

Pitmaston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116769
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338887
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	584
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barrie Morgan
Headteacher	Mr T J Ireson
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation, particularly records of safeguarding and those showing the school's systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress.

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

- whether teaching and learning in class are good enough for pupils to make satisfactory progress
- to what extent use is made of assessment, by teachers in class to support pupils' progress, and by managers to evaluate the school's effectiveness
- whether the strengths in pupils' personal development have been maintained
- to what extent the improvements identified by leaders in monitoring are making an impact on teachers' and managers' practice.

Information about the school

This is a very large primary school in a suburban area of Worcester. The very large majority of pupils are of White British origin, with a small number from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. Most pupils speak English as their mother tongue. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. There are three classes which provide for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are of Reception age. In addition, there is a pre-school provision on site for younger children, which is managed by the governing body, which took over this responsibility from a private provider in September of this year. A new headteacher took up post in September 2009, after two terms when the school was managed by the deputy, following the retirement of the previous headteacher. The school has gained a number of awards, including SportsMark and Healthy School status.

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

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education and is improving after a dip in pupils' progress. It is a happy and positive community where pupils enjoy learning and behave well. Their personal development was good at the last inspection and this strength has been maintained. Pupils get on well together and contribute positively to the community in school and beyond. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Achievement is only satisfactory because there are inconsistencies in the progress that pupils make. After the last inspection, attainment, although remaining above average in some areas, fell in successive years. This decline has now halted and pupils are making satisfactory progress in class, although this remains inconsistent. Attainment is currently average. The most recent provisional results in national tests for pupils in Year 6 reflect broadly average attainment in English and mathematics, and significantly above average attainment in science.

The inconsistent progress is because of variation in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall, but varies from outstanding to inadequate. Strengths in teaching include good relationships and clear expectations so that pupils are keen to learn and have positive attitudes. Teachers prepare interesting activities for pupils and generally explain things to them well, often using the interactive whiteboard to clarify ideas. Better lessons feature a brisk pace, good use of assessment to match work to pupils' different needs and a lively and enthusiastic presentation from the teacher that generates interest and excitement. Weaker lessons often happen when the pace slows, and pupils are waiting to get on with the next activity, or when some pupils are given work that is too easy or too hard for them. Marking is variable and, while in some instances it gives pupils clear pointers on how they can improve, other examples do not. The accuracy of teachers' assessments and their use of data in monitoring progress have been extremely variable in the past, and this is rightly a current priority for the senior leadership team. Good systems for assessing and tracking progress are now in place, but teachers need practice in using them, and it is too soon to see much impact on pupils' attainment.

The curriculum has a number of significant strengths, particularly in the way enrichment activities enthuse and engage pupils, but it is not consistently adapted to meet the particular needs of different pupils. The school maintains a secure, caring ethos which strongly supports pupils' good personal development. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that adults will deal with any problems. On a day-to-day basis, all members of staff take great care to make sure that pupils are kept safe, and support their emotional needs well. However, the systems of record keeping with regard to safeguarding are weak. Paperwork is somewhat chaotic and, although it meets statutory requirements,

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does not provide a good working tool that staff can use easily. In particular, although vulnerable pupils are supported well in a variety of ways by people in the school, and through good external partnerships with other organisations, the records of this support are not drawn together so that all those concerned have the full picture.

The management and leadership of the school have specific strengths, particularly in ensuring pupils have equal access to all aspects of school life, and that their personal development is good. However, most areas of management are only satisfactory, although there is a gathering momentum of improving practice. Until recently, the monitoring of teaching and learning was weak, with most leaders unable to get a clear understanding of their areas of responsibility. Subject leaders are only just starting to have the chance to work alongside colleagues in class to share expertise. Previously, they had minimal impact on driving things forward, as they had too little time allocated for this.

A good start was made in improving monitoring under the leadership of the deputy headteacher earlier this year. This has accelerated under the effective leadership of the new headteacher since September. A focus on assessment and learning in classrooms by senior leaders has ensured clear feedback to help teachers to improve their practice, and pupils' progress is improving as a result. Staff are working as an increasingly effective team to monitor outcomes and address issues, but there is a long way to go before the new systems are fully embedded and effective. Governors, while supportive of the school, have only recently come to a clearer understanding of its strengths and weaknesses so they can hold it to account. The halt in the decline in standards, and the improvements in teaching and learning over the last year, show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' progress by making teaching more consistent and assessment more accurate so that:
- teachers always match work accurately to the different needs and abilities of the pupils in the class
 - marking more consistently gives pupils clear pointers to help them improve
 - the pace of learning is maintained throughout lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of monitoring at all levels by:
- fully involving all staff in monitoring the progress of individuals and groups
 - making sure that leaders and managers, particularly subject leaders, have better information about provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility, and have more opportunities to work alongside colleagues to share their expertise
 - developing clear, systematic ways for governors to monitor the school's work
 - sharing the results of monitoring methodically and using them to improve provision.

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- Improve the way in which records are kept for safeguarding, particularly in integrating the different sources of information about vulnerable pupils.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils' personal development is a continuing strength of the school. Pupils behave well in class and are keen to succeed, which contributes well to their improving progress. They are polite, friendly and caring, and have good relationships with each other regardless of gender, ethnic background or age. Year 6 explained that bullying is rare because, 'We take bullying seriously...' and that if there are problems, '...the headteacher will always sort it out.' They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, join in sports sessions and physical education lessons with enthusiasm, and talk knowledgeably about the need for a balanced diet. They have a very good understanding of keeping themselves safe, for example on the roads, and older pupils showed a very good knowledge of how to behave in the event of a fire. In the playground, pupils play boisterously and enthusiastically, but take care to follow rules so that they and others are safe.

Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, and do so conscientiously, particularly in helping younger children. This contribution to the community is extended through the school council, which pupils are confident makes a major contribution to the life of the school because their views are valued and acted upon. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of cultural and community activities. They work independently when required from an early age, but also display good teamwork skills when working in pairs or groups. This aspect of their preparation for their futures is good, but is undermined because their progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is only satisfactory. Attendance has fallen recently because of an increase in families taking holidays in term time, and is average.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and, until recently, attainment had been falling at both key stages. This trend has now been reversed and pupils' progress in class is better, but there has not been time for improvements to raise standards to the consistently above average levels of a few years ago. The improvement is clearest in better provisional results in science in the national tests for Year 6 in 2009, which were significantly above average, having been the weakest subject in the previous year. The fall in English and mathematics scores for this group was also halted, but results in these subjects (although still broadly average) have not shown as much improvement. Across the school, pupils are making satisfactory progress, and make good progress in many lessons, but too many inconsistencies remain in both teaching and learning for overall progress to be good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress in lessons as their classmates because of extra support to help them cope with the work. When they receive specific help in small groups, such as for the weakest Year 6 pupils in a supported mathematics set, they make good, and

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sometimes excellent, progress.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The good care, guidance and support identified at the last inspection continue to be significant strengths of the school, despite some weaknesses in paperwork. Consistent expectations of behaviour and attitudes are supported well by the 'values' programme which provides pupils with a clear understanding of right and wrong and helps them to develop as caring and responsible members of the community. The provision to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well managed so that pupils' emotional and academic progress is supported effectively. In class, the work of support staff ensures these pupils cope with what is provided, and they receive good quality teaching in small groups outside the classroom. Pupils are confident that staff will support them, academically or with personal issues, if they need help.

Teaching is satisfactory but still too variable, especially in the use of assessment. Teachers are good at engaging pupils' enthusiasm. Year 6 pupils agree that, 'Teachers make lessons fun and interesting.' Teachers make good use of practical activities and

¹ 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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give pupils helpful opportunities to discuss their work together, and this supports their academic and social development. Teachers often make effective use of support staff to help pupils with special educational needs to keep up, and increasingly prepare different, easier work for them, though this is not consistent. At times, opportunities are missed to specifically target support on other pupils who are not making the progress they should.

The curriculum includes a number of interesting elements that pupils find exciting and motivating, including learning French or Spanish, visits out and visitors to school, and theme days such as the St Lucia day that pupils in Year 2 thoroughly enjoyed during the inspection. There are some very good examples of links between subjects that make learning more meaningful to pupils, but these are not developed consistently. Information and communication technology is covered effectively when pupils learn basic skills in the computer suites. However, there are too few opportunities to use these skills in other lessons back in class, because of a lack of equipment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: 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, working closely with the deputy, has made a rigorous and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking impressive steps to address the most important issues. More good lessons are taking place because high expectations of teaching and learning have been made clear, backed up by monitoring of lessons and feedback to staff on their practice. However, most leaders have had only limited involvement in helping to monitor provision so far. A much more effective system to track pupils' progress and address any issues that arise has been devised, but is in the early stages of implementation. These changes mean that self-evaluation is well placed to improve from its current satisfactory levels.

Parents are generally pleased with the school, but there are some who have worries about aspects of their children's education, which the school has not yet been able to alleviate. A strength of the school is how it provides equally well for all pupils to achieve and to enjoy their education. Suitable safeguarding procedures are in place, but the documentation of this is weak. Community cohesion is promoted well within the school and in the local area, through links with other schools and organisations. A link that is developing with a school in China has the potential to expand pupils' understanding of the wider world. However, relatively little is in place to promote cohesion within the

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context of the wide range of communities in the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision in the Reception classes mirrors many of the strengths and weaknesses in the main school. Records show that children come into the classes achieving at the expected levels, and leave Reception with average standards, having made satisfactory progress. Provision is improving quickly as the leader is establishing increasingly consistent practice across the three classes. Progress observed during the inspection was mainly good, but not consistently so. A good use of the outdoor area, a range of interesting activities, and positive relationships are significant strengths. Teachers are increasingly using assessments of children's work to plan the next steps in their learning, but at times there is still a lack of challenge in what is expected.

The recent takeover of the pre-school on site has gone smoothly despite changes in personnel. The children have quickly settled in and are enjoying playing and learning in a safe and welcoming environment. They are learning well from a variety of interesting, practically based activities. Closer links with the Reception teachers give these children a good basis for their move into the school at age four. Discussions with the local authority's extended services are under way to enhance provision further.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are generally very positive about the school. Many praise the way their children are cared for and are confident that they are kept safe. They very largely agree that their children enjoy school. A number of parents are rightly concerned about how much progress their children have made, and the extent to which particular needs are met. The new leadership team had already identified and prioritised these issues, and is addressing them well. Although some parents are concerned about how effectively poor behaviour is handled, the inspectors saw almost uniformly good behaviour, with some outstanding, and most pupils are confident that this issue is handled well. A minority of parents are concerned about how well the school takes account of their worries.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pitmaston 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 254 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 584 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	138	54	109	43	7	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	142	56	107	42	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	104	41	137	54	10	4	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	110	43	114	45	21	8	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	116	46	121	48	8	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	103	41	139	55	11	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	110	43	133	52	6	2	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)	91	36	137	54	11	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	97	38	129	51	19	7	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	87	34	129	51	19	7	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	28	142	56	25	10	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	71	28	147	58	10	4	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	128	48	128	48	8	3	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



25 October 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Pitmaston Primary School, Worcester, WR2 4ZF

Thank you for all your help and your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education, and things are improving. You are reaching the standards expected of you by the time you leave, and usually do well in science. You often make good progress in lessons, but this doesn't happen all the time, especially when some of you get work that is too hard or too easy for you. We have agreed with your teachers that they are going to improve how they check up on your progress, so that you always get work that is at just the right level.

We were pleased to see your good behaviour and how well you all get along together. You told us that you enjoy school, because you get lots of interesting things to do. We found that you know a lot about keeping healthy and staying safe. You work hard in class and are keen to do well. The older pupils are very conscientious in doing jobs around the school, especially helping the younger children.

The adults look after you well, but their written records about how they do this are a bit mixed up, so we have agreed with the headteacher that these need to be improved. The adults are keen to make the school better and are working hard to do this. We have suggested that they should all be more involved in keeping an eye on how things are going, and working together more so they can share ideas on how to improve the school.

You can help the adults to make it better by keeping up your good behaviour and hard work in class, and always telling your teachers if you are finding work too hard or too easy. We hope you carry on enjoying your time at school.

Yours faithfully,

Steven Hill

Lead inspector

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