

Pytchley Endowed Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122028
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359151
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Judi Bedawi

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Tipler
Headteacher	Julia Havlickova
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed four teachers in nine lessons or parts of lessons. The inspection team held meetings with pupils, the staff, representatives of the governing body and had discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked in detail at pupils' books, a range of school documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment. The inspectors received and analysed 49 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

- Inspectors explored the initiatives used to improve writing skills and the impact on pupils' progress.
- They examined the effectiveness of monitoring strategies to raise attendance.
- They explored how well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage acquire basic social and early learning skills.

Information about the school

Pytchley Endowed Church of England is a very small village primary school. Many pupils come from nearby villages, with a few travelling from the small towns of Kettering and Wellingborough. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a broadly average proportion from different minority ethnic groups, of whom almost all are fluent in English. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Within this group, an average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils joining the school throughout the year is high. Significant staff changes over the last three years, largely due to illness and maternity leaves, have now stabilized. The headteacher teaches for three days a week. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were sitting the National Curriculum tests. The school has National Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school ensures that all its pupils, no matter how diverse their needs, receive a good quality of education. This is achieved within an exceptionally caring and supportive learning environment, strongly focused on raising standards and achievement. The schools' self-evaluation of its performance is accurate. The astute headteacher and her staff, supported well by the governing body, share the vision and determination that are rapidly driving the school forward, so that pupils are encouraged and enabled to succeed. Parents and carers value the attention given to their children's learning and welfare, for example saying, 'Our child has blossomed at Pytchley and academically has made massive improvements.'

Current standards are broadly average, with good recovery following a dip in performance in 2010. Writing skills are improving rapidly across the school, aided by focused learning of letters and sounds starting from the Reception class. Pupils use very good vocabulary accurately in their independent, imaginative writing. However, they do not always spell more complex words correctly, and do not develop skills early enough in using pens to write. Attainment in mathematics is much improved on 2010. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average for all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they use language confidently to express ideas or respond to others. Progress is accelerating rapidly as a result of the higher expectations of pupils' learning and greatly improved staff stability. Teaching is good and so pupils enjoy learning and the topic-based curriculum. In a few lessons, activities do not have rigorous timescales to allow pupils to progress faster. Assessment is used well to monitor and track progress and identify pupils' targets. These are not yet refined to further extend the challenges set for individuals and different ability groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils generally know how to improve their work, but marking to support understanding varies from being very clear to occasionally providing limited guidance.

Attendance has improved significantly and is above average. Behaviour is good and pupils feel exceptionally safe in school. The quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils, and their families, is exemplary and this has a positive impact on the strong community spirit that pervades the school.

Given standards of attainment that are rising, pupils' good progress and personal development and good improvement since the previous inspection, the school's capacity to further improve is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:

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- extending pupils' spelling skills in their independent, imaginative writing
- introducing the use of pens for writing from Year 2 onwards.
- Further raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - setting sharp timescales for lesson activities to increase the pace of learning and pupils' progress
 - fine-tuning targets for different groups and individuals and ensuring that marking consistently tells pupils how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enter the Reception class with attainment that is generally below age-related expectations. This is most evident in their communication, language, number and social skills. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and relevant support is quickly provided, enabling them to make good progress. All other pupil groups make similarly good progress. This includes pupils of minority ethnic heritage and the high proportion of pupils who join school throughout the year, who are supported well. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop particularly well. This was observed in an outstanding activity, where young children enthusiastically discussed the class caterpillars as they were moved to a bigger habitat. The teacher skilfully reminded them of new words, talking about caterpillar markings being symmetrical. The children found a chrysalis, easily recalling the word. They built eagerly on each other's thoughts and questions, noting how much the caterpillars ate and understanding the link to the growth needed to become a butterfly. One child said, 'We have to look after them because they are not ours to keep.' As they move into Year 1, children are mostly working at the expected levels and have developed good writing and number skills which are sustained as they move through the school. As a result, progress is good and attainment is rising rapidly, especially in Years 5 and 6.

Pupils relish learning, finding it exciting and fun. They are rightly proud of their achievements. One pupil said, 'It is a good place for education and the best place for improving work.' They work with a good degree of independence, enjoying the increasingly creative curriculum that enables them to develop individual interests and to produce interesting pieces of extended writing. However, their spelling of more challenging words is not always accurate, although the meaning is usually clear. Pupils do not start using pens, rather than pencils, early enough and this limits the development of their individual handwriting styles.

Behaviour is good. Pupils are very tolerant when others occasionally have difficulties or a bad day. They feel exceptionally safe in school, appreciating the way they are taught to use computers safely and to stay safe in the outside community. A pupil commented, 'It is a nice safe school to be in and I wouldn't choose a different school.' They participate in many sports, including rugby, karate and tennis, reflecting the school's Active Mark award. They enjoy daily fruit snacks and there is a high uptake of healthy school lunches. There are significant links with the local community, the parish and the church, where plates decorated by each pupil to celebrate the schools' recent 350th birthday are prominently displayed. Links across the United Kingdom and globally are still developing. Pupils take on additional responsibilities well, and are proud of the school and eco-council's work in designing an 'awesome eco-garden' and working in the village to develop a travel plan.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

The good teaching is exemplified by strong teamwork and high expectations about what pupils can achieve. There is an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching, which is helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They also assist those identified through good tracking and monitoring as needing to catch up with learning, or who have recently joined the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are well planned to meet the needs of different abilities. The use of questioning and extended vocabulary is a strength and really challenges pupils' thinking skills. Lessons mostly proceed at a good pace, but sometimes activities lack sharp enough timescales to further increase pupils' progress and challenge. Assessment is used confidently by staff to check pupils' progress and to set targets, which are yet to become fully personalised for groups and individuals. Pupils know their targets and older pupils are aware of the national levels they are working towards, but marking to support understanding of how to improve work is variable. Some provides detailed information, but at other times marking lacks clear indicators for improvement. Pupils' self-assessment is used well, particularly at lesson ends, to check the quality of learning.

The curriculum is increasingly creative and reflects pupils' own interests, including use of 'best books' for independent writing and other work. This is combined with a strong focus

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on developing basic skills and using English, mathematics and information and communication technology across the curriculum to enhance learning and enjoyment. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who find learning hard. The village and local area are used well as a learning resource and pupils are involved in local events such as the May Day celebrations. Pupils enjoy music, art and learning French and the many after-school activities. They look forward to residential trips and active pursuits. These, and other visits, have a very positive impact on pupils' personal development, confidence and acquisition of new skills.

The quality of welfare and support offered to pupils and their families is outstanding and recognised by parents who say, 'The quality of welfare and care is excellent, this school goes the extra mile.' Staff know their pupils very well, taking time to listen and offer guidance as needed. They are skilled at removing barriers to learning and supporting pupils and families who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances. Most staff are trained to support pupils' different specific needs and this gives parents and carers great reassurance about the quality of welfare. Monitoring procedures are thorough and work extremely well. Attendance has improved significantly in the last year, due to rigorous use of strategies to secure change. There is access to a wide range of external support when needed, to support pupils' learning and personal development. Transition arrangements are thorough and pupils, although sad to be leaving, are well prepared for secondary school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who visit their new schools before they move.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders drive the school forward with rigour and purpose. They are steadfastly focused on reaching and sustaining attainment at the highest levels. This ambition is shared and supported well by the staff and the able governing body. Its members participate regularly in activities to improve the school's performance, for example, by reviewing the development plan and visiting classrooms. Teachers manage their subjects well, identifying future developments to enhance learning. Monitoring of data analysis and lesson observations are well embedded and regularly reviewed.

The school has an outstanding partnership with parents and carers, who are fully involved not only in school events, but as key partners in their children's learning. Parents and carers value the open access to staff and the headteacher when they are not teaching. Partnership with others to support learning is good and has helped the school to overcome considerable staffing difficulties in recent times. Close links with the local group of schools

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provide good opportunities to offer pupils a wider curriculum than this very small school could otherwise provide. Equality of opportunity is good and pupils know and understand that any form of discrimination is unacceptable.

Safeguarding is good with particular strengths in the support provided for those families who find themselves to be in vulnerable circumstances. Health and safety practice is another strong feature. Community cohesion is satisfactory, with significant strengths within the local community, parish and village. Wider links with diverse communities in the United Kingdom and globally are less developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy and settled. They thrive within a secure and lively learning and play environment. Their behaviour is good and they soon build firm friendships and play and learn together well. They become eager learners and delight in acquiring new skills. The strong focus on building their letter and sound identification has led to children being confident in speaking, listening, reading simple words and writing them. They can also count competently, although calculation is less well developed. The quality of teaching and the understanding of young children's needs is consistently good. There is some outstanding practice which is evident, for example, in the pace of learning and questioning that builds on children's ideas and thinking. Provision is good and well resourced, indoors and out. The small outdoor area is used well and fully accessible when children want to go outdoors, although there is limited space for children to use large toys such as bikes or scooters. Leadership and management is good and the new leader has many ideas for development. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. The promotion of children's welfare, care and attention to their needs are, as

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in the rest of the school, outstanding. Parents and carers are fully involved and kept informed of their children's 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 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were almost entirely positive about all aspects of their children's education. All felt that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. They said that the transition arrangements are good and that the school takes account of any of their suggestions or concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pytchley Endowed Church of England 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 85 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	71	14	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	88	6	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	76	11	22	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	63	17	35	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	82	8	16	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	69	14	29	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	57	20	41	1	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)	33	67	15	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	73	12	24	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	59	19	39	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	76	12	24	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	78	10	20	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	88	5	10	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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



16 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pytchley Endowed Church of England Primary School, Kettering, NN14 1EN

Thank you for giving us such a friendly welcome and telling us so much about your school when we visited you recently. We can see how much you enjoy school life and are pleased that you find learning fun and exciting. You work hard and value the good support that your teachers provide. You could not think of anything you do not like. We are delighted that you feel extremely safe at school and that the adults look after you so exceptionally well. You go to a good school. This means that you make better progress than pupils in most other primary schools. Well done, keep it up! Your headteacher and the staff want to make your school even better. I have asked them to do these things:

- to help you get better at spelling the difficult words you use in your interesting writing, and to let you use pens when you write to develop your writing styles
- to remember to set times to complete lesson activities so that you are given more challenges and make even faster progress
- to set targets that offer more individual challenge and to always provide marking that helps you to understand how to improve your work.

You can help your teachers to make your school even better. Practise your spellings and tell your teachers that you really want to use pens. Think about setting targets with your teachers so that you are challenged. Perhaps some of you could try setting your own targets? Remind your teachers to give you helpful hints for improvement when they mark your work.

I hope you all enjoyed the May Day celebration and the visit of the Duke of Gloucester. I know you will continue to enjoy learning at Pytchley.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead inspector

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