

# Penny Acres Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	112565
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378512
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	26
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rob Machen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Solman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Main Road Holmesfield S18 7WP
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	19–20 June 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378512



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Doris Bell

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed five members of staff during eight lessons, covering approximately three-and-a-quarter hours of teaching. As well as observing full or part lessons, the inspector spent time observing sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds. She also heard pupils read, watched them being taught in small groups and individually, analysed their work, and discussed their learning and school life with them. Meetings were held with all staff and with representatives of the governing body. The inspector also observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including information relating to the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils, the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, and evidence of monitoring and evaluation. She also spoke to parents and carers, and analysed 15 parental questionnaire responses, together with the responses to the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in two classes, one for Reception-aged children and pupils in Years 1 and 2, and one for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Year 2 pupils join the older class each morning for mathematics. All statistics have to be treated with caution because, with numbers in each year group being so small, they vary from year to year. However, the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at 'school action plus' or have a statement of special educational needs is currently average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is currently below average.

Last year, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Prior to September 2011, the school went through a period of considerable instability, with no permanent leader for some time. This school year started with a new headteacher, a new part-time teacher and a teacher who had only been with the school since January 2011. Pupils, parents and carers and the governing body describe the school as being 'virtually brand new' because of this.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because, although much improved this year, teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure good progress in all age groups, and staff have not yet developed the skills to fulfil their roles as curriculum leaders. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Overall achievement is satisfactory, although pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making faster progress this year, especially in Year 6. Attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Some younger pupils still struggle to read unfamiliar words, and do not always understand what they read.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching has accelerated progress in Years 3 to 6 this year. Staff sometimes miss opportunities in lessons and through marking to focus pupils on their writing targets, and do not always make the most of opportunities to consolidate key skills when Reception children are learning through play.
- Pupils rightly say that behaviour is 'really good' and they feel very safe in school. All of their parents and carers agree. The pupils' exemplary behaviour and keen desire to learn are key factors in their rapidly accelerating progress. Pupils describe the school as 'unbelievably caring'. They recognise and appreciate the improved teaching and leadership this year, saying that they had 'been a bit down' but are doing 'so much better now'. They have a very mature attitude to school and to their learning.
- The whole school community shares the headteacher's strong determination to raise achievement as quickly as possible. The management of performance is robust, and teaching is led well. The satisfactory curriculum is under review to make learning even more relevant for the pupils. Staff have not yet had sufficient training to take a lead role in different aspects of the curriculum.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and secure consistently good teaching in all age groups by:
  - referring pupils to their writing targets whenever they do a piece of writing, and marking writing consistently well
  - ensuring that pupils learn the different methods they can use to help them read new words, particularly in Year 1, and understand what they read.
- Accelerate progress in Reception by:
  - providing more opportunities for children to develop their skills and confidence in writing and recording numbers
  - ensuring adults intervene more in tasks that children select for themselves, especially in the new outdoor area.
- Capitalise on the effective teamwork now evident throughout the school by developing the staff's ability as curriculum leaders.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children usually start school with the skills expected for their age. Early reading, writing and number skills are developed satisfactorily, although journals and classwork show that Reception children do not have enough opportunities to practise writing letters and numerals. Nevertheless, pupils start Year 1 broadly at the levels expected for their age. Parents and carers, recognising the improvements this year, all say in their questionnaires that their children are making good progress. While satisfactory overall, progress is accelerating rapidly in Years 3 to 6, and showing a clear improvement over previous years. Having failed to meet the government's floor standards last year, the school is on course to achieve them this year.

Year 6 pupils use an increasingly wide range of vocabulary in their writing to engage the reader. For example, they showed a good understanding of how to manipulate words to create eye-catching headlines for newspaper articles. Pupils in Year 2 write imaginative stories, using a range of 'wow' words to make them interesting, but they sometimes forget to include punctuation and to space words out. This makes their writing difficult to read. Pupils write in different subjects but do not always remember their targets as they do so, thus making unnecessary mistakes.

Attainment in reading is broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils enjoy reading. Year 6 pupils read fluently, with confidence and expression. They understand what they read. Year 2 pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. They explain the difference between stories about sea creatures, and books

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that give information about them. In Year 1, fluency and understanding are sometimes compromised because, while pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them read unfamiliar words, they do not always understand the meaning, and rarely refer to clues in the text or in pictures to help them.

Pupils' learning sometimes falters in mathematics because they do not always read the question carefully and therefore do not use the correct calculations. Current work on handling data demonstrates good learning. The step-by-step approach adopted has greatly consolidated learning for older pupils and successfully introduced new concepts for younger ones. The inclusion of Year 2 pupils in mathematics sessions in Years 3 to 6 is accelerating their progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs typically make good progress in all subjects, particularly because the very competent support staff have a good understanding of their needs and provide good levels of support for them.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers all say their children are taught well. Inspectors observed much good teaching during the inspection, and some was outstanding. However, it is clear from observations, school records and pupils' books that the improvements are not yet fully embedded across the school.

Staff use assessment information effectively in their planning to ensure that the pupils' individual needs are met well. Pupils understand their targets, know the levels they are working at, and are rising well to the challenge to learn as much as possible in every lesson. They refer to being 'pushed' but in a 'nice way', and know they have done well this year because of it. Marking usually gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work in literacy and numeracy, but when writing skills are used in different subjects, teachers miss opportunities to correct errors and focus pupils on their writing targets. They mostly teach reading well, but do not always help pupils in Year 1 enough to learn how to understand the different ways to read and understand new words.

Excellent relationships throughout the school contribute greatly to the improved teaching and learning. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to draw every pupil into discussions through well-targeted questioning. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 understand how asking as well as answering questions helps to extend their learning. Pupils work in an atmosphere where they can reflect on their learning, and are not afraid to make mistakes because they know they will be helped to learn from them. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Teaching and support staff, and other pupils, help these pupils to participate fully in lessons.

Teachers usually foster pupils' ability to work independently and in different groups. This was noted in a science lesson where pupils in Years 3 to 6 thoroughly enjoyed helping each other to work out the relative sizes of different planets and their distances from the sun. They used information and communication technology skills

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well to research and interpret the information, and present it to the class. Where teaching is less successful, staff do not interact enough with pupils to extend their learning.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Attendance is above average, reflecting the pupils' thorough enjoyment of school. Parents and carers report that pupils do not want to be absent, even when ill, because they will miss important learning. Pupils describe the school as 'unbelievably caring'. They manage their own behaviour exceptionally well, recognising that doing so helps them to learn well. Every parent and carer, every pupil and all staff who responded to the questionnaires, and to whom the inspector spoke, said behaviour is excellent, and that pupils feel very safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They say, for example, 'the school is extremely nurturing', and that 'discipline is fair and firm, and a real sense of care and kindness prevails throughout'. They are right. The pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes, which they and their parents and carers say have always been there, have helped them rise to the challenges now placed upon them to make better and better progress.

Pupils are acutely aware of different types of bullying and harassment. They talk about how racist comments, name-calling and ganging up on others are wrong. They say there is 'no way in this school' that any such untoward behaviour would be allowed, and that it is 'very important that everyone gets along'. They also say that it is 'very interesting to learn about others, inequality is wrong, everyone should be treated the same'. They demonstrate all of this well in lessons and around the school, at times imperceptibly correcting each other's behaviours and absorbing all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, into everything they do. All pupils trust the staff to help them, should they have any concerns.

The 'pupil voice' gives pupils good opportunities to contribute to school and to their own improvement. For example, they asked for and got a reading club and a variety of well-attended extra-curricular clubs that enrich their learning. Playground 'ambassadors' help pupils at play and lunchtimes, and older pupils readily accept opportunities to help younger pupils. Pupils are very proud of the 'Penny Acres Code', explaining how they arrived at it, and how it shapes their attitudes to school and towards others.

### **Leadership and management**

The school is moving forward quickly after a very turbulent time. The headteacher has galvanised the new team to improve key areas of weakness and thus accelerate pupils' progress. She, the governing body, and staff are highly ambitious for the school. The governing body knows the school really well and is successfully challenging it to improve further. Parents and carers, and pupils themselves, are very pleased with the rapid improvement in the past year, and their greater involvement

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in it. They describe it as a 'different school' with a 'family atmosphere', where 'everyone counts'.

The school has effective systems to keep track of pupils' progress and accelerate it further. Accurate self-evaluation has led to a realistic school improvement plan with well-focused priorities. These are followed up with robust monitoring, performance management objectives and well-considered professional development opportunities for staff that are increasingly influencing the work of the school. Staff are receptive to advice and guidance, and they all want to do their best for the pupils. All of these positive features demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve further.

Subject responsibilities have been allocated to staff as part of a curriculum review, but they have not yet been trained to undertake their roles. Basic skills are promoted well throughout the curriculum, and the school makes effective use of computers as tools for teaching and learning. The curriculum contributes really well to pupils' personal development, including through visits, visitors and links with other schools and external agencies. Pupils are successfully encouraged to reflect on their learning and behaviour, to mix socially, and to work independently and together. They learn about different faiths and cultures at home and abroad, and say that they find the work 'very interesting'.

Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and all training, including for child protection and safer recruitment, is up to date. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, although pupils do not yet make equally good progress in all age groups. The new outdoor area for Reception children, which was used for the first time during the inspection, is set to enhance outdoor learning. However, staff are not yet well enough organised to ensure that learning is promoted equally well wherever it occurs.

## 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](http://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.**



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Penny Acres Primary School, Holmesfield, S18 7WP**

Thank you all so very much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I came to inspect your school. It was a real delight to talk with you and to watch you at work and at play. You told me your school is 'unbelievably caring'. You demonstrated that you are too, for example in your response to being asked about bullying ('no way in this school') and the way you so readily help and support each other in class and around the school. Your excellent behaviour is one of the key factors in helping you, in your own words, to do 'so much better now'.

I found your school to be satisfactory overall, but I can see that it has taken great strides forward in the past year, and that staff, guided by your headteacher, are determined to do their best for you. You, your parents and carers, the staff and the governing body all recognise this too, and you are all playing your part in keeping up the improvement.

I have asked your headteacher to do some things to ensure that the faster progress you are now making continues to accelerate. They are to:

- make sure teachers remind all of you to use your targets every time you write, and help younger pupils to understand the different ways in which they can learn to read new words and find out what they mean
- encourage Reception children to write more often and record their number work, and ensure adults help them when they choose their own activities
- help all of the staff develop the skills they need to lead different parts of the curriculum so that learning can become even more exciting for you.

You can help by always remembering to refer to your targets when you write, and by continuing to develop those excellent attitudes to learning that you have now. I hope that by doing so you will enjoy learning for the rest of your lives as much as you do now, and I wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell  
Lead inspector

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