

Pillowell Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115554
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357777
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Kirk

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Crossland
Headteacher	Brett Stevenson
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was undertaken by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed taught by five teachers and short visits were made to a further seven. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information, policies, safeguarding documents and teachers' planning. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils as well as 31 questionnaires from parents and carers. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The achievement for all groups of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in mathematics.
- The achievement in English for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Years 1 to 3.
- The quality of the curriculum and how well it develops literacy and numeracy skills in thematic work, and how well it is adjusted to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging the school and holding it to account and the quality of its strategic planning to prepare for its role in the new federation.

Information about the school

Pillowell is a much smaller-than-average primary school serving Pillowell and the surrounding area. All pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has recently become part of a federation with Blakeney Primary School and the two local schools share their headteacher. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in the same registration group as pupils in Years 1 and 2, but are taught separately. The school has achieved the Eco School's Bronze award and Healthy Schools Plus status. Pillowell Early Years Playgroup is situated within the school but is not managed by the governing body. This setting was inspected separately.

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

This is a good school where pupils are well cared for and achieve well. Pupils say they feel safe and that they enjoy school. Behaviour is good and all age groups contribute well to school life by taking on jobs, such as clearing up after lunch. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is average, but improving. Progress is good, but is better in English than in mathematics especially in Years 3 to 6 because, until this academic year, insufficient time was spent teaching mathematics and sometimes teachers do not set work at the right level to appropriately challenge all pupils.

Reception children have a good start to their school life and are supported well by adults. They make good progress overall but there is insufficient challenge given to children when working independently and these opportunities are not sufficiently linked to the main topic to enable them to make links between different areas of learning.

Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons have a considerable focus on practical skills resulting in well-engaged, active learners. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and offer useful feedback on strengths and areas for pupils to improve. The curriculum has a number of strengths, particularly in the broad range of opportunities offered to pupils, which include woodwork, outdoor learning and the chance to learn a range of musical instruments. Particular care is taken to make sure that learning is enjoyable and memorable. For example, the two primary schools, which are now in the federation, performed Peter Pan as a joint whole-school drama production earlier this year which, as well as providing singing, acting, dancing and stage-support roles, included pupils writing to local businesses and successfully selling advertising space in the programme. As a result of this and other successful initiatives, the extent to which pupils develop workplace skills is outstanding. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to mix with pupils from other schools whose pupils are from different cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds to their own. The impact of this work is evident during discussions with pupils who clearly embrace diversity.

Parents and carers were almost all supportive of every aspect of the school. Furthermore, the school has changed its practice as a result of listening to their views, for example in the reorganisation of hot and packed lunches. This has resulted in outstanding engagement with parents and carers. Many joint initiatives exemplify the schools' outstandingly effective partnerships in promoting learning and well-being including the lead role it plays in hosting and organising training for newly qualified teachers.

The good leadership and management, driven by the headteacher, are central to the improvements taking place in this school, such as the new marking policy which is now being applied well and which has improved the quality of feedback to pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the governing body to hold the school to account on the right issues. The governing body has ensured that its members have undertaken

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extensive training to enable them to fulfil their new role in the federation. As a result of this, and taking into account feedback from stakeholders during the consultation process, they have plans in place to improve, for example, the quality of their monitoring across both schools. Consequently, the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve even further. Senior leaders track individual pupils' progress effectively and, as a result, meet individual needs well. However, they do not analyse progress tracking information for groups of pupils to help them to identify trends and areas of strength and weakness, to support their evaluation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in mathematics by ensuring that work set is at just the right level to challenge all pupils.
- Improve the analysis of the tracking information on groups of pupils so that senior leaders and governors can use this information to inform and support their monitoring and evaluation.
- Improve children's independent learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children are sufficiently well challenged and their work is linked effectively to the main learning theme or topic.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils respond well to the stimulating and well-planned curriculum. Behaviour is good in and outside classrooms and pupils enjoy their learning; this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils' good understanding of how to stay healthy is evident in their ability to discuss the impact of a balanced diet and the harmful effects of smoking and drugs on the body, supported by the school's achievement of Healthy School's Plus status. Pupils have a good sense of common values across different societies and are eager to discuss recent artistic and cultural experiences.

Children start school with skills that are typically below the levels expected for their age and their attainment is average by the time they leave the school. Progress is good overall, including for pupils with special educational needs, but is improving at a faster rate in English than in mathematics. This gave the school cause for concern and it has taken decisive action by reorganising the timetable to include additional mathematics lessons and an improved focus on the teaching of basic mathematics skills. Training for teachers and teaching assistants has also successfully focused on improving subject knowledge, which has accelerated progress for some pupils. For example, in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, which also included the most able Year 2 pupils and special educational needs pupils from the older class, the teacher's good subject knowledge, clear explanations and correct use of mathematical vocabulary resulted in pupils making good progress in their ability to identify types of angles and describe two-dimensional shapes in detail.

Achievement in English is good throughout the school for all groups of pupils. This was exemplified in a Year 1/2 lesson where pupils planned and wrote stories related to the Mr Grinling's adventure stories. More-able pupils were beginning to use thesauruses and dictionaries effectively to choose more interesting adjectives for their stories while those with special educational needs were supported well to match their writing to their original

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plan through careful adult guidance and a clear structure. The most able Year 2 pupils are taught alongside Year 3 pupils for English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar good progress to their peers as a result of good quality adult support in lessons and targeted interventions when required.

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	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	1
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?

Teaching is good and this was reflected in the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and a good understanding of their differing needs. However, although pupils are set by ability for English and mathematics, some teachers do not always ensure that, even within the set, work is still adjusted so that it is at just the right level to challenge all pupils. As a result rates of progress are sometimes limited.

The school provides a good quality and broad curriculum which leads to good outcomes for all groups of pupils. The school is particularly successful in linking learning to the outdoor environment, using the local woods and the school's outdoor classroom, which has helped the school achieve its Bronze Eco award. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities for practical work which, in Years 1 to 6, is linked well to other areas of learning. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed designing and building shelters in the woods that were waterproof and camouflaged, so as to be hidden from bombers overhead, and could have been used by soldiers in the Second World War. All pupils, including those with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities, were able to discuss in detail the suitability of their shelters to the specification. Cross-curricular opportunities to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are good.

There is a strong ethos of care and support for all pupils. The school ensures that well-planned interventions are provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils in potentially vulnerable circumstances. For example, some pupils who were identified at the end of Year 2 as achieving less well in reading and writing, receive well-targeted additional support in Year 3. Links with a range of outside services and agencies are effective.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Through good leadership, the headteacher, ably supported by teachers and the governing body, has embedded high ambition. As a result, all staff and the governing body have a good insight about what the main priorities are in guiding the school forward. Staff work well together and are all committed to school improvement, for example, in bringing about the recent improvements to the organisation of the curriculum. Equality of opportunity and the tackling of discrimination enable all pupils to achieve well and any who have barriers to their learning are well supported. Any pupils who are not making enough progress are identified through the school's tracking system and through regular pupil progress meetings so that additional action can be taken.

The headteacher and staff have worked hard to build excellent partnerships and trust with parents and carers and this is reflected in the particularly high degree of satisfaction indicated on the parental questionnaire returns. Staff and the governing body have a good awareness of safeguarding measures. Safeguarding policies are reviewed regularly and the site is constantly under review to make sure that good standards of security, health and safety are continued. Pupils' awareness of cultural differences within the United Kingdom are particularly well developed through links with schools in London and Birmingham and globally through the use of information and communication technology, which is used to email pupils in other countries.

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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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Induction arrangements are planned carefully to ensure good partnerships with pre-school providers and to support children who enter school having had no previous educational experience. Children display a good awareness of the daily routines, for example in their good ability to tidy away equipment quickly and efficiently and in their confidence in moving between the outdoor learning area and their classroom, which means moving through where Years 1 and 2 pupils learn. There is an appropriate balance on teaching letters and sounds and number skills. Effective use of assessment and recorded information ensures all areas of learning are fully met.

Adult-led groups achieve well as a result of carefully planned lessons, many with a focus to improve children's writing skills. Adults' good questioning skills engage pupils well orally and encourage them to think through problems. For example, children had plenty of good ideas, and were able with help, to sound out their letter sounds to write about a car journey linked to a story which had been read to the whole class. On another occasion, an adult supported two children by challenging them to make their house stronger by staggering each layer of bricks. However, when pupils are working independently, activities are sometimes insufficiently challenging for them or they are not always well linked to other learning, so consequently they make less progress.

Assessment information shows that by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, outcomes have improved since the previous inspection and most children now make good progress from their varied starting points to attain broadly average standards.

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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' response rate was about average for primary schools. Of those who responded nearly all are in agreement with all 13 questionnaire statements. One summed up the views of many by saying, 'I think Pillowell is a fantastic community school with a good team of teachers who show they love what they do through helping and teaching the children.' Inspection findings firmly endorse parents' positive views about the school. There were no written concerns in any area raised by more than one parent or carer. The inspectors judge the school to be diligent in dealing with parental concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pillowell Community 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	61	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	58	12	39	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	65	11	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	77	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	45	16	52	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	48	16	52	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)	16	52	14	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	52	15	48	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	52	14	45	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	42	16	52	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	81	6	19	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	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.



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pillowell Primary School, Lydney GL15 4QT

Thank you for making us very welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You told us that the staff take good care of you and that you feel safe in school, happy in the knowledge that staff listen to any concerns you have. We were impressed with your good attitudes and behaviour and by how well you all get on with each other.

We judge that Pillowell is a good school. You make good progress and your attainment is average. The teaching is good. Your teachers are particularly skilled at making lessons interesting and enjoyable, for example, by planning practical activities which often take place outside in the woods or in your outdoor classroom. Your development of workplace skills is outstanding because your school makes sure that lessons are based on skills that you will use in the future. You contribute well to the school in many ways, for example, by taking on the responsibility for tidying up in the dining room. The school is outstanding in the way it works with its many partners, for example, your joint performance of Peter Pan with Blakeney Primary School. It also has excellent relationships with your parents and carers and listens well to their suggestions.

In order to improve further, we have asked your school to:

- improve achievement in mathematics by ensuring that work set is at just the right level to challenge each of you
- improve the analysis of the information the school holds on your rates of progress so that senior leaders and governors can use it to help them evaluate how good the school is
- make children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage more challenging when they are working independently.

You can help by keeping up your positive approach to learning. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk Lead inspector

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