

The Pines Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134740
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	341520
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Doug Jennings
Headteacher	Mrs Kathleen Nugent
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They spent the majority of their time looking at teaching and learning. They visited 14 lessons, observing all teachers at least once, attended assemblies and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors scrutinised assessment information, pupils' books, records of pupils' progress and improvement plans. The team analysed 51 parental questionnaires, 99 responses to the pupil survey and 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

- how effectively teachers use assessment data to inform their planning and to what extent pupils are involved in assessing their own progress and identifying the next steps in their learning
- the impact of strategies to improve boys' writing
- the effectiveness of the school's action to improve attendance.

Information about the school

Pupil numbers have fluctuated in this average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen to above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average; the largest group is of pupils with learning difficulties that are related to literacy. Children of nursery and reception age are taught in an Early Years Foundation Stage unit. The school has National Healthy School Status and the Activemark award.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

From below expected levels of skills on entry, children get off to a sound start in the Nursery and Reception but the main school does not build on this. Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. There is too much inadequate teaching which is not helping to improve pupils' progress and they experience few good lessons.

Attainment is low and test results in 2009 for Year 6 pupils were well below average. A significant minority of pupils do not develop a firm platform for success at secondary school as they are not reaching nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. Few are working beyond this level, and there is a considerable gap in writing standards between girls and boys.

While all members of staff share the headteacher's commitment to pupils and their families, there is not a sufficiently determined drive to raise attainment. The main reasons for this underachievement are:

- expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and lessons often lack challenge, particularly for more-able pupils
- marking gives pupils limited guidance on how to improve their work
- action to improve boys' writing skills is having limited impact
- pupils' progress is not monitored sufficiently frequently to ensure that their personal targets are met
- leaders and managers are not tackling shortcomings in teaching robustly enough to improve pupils' progress
- monitoring and evaluation are not sufficiently robust to enable leaders and managers to identify whether their actions are having the desired impact.

There are some strengths. By forging strong links with parents, the school staff are supporting families and directing them towards appropriate local services. They also help parents to appreciate the importance of ensuring regular attendance and punctuality, both of which are improving. Nevertheless, parents' views about the school are mixed. Many expressed concerns in the inspection questionnaire about how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Most pupils behave well but a few pupils do not respond readily to teachers' expectations. This impedes their progress and slows learning for all, while teachers spend time repeating instructions. Pupils report that they feel safe and happy in school and have someone to confide in.

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Governors and school leaders have a broad understanding of the improvements needed, but evaluation is not incisive enough to identify the actions required to secure better teaching and learning. School planning does not focus sharply on what will raise pupils' achievement. Hence, the school has an inadequate capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupil progress by:
 - adopting strategies that engage pupils so that they take greater responsibility for their learning
 - making better use of time in lessons to increase the pace of learning
 - having higher expectations of pupils and ensuring that more-able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons
 - improving the quality of marking and increasing pupils' involvement in evaluating their own progress.
- Improve standards of boys' writing and basic skills by providing meaningful writing opportunities in all subjects.
- Increase the capacity for sustained improvement in the school by:
 - introducing a cycle of self-evaluation involving all, including parents
 - focusing planning on specific actions and measurable targets to eliminate inadequate teaching and raise pupils' achievement
 - checking the progress pupils make towards challenging targets more regularly so that action can be taken rapidly to eliminate potential underachievement
 - identifying where teachers' expertise needs improving and providing tailored professional development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils make inconsistent and often inadequate progress from year-to-year and between subjects as shown by results of national tests over the last three years. In the 2009 Year 6 national tests, results fell in English and mathematics and only a small number of pupils reached the higher levels. Lesson observations confirm that few pupils are currently working at higher levels and attainment remains well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils learning English as an additional language is also inadequate. Some pupils acquire new skills at an appropriate rate but this is not the case in all classes. Many pupils do not always consolidate their understanding by applying their skills in a variety of situations. Most pupils are able to collaborate well but teachers do not exploit this by encouraging them to discuss their ideas with each other. Pupils generally try hard and want to be successful but in some classes they quickly lose concentration unless closely supervised. Some do not complete tasks or take pride in the

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presentation of their work. A small but significant proportion of pupils do not take great interest in their learning. This is the case for some boys who, consequently, make slow progress, particularly in their writing.

However, pupils make a major contribution to school life. They take their responsibilities as representatives on the school council, house captains or playground helpers seriously. Pupils usually understand what they should do to stay fit and healthy, although a few do not demonstrate this consistently through their lunchtime eating. The school orchard and garden allotments for each class help pupils to appreciate the natural world. Pupils respect the values and customs of others and mostly treat each other with consideration. Participation in a UNICEF project helped them to gain a clearer understanding of their rights and responsibilities towards others.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Not enough teaching is of the quality required to inspire pupils or to move learning forward. Occasionally, activities spark pupils' interest, but these are not frequent. Teaching does not sufficiently engage pupils and lesson planning does not consistently

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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focus activities on individual pupil's learning needs. Pupils are starting to become involved in setting personal targets and assessing their own progress, but targets are often too general and feedback given by teachers, through their marking, is not always helpful. Classroom assistants are sometimes used effectively, but are not always deployed well enough to support pupils' learning throughout lessons.

Music and art play a major part in the life of the pupils. Close partnerships with other organisations, such as the local arts centre, make this possible. There are opportunities for all pupils in Year 4 to learn to play a brass instrument and older pupils can join the school's brass ensemble. Teachers are only starting to make links between subjects so that pupils' learning is more coherent. However, despite some examples, there are not enough opportunities to develop writing in a wide range of contexts for all pupils.

The school is a safe and secure environment and staff manage the transition into school, and between key stages smoothly. Key members of staff know pupils' circumstances well and provide appropriate support to help meet their needs. Individual reading programmes and personal tuition are both helping a few pupils to catch up when they have fallen behind in their learning although this is not always the case. Not all staff are effectively supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to meet their key targets, appropriately and consistently.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has coped with the challenges of recovering from a serious flood in late 2008 and major premises developments. Nevertheless, senior leaders and the governing body have not established a concerted drive to sustain improvements in learning so that the gap between pupils' attainment and national expectations closes. Since the previous inspection, monitoring has become more systematic, involving subject leaders more, but strategic planning does not place the rapid improvement of teaching at the heart of tackling the school's weaknesses.

The development of each individual teacher's skills is not having enough impact on pupils' progress. There are few opportunities for teachers to learn from others by observing them teach or working alongside them to develop specific expertise. Targets set for pupils are appropriately challenging, but the school is not clear whether they are meeting them. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are not used frequently enough for leaders to quickly pick up signs of underachievement.

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The school is involved in many activities to help the wider community become more cohesive. They also take their duty to promote equal opportunities seriously, although the gap in standards of writing between boys and girls is not closing. Senior leaders successfully ensure that the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. Staff and the governing body understand the school's context and participate in activities to support pupils and their families but have not evaluated their impact. Arrangements for vetting those in contact with pupils are appropriate. School policies meet safeguarding requirements and the governing body effectively checks their implementation. However it has not managed to ensure that all pupils' progress at a similar rate or that attainment is at least satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Arrangements for settling the children into the Nursery help them to feel secure. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in literacy and personal development. They are generally happy in the setting and collaborate well, developing their skills at a sound rate. Most are considerate when working with others, because adults model their expectations continually. The children understand the importance of a healthy diet and, as one girl working in the 'Chinese restaurant' put it, 'You eat vegetables because they are good for you.'

Adults use daily observations of the children at work and play to plan the next steps in their learning. All areas of learning are covered but planning does not always meaningfully link activities inside and outdoors to give the children greater purpose in

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their play. Learning is more effective during activities directed by the adults, such as session about the sounds that letters make (phonics). Adults do not use questions and other interactions skilfully to promote children's thinking. Most children develop independence and can initiate their own learning, for example when searching for buried treasure, but a small minority remain overly dependent on the adults to direct their learning.

Adults work well together and share a common sense of purpose. They are rigorous in ensuring the welfare of all children. Nevertheless, the use of of assessment and monitoring data is not sufficiently robust to ensure the setting's effectiveness.

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 happy with some aspects of the school but have concerns about others. Most report that their children enjoy school and feel safe. Inspection evidence does not support the views of parents who believe that teaching and their children's progress are good. A significant minority of parents have lost confidence in the school's leadership and its ability to listen to their concerns. The school is making concerted efforts to work more closely with parents but the governing body does not use parents views sufficiently frequently to inform school planning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Pines 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	51	19	38	4	8	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	15	29	28	55	2	4	4	8
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	26	28	55	4	8	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	26	31	61	6	12	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	15	29	27	53	2	4	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	28	29	57	3	6	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	31	30	59	2	4	1	2
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)	11	22	28	55	4	8	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	28	27	53	4	8	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	16	9	37	13	26	8	16
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	20	25	49	9	18	5	10
The school is led and managed effectively	7	14	23	45	13	26	5	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	24	26	51	7	14	3	6

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.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Pines Primary School, Bracknell, RG12 7WX

You will remember that inspectors visited your school recently and I am writing to let you know what we found out. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so ready to share your thoughts about your school. We had the opportunity to talk with many of you and we told your teachers you were very helpful and polite.

We recognise that The Pines Primary School does some things well but there are weaknesses in some important areas. For this reason, we have decided that your school requires help to improve. The youngest of you have a sound start in the Nursery and Reception classes but we think that many of you could be doing better in reading, writing and mathematics. Some of the teaching is not good enough and not all of you are making the progress you should. The main things we have asked the school to do are to:

- make lessons more challenging and exciting for you, involving you more in your learning and making marking more helpful
- improve boys' writing by developing your basic skills more quickly and finding ways to make writing more interesting
- make sure those in charge focus on improving your progress by helping teachers to develop their teaching skills.

I know that the adults in the school work hard and care for you. They will be helped to carry out these improvements and inspectors will visit regularly to check the progress they are making. You can all play your part in helping the school to improve by working hard, attending regularly and being punctual.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector

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