

Pattishall Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121985
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380376
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Atkin
Headteacher	Brian Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2008
School address	School Road Pattishall Towcester NN12 8NE
Telephone number	01327 830301
Fax number	01327 831134
Email address	office52@pattishall.northants.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	10–11 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Steven Hill

Additional Inspector

Matthew Heasman

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body, and an inspector talked informally to parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors observed the school's work including break-times, assembly, and a meeting of the school council. They analysed pupils' work, in books and in displays, and listened to some younger pupils reading. A range of documentation was scrutinised, especially that related to keeping pupils safe and records of their progress. Questionnaires were analysed from 93 parents and carers, and from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Pattishall is smaller than the average-sized primary school, and is situated in a large village. It caters for pupils from the village and the surrounding area. The large majority of pupils are White British, with a few from other minority ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language, and none are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

In 2011, the school did not meet floor standards, which are the minimum standards set by the government for pupils' progress and attainment. Since then, the classes in Key Stage 2 for English and mathematics have been reorganised into mixed-age groups of similar ability, based on pupils' levels of attainment in each subject.

There is a pre-school provision on site for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who have not reached Reception age, and a before- and after-school club. Both of these are managed privately, and are inspected and reported upon 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. The school is not outstanding because there is not enough outstanding teaching to raise achievement to equally outstanding levels.
- In most years, pupils reach above-average standards by Year 6. Special circumstances led to a lapse in standards in 2011, but attainment is, currently, again above average. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and enjoy learning. They achieve particularly well in reading, and younger pupils have a good knowledge of phonics (how sounds in words relate to how they are written).
- Teaching is good, with some outstanding practice, but some is only satisfactory. Classes are managed well and relationships are good. Teachers enthuse pupils through exciting practical activities, and keep them actively involved. Learning in lessons is usually at a brisk pace but, occasionally, slower pace or lack of active participation make progress only satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to enhance learning are sometimes missed. Marking of books does not always show pupils how to improve. Homework provision is excellent.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Their collaborative skills in learning are good. They get on well together and are polite and respectful to adults. They feel very safe in school and are very confident that adults will deal with any problems that arise.
- School performance is led and managed well, particularly that of teaching. Strong teamwork from all staff has quickly reversed the fall in standards at Year 6 in 2011. The school moved swiftly to improve assessment and its use, and to reorganise classes in Key Stage 2 to match work more tightly to pupils' needs. Consequently, progress has greatly accelerated.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement through increasing the proportion of teaching and learning that is outstanding – eliminating teaching that is no better than satisfactory – by:
 - ensuring that learning has good pace throughout each lesson, and that pupils are fully involved
 - consolidating the gains made this year in pupils' progress through the improved assessment and setting arrangements
 - clearly showing pupils, when marking their work, how they can move up to the next level
 - making more use of pupils' information and communication technology skills in different subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good and attainment is above average. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that varies widely in this small school context, both within each year group and from year to year. It is, typically, below age-related expectations and, occasionally, considerably below. Children achieve well to reach broadly average attainment by the end of Reception. They progress particularly well in their early reading and writing skills, including linking sounds and letters, and in their understanding of calculations. The provision has improved greatly since the last inspection, when progress for the youngest children was only satisfactory.

Pupils make good progress in the rest of the school, and attainment is often above average at the end of Key Stage 1, although this varies because of considerably different starting points for each cohort. Pupils work together well. Year 2 pupils increased their collaborative skills as well as their competence to solve mathematical problems when they calculated which was the most valuable 'treasure chest', in very challenging work linked to their history topic, discussing their ideas sensibly.

In most years, attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. Standards in reading are usually above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school. In 2011, attainment at Year 6 fell to be below floor standards. The fall reflected low starting points, but leaders' analysis of performance indicated an additional factor was a lack of success in meeting the learning needs of each individual across the extremely wide range of abilities within the year group. Action has followed to ensure, even more decisively, that higher-ability pupils are always challenged, and those who find learning difficult receive enough help to succeed. The subsequent grouping of pupils of similar ability in classes for English and mathematics has accelerated progress in the current academic year, with pupils across Key Stage 2 making almost two terms' progress in just over one term – from

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September to January. The attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is above average.

Good progress was confirmed in work seen and in lessons observed. For example, pupils from Years 3 to 6 produced good-quality writing in a short time because they were enthused by the interesting film clip they had seen on the interactive whiteboard. The clear criteria for success, which were adapted for different ability groups, underpinned their good progress, as did their hard work and concentration.

Boys and girls from different backgrounds make similarly good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates because tasks are matched well to their needs, they are challenged to do their best and supported helpfully when they struggle. Inspection findings that pupils achieve well are fully endorsed by parents and carers, who are rightly positive about the progress their children make.

Quality of teaching

Teachers plan tasks that are matched to the varying needs of pupils so that work is set at a challenging but manageable level. Pupils are clear about their targets and know how they are moving towards them. However, teachers do not always give them specific advice, when marking their books, about how to move up to the next level. Teachers make good use of an interesting curriculum to support progress. A range of interesting activities characterises most lessons, such as the hands-on work in measuring temperature that engaged the enthusiasm of pupils in Year 5. Consequently, the pupils worked together well, sharing responsibilities and discussing their work together animatedly, and improved their speaking and listening skills, as well as their scientific understanding.

Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The use of discussion is a strength of many lessons, when pupils share suggestions to clarify their thinking before contributing ideas to the class, or putting them on paper. Independence is successfully encouraged. Teaching in the Reception class provides a good balance between adult-directed activities and those children choose for themselves, both indoors and out. A group of children made good use of the 'reading tent' in the garden to share books, as well as role playing a variety of scenarios. The teaching of reading is very effective and, in younger classes, is firmly based on well informed teaching of phonics, and good reinforcement of reading skills throughout the curriculum. Occasionally, the good pace of learning in lessons falters, particularly if pupils are passive for too long, making learning no more than satisfactory.

Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to clarify their explanations or to show pupils just what to do. They give some good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology for themselves, such as when pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 used digital cameras to record their findings in mathematics. In other lessons, such opportunities are missed. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. They are fully integrated into classes, particularly since the new grouping of similar abilities was introduced, and enjoy

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working with classmates at similar levels, with work well adapted to their needs. Inspection findings on the quality of teaching are endorsed by parents, carers and pupils themselves, who all consider that teaching is good. The use of homework greatly helps to inform parents and carers and involve them in their children's learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good and they have good relationships with each other and with staff. Parents, carers, and pupils confirm that this is the usual picture, and not just that seen during the inspection. All consider that pupils are always kept safe in school, and have learnt how to contribute to their own and classmates' safety through their responsible actions. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying for example, and say that it is rare. They acknowledge that there are occasional 'fall-outs' but that these are quickly resolved with help from adults, so everyone is 'friends again'. Pupils enjoy their learning and value the friends they make in school. They treat others with respect, and are developing a good understanding of people in different parts of the world. Pupils in Year 6 identified a positive result of the new ability-grouping arrangements as the chance to work with different age groups and 'make new friends'. They are keen to learn, work hard and concentrate well in class, and their good behaviour and collaborative skills contribute strongly to the good progress made. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance. They have great confidence that the adults and their friends will help them with any difficulties, both academic and social.

Leadership and management

The school succeeds because leaders form a strong team who share common goals and work together effectively to raise achievement. Performance management is effective. Teaching is monitored regularly and colleagues are given clear feedback to help them address any individual weaknesses. More global issues are shared and the school addresses them effectively. Crucially, the grouping of pupils into classes of similar ability groups at Key Stage 2, combined with the moderation of assessments to make them more accurate, have led to a sharp improvement and greater consistency in progress at Key Stage 2 in the current academic year. The monitoring of individual pupils' attainment is used well to track their progress, identify any who are falling behind, and to provide extra help when it is needed. The system also shows that different groups of pupils make similarly good progress, illustrating the school's successful commitment to equal opportunities, and the combating of discrimination. Boys and girls, for example, make similar progress.

The governing body has good systems that give it a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is fully involved in setting strategic direction for the school, and is well able to hold it to account for its performance – as over the Year 6 results in 2011. It ensures that safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school has maintained good teaching, behaviour and achievement since the previous

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inspection. Its accurate self-evaluation and prompt and effective action to address any potential underachievement show it is well placed to continue to improve.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It includes the effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their academic learning. Pupils are helped to learn about people from different communities and countries, and about aspects of their culture, such as songs and painting. Good behaviour and moral values are reinforced in lessons and assemblies, but also in resolving any minor disputes between pupils.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Pattishall Church of England Primary School, Towcester,
NN12 8NE**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you hard at work in lessons. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see that was true. We were particularly pleased to see that you behave well, are polite and friendly, and that you all get along together. You are growing up into sensible, thoughtful young people who are a credit to your parents and carers, and to your school.

Your school gives you a good education. You are making good progress and reach above-average standards because the adults are good at helping you to learn. The new arrangements for older pupils are working well, so you make better progress in mathematics and English. In most lessons, teachers give you interesting things to do, and learning whizzes along. We have agreed that they are going to try to make all lessons like this. You know your targets, and we have asked teachers to show you more often how to get to the next level when they mark your books. We also have suggested that you could make even more progress if you had more chances to use computers and other technology in your lessons. The school has plans in place to do this.

The adults are good at organising your school so that you are safe and happy there. They keep a careful eye on how you are getting on, and make sure that you get extra help if you need it. They are keen to make your school even better, and I know you will want to help. You can do this by keeping up your hard work and good behaviour. We hope you all carry on enjoying your time at Pattishall.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill
Lead Inspector

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