range of experiences both indoors and out which add effectively to their learning and skills.

In a recent inspection of the Infant School prior to amalgamation, the quality of care, support and guidance was judged as outstanding. The high standards have been maintained. The staff throughout share a wholehearted commitment to the safety and welfare of pupils and work tirelessly to ensure they receive the best possible care and attention during their time at school. A nurture group to support the most needy pupils has recently been created. The breakfast club is well-managed and gives pupils a healthy start to their day. Building self-confidence and self-esteem is seen as crucial to ensure all pupils and especially the most needy become effective learners and achieve their true potential. The staff do this very successfully.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The highly effective headteacher, supported by the newly assembled leadership team,

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are doing their utmost to eliminate systematically the legacy of underachievement and weld the two schools together. It is clear from discussions with staff and the response of parents that the school community values highly the headteacher's passionate commitment to meeting pupils' needs and securing school improvement. However, many of the staff with leadership responsibilities are new to their role and so changes they have made and are making have yet to produce improved outcomes for pupils. Subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, for example, or supporting senior staff well enough to eliminate weaknesses in teaching.

The governors are highly respected, well led and organised. Together they have tackled some difficult issues following the amalgamation. They know what the current priorities for improvement are. Their financial expertise is used wisely but they are far too reliant on the school staff for information about targets, provision and outcomes. Overall, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

The school has a highly positive relationship with all groups of parents and carers, as reflected in the parents' and carers' questionnaires. The school's systems for keeping parents and carers informed, supporting them with three family workers, and involving them in their children's learning are highly effective. They are helping to successfully promote pupils' well-being and learning.

Pirton Hill Primary is an inclusive school and actively promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and found that they meet requirements fully and are consistently applied. The safeguarding of pupils is good and the school responds quickly to any concerns raised. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is a cohesive community but links with the international community are at an early stage of development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>



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**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money**

**3**

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well, giving children a good start and a firm foundation for their future learning.

Children enter the three Reception classes with levels of skills and understanding that are well below those typical for their age. The majority make good progress relative to their starting points in all areas of learning. The most rapid gains are in their behaviour, attitude to learning and relationships with one another and adults. This is because of the high quality of care, support and guidance offered to children and their parents or carers, which begins before they start school. It cements the excellent relationships between staff, parents and carers and their children.

Accurate assessments give staff a clear picture of the progress children are making and learning is tailored well to meet individual needs. As a result, children benefit from the consistently good quality of teaching and learning. The staff are constantly seeking to introduce a 'wow' factor and activities such as an 'Ugly Bug Ball' and a Diwali celebration enrich the children's learning experiences. The exciting curriculum ensures the right balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities, enabling all children to enjoy their Reception year thoroughly. The staff provide a stimulating environment that is well resourced and their careful planning ensures a good range of learning experiences indoors. Outdoor learning is satisfactory but restricted currently by building work.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of those who returned the questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the school. However, a small minority indicated that they felt unhappy about pupils' behaviour and the effect that this was having on their children's learning. Inspectors looked into this, mainly through conversations with pupils, observing lessons and looking at the school's policies and procedures. Pupils did not express any undue concern, although they wished 'some could behave as well as they do'. The school has very clear policies and actions in place to deal with bullying and to minimise the impact of this disruptive behaviour.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pirton Hill Primary school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 530 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	52	34	42	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	48	38	47	4	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	46	37	46	3	4	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	33	46	57	7	9	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	31	38	44	54	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	37	43	53	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	41	39	48	6	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	28	43	53	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	27	47	58	5	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	28	45	56	8	10	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	22	47	58	10	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	30	37	45	56	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	52	33	41	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 November, 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pirton Hill Primary School, Luton, LU4 9EX

Thank you very much for being so helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. It was a pleasure to be with so many friendly and happy young people, who are clearly proud of their school.

Overall, we found Pirton Hill Primary to be a satisfactory school with some really strong points. The school's main strength lies in the excellent care and support given to you by the staff. They make sure that you are all safe, and they help you to have a clear sense of what is right and wrong and how to behave towards each other. We hope that it is not too long before everyone lives up to the high expectations of how you should behave, especially during your lessons.

All of you get off to such a good start in the Reception year and make good progress. This is thanks to the hard work of the staff. We can see how much you enjoy all the activities in class and outdoors. We expect that you too will be pleased when the builders have finished work and gone so you can do more outside.

Well done to Years 1 and 2 for keeping up the good progress and doing so well in reading, writing and mathematics to achieve your targets. It was good to see that standards are improving by Year 6, but there is still much to do if you are to gain the valuable skills that you need in English, mathematics and science.. The inspectors found some things that the school could do better to help you to learn faster and achieve those vital skills. We would like the school to do the following:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 by helping all of you to make faster progress. To do this your teachers must make all your lessons more interesting and exciting and you must concentrate really hard, all the time.
- involve all staff and governors more in finding ways to make your learning more challenging and effective.

You have got your new school off to a satisfactory start. We hope the older pupils will continue trying your best to improve your work and achieve higher standards.

May I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joe Peacock

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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