

Pulham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121051
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339848
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Fran Pitt-Pladdy
Headteacher	Miss Lesley Farrer
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
School address	Harleston Road Pulham Market Norfolk
Telephone number	013 7967 6313
Fax number	013 7967 6679
Email address	office@pulham.norfolk.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited two assemblies, seven lessons and observed five teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, at procedures for keeping pupils safe, at the school improvement plan and analysed 50 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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

- the differences in the attainment and progress of boys and girls in mathematics
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in meeting the needs of different groups
- pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths, cultures and beliefs.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school serving the village of Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary and the surrounding area. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. None speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or difficulties and the number with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average.

The school gained the Healthy School and the sports Activemark awards in 2009.

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

Pulham Church of England Primary is a satisfactory school. It is a calm and well ordered school, and its strengths lie in the care it provides for the pupils, the welcoming and inclusive ethos and its commitment to the local community. The school supports pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils behave well and enjoy school.

The large majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills and understanding at the expected level for their age, and they achieve well. In the school as a whole, achievement is satisfactory because in Years 1 to 6, pupils' rates of progress are variable due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. There is some, but not enough, consistently good teaching to enable pupils to make accelerated progress. Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan lessons that routinely challenge all pupils.

In recent years, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science has been broadly average and sometimes above average in mathematics. The large majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to attain the nationally expected level in English and mathematics by the end of the year. Currently, pupils' attainment is slightly higher in mathematics than in writing. This is because pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to practise and extend their writing skills in a range of subjects.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well but has been less effective in quickening their academic development. The staff are in the process of reviewing the way the curriculum is organised and taught. Greater emphasis is being placed on ensuring pupils make the links in learning between the different subjects. The changes have yet to be consolidated but are already having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Information and communication technology is not always used effectively to support pupils' learning and to accelerate their progress but this has been identified as a priority in the school improvement and development plan.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. The headteacher is committed to the school and the local community. She is supported well by all staff and governors, who make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and reflects the school's strengths and areas for development. Middle leaders are enthusiastic but have yet to fully develop their roles in leading their subjects and contributing to whole school improvement. Assessment information is analysed regularly but not used consistently to raise expectations and ensure all pupils make more than the expected rate of progress.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good practice in teaching to ensure that more lessons are taught well by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are planned to meet the needs and challenge all groups of pupils
 - making greater use of information and communication technology to support learning.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in a range of subject areas.
- Embed the recent changes made to the curriculum to ensure pupils make the links in their learning between subjects.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels develop their roles and use assessment information more effectively to accelerate pupils' progress from satisfactory to good.
- 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 enjoy school. They feel safe and relaxed. Younger children value the buddy system and appreciate the support of older pupils when they start school. Pupils are confident and readily engage visitors in conversation. They have a good understanding of internet safety. They get on well with each other and have a good understanding of right and wrong. The pupils' commitment to healthy living and to taking part in sporting activities has contributed to the school being awarded the Healthy School and the sports Activemark awards. Pupils' eat healthily, enjoy sports and exercise. All pupils present keenly participated in the Sports Relief fundraising event: approximately £1000 was sent into school during the inspection. Pupils want to take on responsibility and eagerly volunteer to be members of the school council. They are keen to help improve the school and take part in local events. Pupils are reflective and their knowledge of other faiths, cultures, values and beliefs is developing satisfactorily. Pupils are looking forward to links being firmly established with schools in South Africa and in Toulouse.

In lessons, pupils are attentive. They speak positively about their teachers and support staff. They enjoy the opportunities to work together in pairs. Pupils are motivated and respond well to challenge, but some say the work is often too easy, especially in English and mathematics. The content of pupils' writing is developing satisfactorily. They write for a range of purposes and audiences. Their use of punctuation, vocabulary and sentence construction is broadly in line with expectations. However, pupils do not consistently use adventurous vocabulary or apply their knowledge of conjunctions, similes and more advanced punctuation to reach the higher levels. Handwriting is often untidy and letters are poorly formed. In mathematics, pupils enjoy the opportunities to

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

investigate number and shape. The practical approach in a Year 5 and 6 lesson enabled pupils to develop their understanding of the properties of three-dimensional shapes and the use of subject specific vocabulary to describe shapes to a partner. Their skills in undertaking investigations and their use and understanding of subject specific mathematical and scientific vocabulary are developing well.

Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory support. This enables them to make progress similar to their peers. The differences in performance in 2009 for girls and boys in Years 2 and 6 are not typical of achievement across the school and were cohort related. Overall, the progress of boys and girls is broadly similar.

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 level of care, particularly for pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable, is good. Relationships are good and all pupils feel safe. They know that they can turn to staff if they have any concerns and they will be listened to. The school works well with a wide range of agencies and local cluster schools to promote pupils' learning. It welcomes the involvement of parents and carers. The school monitors attendance

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

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

closely and is aware that attendance rates have fallen recently from above the national average to broadly average. It attributes this mainly to increased absence due to illness. Within an overall satisfactory picture, teaching has a number of good features. Relationships are good and teachers explain clearly what is to be learnt in each lesson. They display good subject knowledge and promote pupils' use and understanding of subject specific vocabulary. In the better lessons, pupils of all abilities are challenged. Teachers make effective use of questioning strategies. Initial answers are probed and pupils' thinking is consolidated and extended. The lessons proceed at a quick pace and there is good balance between the teacher's and the pupils' contributions. However, at times pupils' progress is restricted because the work is not matched closely enough to the different levels of attainment. In these lessons, some pupils do not make accelerated progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially by supporting those who find learning difficult. However, at times they are not deployed effectively at the start and end of lessons. Assessment strategies to support learning are improving but are still in the early stages of development. Pupils have a good understanding of their targets in literacy and numeracy. They are increasingly and rightly being asked to self-evaluate their own learning. Their understanding of their next steps for improvement is variable. Whilst there are some good examples of marking, it does not consistently offer clear advice or raise expectations.

Staff are in the process of reviewing the curriculum to develop a more creative approach. This is to ensure that basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are consolidated and extended through topic work. Themed days and weeks present staff with good opportunities to promote learning across all subjects and provide an added stimulus for the pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. These contribute effectively to promoting the pupils' personal development.

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 headteacher, staff and governors are committed to improving provision for the pupils. Improvements have been made to the school building and a library has been established. Work is in progress for the development of the outdoor environment. An impressive physical adventure structure has recently been erected with further work

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

planned for the near future. Much care is taken by all staff in ensuring the displays around the school are of a high quality and celebrate the pupils' accomplishments. The school's self-evaluation of its own performance is slightly more generous than inspectors found it to be. However, the recently introduced systems for recording and analysing pupils' attainment and progress are beginning to be used to scrutinise the work of the school more effectively. As a result, there is a sharper focus on identifying the precise areas for development. Expectations are rising as staff are increasingly being held to account for the progress their pupils are making and the role of middle leaders evolves. Governors take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They have undertaken a detailed self-evaluation and are increasingly challenging the school. They set suitably challenging targets and monitor the work of the school closely. Their work has yet to make an impact on pupils' progress.

Governors ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures are thorough and implemented consistently. Staff and governors promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily. They welcome pupils to the school and ensure that all are included.

The school's contribution to promoting cohesion is good. The governors, headteacher and staff know the local community well and have done much to involve the school in local activities. Pupils take part in a wide range of local events and contribute to the parish magazine. The school holds the International School award. Developments are well under way to establish links with schools nationally and internationally. This is to enhance the pupils' understanding of other cultures and to prepare them for living in today's global society.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff use their good understanding of how young children learn to plan a good range of stimulating activities that maintain the children's interests. Children are carefully monitored to ensure that all are actively engaged in learning throughout the day. Sessions are well planned so that children take part in focused teaching activities and have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. Overall, there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Effective use is made of the outdoor area as a natural extension of the classroom to promote the children's creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, not enough use is currently being made of the area to promote the children's literacy and numeracy skills.

The established links with the village pre-school; good relationships with parents and the good induction arrangements help the children to settle quickly, feel safe and develop their self-confidence. They work and play well together and are developing good social skills. Their behaviour is good. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy living and follow routines which promote good hygiene practices. They know the importance of washing their hands before handling food.

The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. She ensures that children's safety is given high priority and their attainment is regularly assessed. Parents are kept informed weekly on their children's learning. Their views are valued and used appropriately to plan the next steps in learning. As a result, the children are making good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The vast majority of the responses from parents and carers were entirely supportive of the school's work. Their positive views are generally confirmed by inspection evidence. A particularly high percentage of parents and carers stated that their children enjoy school, that it helps them to have a healthy life style and that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. A few parent and carers felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour is good and that staff implement the behaviour policy with reasonable consistency.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pulham Church of England 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 124 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	72	14	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	58	20	40	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	58	20	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	58	20	40	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	62	19	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	52	22	44	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	60	18	36	0	0	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)	21	42	22	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	58	20	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	32	26	52	4	8	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	38	25	50	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	46	21	42	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	58	20	40	1	2	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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pulham Church of England Primary School, Pulham Market, IP21 4SZ

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

You showed us that you are keen to take responsibility and that you all get on together. You like getting involved in your local community. You have a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy keeping fit. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. You show respect for each other as you move safely around the school and in the playground.

By the end of Year 6, your attainment in English, mathematics and science is similar to that seen in most schools. Your attainment in mathematics tends to be better than that in writing. Your progress and achievement are satisfactory. You get off to a good start and make good progress in the Reception class but your progress slows a little in Years 1 to 6. This is because some of the lessons are not closely matched to your needs. To help you, we have asked the teachers to use their assessments of your work to plan lessons that will challenge you and to give you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in other lessons. We have also suggested that the governors, senior teachers and teachers analyse the school's results to see what needs to be done to make sure that your rate of progress is good.

Your teachers work hard. They have been looking carefully at the curriculum and have started to change some things to make your learning more interesting. This is a good approach so we have asked them to continue with this and to make more use of information and communication technology to help you learn.

Please remember, you must also play your part by always trying your best. Good luck for the future and remember to keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.