

Pilton Infants' School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 113128 |
| Local Authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 357270 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Alexander Baxter |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 172 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Stephen Edmonds |
| Headteacher | Jayne Kyle |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 December 2007 |
| School address | Abbey Road Barnstaple Devon EX31 1JU |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed seven teachers. They observed the school's work, and attended assemblies, evaluated break times, before- and after-school activities, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. In addition, questionnaires completed by 70 parents and carers and 12 staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- It checked the consistency of teaching and learning, especially in using assessment, to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well.
- It looked at the development of guided reading, in bring reading skills to a level which matches pupils' writing and numeracy skills.
- It examined the degree to which the leaders and managers seek to bring about and sustain continuous improvements in pupils' achievements and attendance by embedding shared and effective practice.

Information about the school

This is a broadly average-sized infants' school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, but there is a below average percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

- Pilton Infants is an outstanding school. Within a distinctive caring, family ethos, everyone is committed to doing the very best they can for the children. This highly effective unity of purpose and teamwork stems from the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. She receives highly effective support from senior managers and good support from the governing body.
- Underpinned by excellent self-evaluation, promoting school improvement and raising achievements by setting appropriately challenging targets are extremely well established and effective. Higher attainment in reading, improved progress by boys and a rise in pupils' attendance represent the latest examples of the school's excellent capacity to improve.
- Pupils are nurtured and are encouraged to maximise their full potential. This was seen in the wholehearted way Year 1 pupils recited and signed their own story about 'Lady Lovely O'Shiny and the Castle in the Woods' during the school's celebration assembly and the joyful teamwork of children in the Reception Year as they practised their 'Morris Dancing' in readiness for the Royal Wedding.
- Such examples typify the many stimulating and very well-supported learning activities provided within the school's outstanding curriculum and excellent care, support and guidance. One parent, reflecting the views of most, wrote 'What more can you ask when your daughters are desperate to be at school because they love it so much.' Inspection confirms that pupils, clearly, enjoy learning greatly and that additionally good safeguarding procedures mean that pupils feel very safe.
- The pupils' exemplary behaviour and diligent adoption of healthy lifestyles contribute also in no small measure to their excellent academic achievement. In particular, the way pupils channel their enthusiasm into their own and in support of each other's learning enriches their progress significantly in all parts of the school.
- Children have an excellent time and make outstanding progress in the Reception and Year 1 classes, especially in enjoying school and becoming independent learners. Good teaching and continuing efficient use of assessments lead to high levels of attainment by the end of Year 2 in speaking and listening, writing and mathematics, and now in reading. These show that pupils across the range of ability and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve extremely well.
- Although an increasing proportion of the teaching is outstanding, new intentions to reduce the time spent in adult-led whole-class teaching have not had full effect in a few lessons in Years 2. As a result, teaching is reported here as good overall and this confirms the school's own accurate monitoring.

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- Even so, by analysing pupils' performance and planning work that is sharply matched to pupils' abilities, for example during guided reading sessions, the school has lifted pupils' reading skills in recent school terms. In addition, by providing learning activities and topics such as 'animals', which are relevant to the pupils' interests, the school has also accelerated the progress of boys during the course of this academic year. The teachers' increasingly effective use of information and communication technology (ICT), including interactive whiteboards and their involvement of pupils in self-evaluation, is also making learning more interesting and enhancing pupils' independence as learners.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing strengths to improve the quality of teaching in Year 2 by ensuring that teachers spend less time leading whole-class discussions so that pupils have more opportunity to engage in practical learning either individually or in small groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and analysis of assessments show clearly that pupils are achieving extremely well. Good and better teaching, which enhances and is then supported by the pupils' excellent commitment and skills as independent and collaborative learners, promotes outstanding progress across the school. As a result, by the end of Year 2, attainment is high in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Excellent progress in lessons was evident in the Reception Year and Year 1 when pupils' interest and expectations were raised. This was the case, for example, in Year 1 classes during literacy and handwriting lessons, when all pupils responded to timed challenges and gave of their very best. The way in which pupils of all abilities, and increasingly boys, seek to learn, with and from each other, especially when working in small groups, reflects the very beneficial ethos in developing learning in all classes. The pupils' very positive attitudes reflect their developing self-confidence and great enjoyment of school. These factors illustrate also why all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with more ability, achieve with equal success in relation to their differing abilities.

Pupils' behaviour and relationships are excellent throughout the day and enrich their learning greatly in all parts of the school; as seen, for example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, when pupils, happily, shared ideas as they explored the relevance of words for their story about 'The Secret House'. Pupils respond extremely well to the very caring adults and clearly feel safe. Their great enjoyment of school is illustrated further by their improved and now above-average attendance. Pupils make excellent contributions to school and community events, currently promoting road safety, for example, and are diligent in undertaking responsibilities, such as membership of the school council. As a result, by the time they leave school, the pupils' outstanding academic achievement and willingness to work and co-operate with other people prepare them very well for the next stage of their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Excellent features in the quality of learning across the whole school contribute to the pupils' outstanding progress. Most notably, it is the teachers' consistent emphasis and success in developing pupils as thinking, self-reliant and collaborative learners and the pupils' wholehearted commitment that underpin the pupils' equally outstanding academic and personal achievement. Information from assessment is used very effectively to identify relevant learning objectives and to plan work which accurately meets pupils' needs. In most classes, for most of the time, but in particular in the Reception Year and Year 1, teachers are extremely effective in adapting their teaching strategies to match pupils' interests and understanding. This was evident in a typical guided-reading lesson in Year 1 when the teacher used praise very effectively to engage pupils fully and to advance their understanding and ability to tackle tricky words. Teachers' questioning is focused accurately on clarifying learning objectives and building new learning from pupils' responses and ideas. Also, consistently in the Reception Year and in Year 1, and for most of the time in Year 2 classes, the questioning keeps pupils engaged very productively in learning. However, on occasions in Year 2, whole-class discussions continue for too long and a few pupils lose interest and are not sufficiently included in good learning. The school is tackling this already with some success and plans identify further use of existing best practice as a training model.

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Pupils have an excellent understanding of the quality of their work and what they need to do next in order to move forward. This is because teachers and learning support assistants are engaged constantly in a dialogue with pupils about their learning and provide clear guidance and targets when they mark pupils' work. Also, teachers provide small group or one-to-one support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and work very closely with outside agencies to enhance the quality of the support and learning activities available. Arrangements for the care of pupils are extremely well organised and contribute strongly to their social development, safety at school and well-being. The curriculum is outstanding and the way subjects are linked together seamlessly is a significant strength. Examples of this were seen when inspectors observed literacy taught through topics such as animals, following a visit to a zoo. Excellent displays of various customs, cultures and historical characters illustrate the rich learning experiences provided in all parts of the school. The school also makes effective use of much improved ICT resources to enthuse pupils and advance their independent learning skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear and unwavering vision of improvement for the school. This strong drive and ambition is also supported and implemented very well by senior staff. The governing body, with several new members, is undergoing a period of change. Nevertheless, with strong leadership in key positions, governance is effective and has contributed well to improved pupils' attendance, resourcing for ICT and adaptations to outdoor learning facilities for children in Reception classes. The governing body, very well informed by the headteacher, also fulfils its statutory duties effectively. For example, enriched by excellent partnerships with outside agencies, arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, including safe recruitment and child protection procedures, are implemented well. There is an obvious sense of purpose in this strongly self-evaluative school. Monitoring is very effective in bringing improvement and in securing the excellent value for money evident in the pupils' outstanding personal and academic achievements. The school's strong ability to bring improvement is particularly evident this year, for example, in bringing boys' achievements closer to those of girls. This increase in boys' skills also reflects the staff's highly effective promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils and elimination of discrimination across all aspects of the school's work. The pupils' very positive attitudes also reflect the school's good partnership with parents and carers. The school fosters community cohesion well. There are very close links with local schools and the local community. National and international aspects are developed well through

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topics, such as 'Great Britain', high-quality displays of culture and religious customs and through visitors to the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision is extremely well led and planned and ensures that children's welfare is safeguarded fully. Recent improvements to the outdoor facilities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are promoting the children's outstanding progress. There is a clear emphasis on promoting children's independent learning skills, very successfully now because children can experience either indoor or outdoor activities freely. This has enhanced boys' interest and progress and, for example, has also brought children's progress in creative development to the same above-average level evident in other areas of learning. All children, for example, were fully enthused by their making of and playing within their 'Wolf-proof Little Pigs' Houses'. Excellent teaching is underpinned by exemplary assessment of the children's progress, which, through detailed planning, directs the precise targeting of children's individual needs. Children enjoy learning in the knowledge that, through empathetic, but sharply focused questioning from adults, their ideas and effort are appreciated. This results also in excellent outcomes, not least, for example, the children's high-quality writing about their 'Three Little Pigs' topic.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

There was a broadly average response rate to the questionnaire by parents and carers, with the vast majority of responses indicating that, overall, they are happy with their children's experience at this school. A few parents and carers spoke with an inspector and also expressed very supportive views, which the inspectors fully endorse. A few statements and additional written comments mostly reflected concerns about the information that the school provides about pupils' progress. Inspectors considered the parents' and carers' concerns and find that, as the very large majority indicated, the school provides good information to parents and carers about their children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pilton Infants 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 172 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 45 | 64 | 25 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 41 | 59 | 27 | 39 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 26 | 37 | 34 | 49 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 4 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 28 | 40 | 37 | 53 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 40 | 57 | 27 | 39 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 29 | 41 | 36 | 51 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 33 | 47 | 35 | 50 | 2 | 3 | 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) | 31 | 44 | 34 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 29 | 41 | 37 | 53 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 24 | 34 | 45 | 64 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 24 | 34 | 39 | 56 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 29 | 41 | 37 | 53 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 42 | 60 | 27 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 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 all 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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pilton Infants' School, Barnstaple, EX31 1JU

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome that you gave us during our recent inspection of your school. We give special thanks too to those members of the school council who spoke with one of my colleagues. We were very impressed by your behaviour and by your willingness to learn, with and from each other. We found Pilton Infants to be an outstanding school, where you make excellent progress and have a happy time. There are lots of things to be proud of. These are the other main things we found.

- You work hard and make outstanding progress.
- You contribute very well in all activities and are very good at living healthily.
- Teachers are good at teaching you new things and are particularly successful in teaching you how to learn together and for yourselves.
- Staff take excellent care of you and keep you safe.
- Your headteacher is an outstanding leader who is working very effectively with the staff and governing body to make sure that the school continues to improve.

All this adds up to an outstanding school, but as your headteacher says, quite rightly, 'Outstanding doesn't mean that we can't get better.' So we have asked the school to help staff in Year 2 to spend less time teaching you in whole-class groups so that you have more time to work at your own level, either by yourself or in small groups. You can all help by continuing to give of your very best in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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