

# Penny Acres Primary School

Main Road, Holmesfield, Derbyshire, S18 7WP

**Inspection dates** 21–22 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils throughout the school make good progress, including the most able, and there has been a continued improvement in the proportion of pupils who attain above-average standards in the Year 6 national tests.
- Teaching is consistently good and lessons are active and enjoyable. Teachers plan imaginative activities that help pupils learn by applying their knowledge in realistic situations.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and have ensured improvement in teaching and achievement.
- The development needs of the staff are a priority so that all staff can fulfil their roles effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to learning are strong. They work hard in class and enjoy being challenged.
- Children joining the Reception class settle quickly. Their development is good and they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- The school plays a key role in the local community. It takes advantage of its setting to provide pupils with a good variety of learning experiences that support their personal development well.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to help eligible pupils do well. Gaps between the attainment of this group and others is consistently narrowing across the school.
- Sport is of a high standard and has a positive impact on pupils' determination to do well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding because some teachers are too slow to notice when pupils are ready to move on to more difficult tasks. Occasionally, they do not explain new ideas clearly when pupils need extra help.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to act on teachers' comments given in their books.
- Improvement planning has not had a positive impact on realising the school's ambition to be outstanding because targets for improvement are not precise enough.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed five teachers and visited six lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the English subject leader, pupils and governors. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' work, looked in their exercise books and listened to them read.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, information on pupils' progress, documents related to safeguarding and key reports and policies.
- The inspectors talked with parents at the start of the school day, and took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also analysed seven questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Penny Acres Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school, although more pupils are on roll than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils attend from the village and over a quarter come from the surrounding area.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for Reception-aged children who are taught in a mixed-age class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 2 pupils, in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, are taught together in one class.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- Very few pupils are supported by the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school during term time is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school contributes to the work of a cluster of local schools to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The governing body includes representatives from several local businesses.

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

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils reach the highest standards, by making sure that:
  - teachers respond quickly when pupils show that they are ready to move on in their learning
  - teachers and teaching assistants simplify explanations and use a variety of means to help pupils overcome difficulties more quickly
  - pupils have frequent opportunities to respond to the comments made by teachers when they mark pupils' books.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that there are targets that can be measured in the school improvement plan, so that governors are able to hold leaders to account for more rapid school improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils throughout the school make good progress because teachers draw on pupils' experiences to create imaginative activities that encourage them to solve realistic mathematical problems and to write at length. As a result, attainment in the Year 6 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics has continued to rise over the last three years. Pupils' good progress is reflected in the above-average numbers, especially the more able, achieving the higher standards at the end of Year 6.
- Children join the Reception class with varied pre-school experiences. Few entrants each year leads to variations in children's abilities when they join the school, but their skills are usually close to those expected nationally, apart from in mathematics where their skills are a little lower. Arrangements for helping children settle are very well thought out so they begin to make progress quickly. They develop well because teachers make sure there is a good balance between activities that are specially prepared for them and opportunities for them to learn from pupils in Years 1 and 2, who are keen to set an example.
- Pupils make good progress in early reading because they are so well known by their teacher that they are given different words that test them to apply their knowledge of phonics (letters that sounds make) on a daily basis. Pupils in Year 1 achieved above-average scores in the phonics screening check in 2013. Pupils in Key Stage 1 get good opportunities, for example, to identify the tenses of verbs through using stories to find examples. As a result of reviewing and applying what they know, they make good progress in acquiring literacy skills.
- Standards in Key Stage 1, are above average in reading and writing, and broadly average in mathematics. Pupils make good progress from their starting points when they joined the school.
- The school's reliable data show that all current year groups are making good progress. The standards of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual ones are assessed on arrival and additional support by staff is quickly arranged where needed. These pupils rapidly begin to make good progress.
- In Year 6 in 2013, there were too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make a reliable judgement of their attainment and progress. Across the school, the funding is allocated to give eligible pupils extra help when needed. Consequently, any gaps in attainment between those who are eligible and others close in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are helped individually in this small school to achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants take advantage of training and provide specialist support. Their expertise helps these pupils grow in confidence to want to explore new ideas for themselves. The parents of these pupils praise the school for the excellent support their children receive.
- Pupils' achievement in physical education is good because teachers' expectations in lessons are high and pupils are learning to perform skills of a good quality. The school promotes equality well and all pupils are encouraged to compete in local sporting events. Physically able pupils do well and those with lower levels of fitness take pride in achieving personal goals and representing the school regardless of where they finish in the competition.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Learning is of consistently good quality because teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to set new challenges for all pupils, especially the more-able, as soon as they complete a task successfully. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 made good progress solving the problem of dividing numbers using a straightforward method. The teacher encouraged pupils to apply their knowledge of multiplication tables to arrive at the correct answer, but the more-able were asked to tackle more challenging sums.
- Occasionally, teachers remain with some pupils for too long, and so miss the signs that other pupils are ready to move on more quickly.
- Teachers usually have high expectations of what pupils should achieve, especially, for example, in the use of grammar and range of vocabulary. Consequently, pupils' grasp of the English language is sophisticated for their age, as demonstrated by their provisional results in the recently introduced national spelling, punctuation and grammar test at the end of Year 6. As part of preparation for this aspect of literacy, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were observed successfully learning words such as, palaeontologists, pterodactyl and ichthyosaur as part of their dinosaurs topic.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use classroom discussion effectively so they recognise when pupils are unsure about new learning. Their questions usually help pupils overcome difficulties in understanding. Occasionally, explanations are too complicated for some pupils, but use of a variety of resources sometimes helps to simplify an explanation and helps pupils understand more quickly.
- Although pupils are well motivated and write creatively, a few sometimes find out too late that their writing would have been improved had they taken steps to check spellings for themselves, without having to be prompted to use a dictionary by the teacher.
- Teachers respond effectively to the range of ages and abilities in classes by using a variety of methods that enable all pupils to make good progress in their learning. Pupils are encouraged to combine their learning of different subjects. For example, in Key Stage 2 they used what they had learnt about conditions in Britain during the Second World War to gain the reader's attention to their writing. The more-able used rhetorical questions, and others chose from 'wow' words, metaphors and alliteration when writing about features such as rationing, gas masks and evacuation.
- Teachers assess pupils' work accurately so they plan activities that are neither too easy nor too hard for learners' range of abilities. Tasks develop logically within lessons as well as from one lesson to the next so that progress is sustained. For example, following on from a group discussion in a lesson about the style of language appropriate for advertisements, pupils were able to apply their knowledge of the advertisements when writing to persuade readers about holiday deals in India.
- The school continues to improve marking and has recently adopted a 'two stars and a wish' policy. Teachers routinely praise the 'star' elements in pupils' books and most include a 'wish' development point. This practice is used effectively to help pupils to learn how to calculate accurately and improve their literacy skills. However, pupils do not routinely have opportunities to answer the precise points the teachers write in their books and, therefore, do not extend their learning by improving their work as well as they could.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and this contributes to their good achievement. Pupils use initiative in discussion and little time is ever lost in beginning activities.
- Pupils respect and trust their teachers so they are always keen to test their level of understanding by checking new ideas with them. They are familiar with the systems that help them understand their current levels of attainment and pursue their improvement targets responsibly.
- The school fosters good relationships among pupils so they show tolerance towards those who have particular emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school works closely with these pupils and their families to help overcome these difficulties, and other pupils celebrate their success.
- School records show that behaviour over time is good and there are very few occasions when lessons are disrupted. Pupils admit that behaviour is not outstanding because some of their classmates find it hard to keep their boisterous behaviour in check in the playground. Parents think that behaviour is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Consequently, pupils say that they feel safe and they are helped by teachers to know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when they use the internet. Older pupils play their part in helping others feel safe within the school community, fulfilling roles as 'play leaders' and 'young ambassadors'. Pupils have good understanding of the many different forms of bullying and are confident to seek help if it occurs. Such instances are rare and parents think behaviour is well controlled by the school.
- Attendance is improving and has risen to be above average. Senior leaders have taken effective steps working with families to bring about regular attendance and to make sure pupils are punctual to school.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The determined leadership of the headteacher has instilled in staff, pupils and parents a sense of high ambition and purpose to improve achievement and teaching quality. She has united a loyal team proud to be associated with the school. Parents, teachers and representatives from local businesses are keen to play their part enhancing pupils' experiences. This places the school at the heart of the local community where pupils' involvement in musical events and well-dressing festivals supports their cultural development well.
- As more pupils join the school each year, leaders and governors make sure management systems are adapted. Consequently, new arrivals are quickly helped to make the same good rate of progress as that of others, and the school continues to improve.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are encouraged to use their initiative to take advantage of the local environment and create an engaging curriculum that stimulates all pupils' interests, including the more able. They draw on their own involvement in local organisations so that pupils enjoy extremely worthwhile learning opportunities that give them a sense of their Peak District heritage.

- The emphasis on pupils' taking responsibility for one another in this rural community promotes their social development well. For example, each pupil adopts a local footpath to maintain. Also, the parents organise an annual treasure hunt that encourages pupils to help one another navigate safely around a course that includes boundary stones, animal troughs and Celtic crosses.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school. However, the targets in the school development plan are not specific enough to drive the more rapid improvements that would lead to outstanding achievement by pupils. The targets set are not always measurable so it is not always clear how well some stated priorities have been achieved.
- The headteacher enables teachers and subject leaders to gain valuable knowledge and experience through training and working in partnership with local schools. School leaders use this partnership to develop their assessment practice, so that pupils have an accurate view of their levels of attainment and of what they need to do to improve to reach those levels. The effect has been to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- In this small school, teachers, including the headteacher, all take leadership responsibility for several different subjects. The staff, including those who have taken on responsibility only recently, work tirelessly to improve provision in their subjects and raise pupils' achievement. All receive helpful guidance in their management roles from the headteacher.
- The subjects taught promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Assemblies are a time of coming together to reflect communally on key values. There is a broad variety of school clubs and pupils' skills in performing arts are a strength because of the good opportunities they are offered in this subject. Books are chosen that challenge pupils' thinking and introduce them to different viewpoints and cultures. Visitors to school and trips that support topics studied add breadth and depth to pupils' understanding and broaden their cultural horizons. Pupils have good opportunities to practise key communication, language and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- There is overwhelming approval for the school among parents, who are well prepared to help support their children's progress at home. For example, pupils' reading diaries include detailed commentary that show parents are able to reinforce the reading skills learned in the classroom. Parents comment on the impressive way the school helps their children brave outdoor challenges, such as on the visit to Cresswell Crag, and the extent to which the resilience they learn in these situations gives them determination to achieve well in the classroom.
- The school has embarked upon an extensive programme of physical education to enhance the well-being of all pupils by employing a specialist coach for four hours each week. This runs alongside the school promoting a healthy lifestyle, supported well by the kitchen providing a good, balanced diet for the large number of pupils who opt for a school lunch.
- Representatives from the local authority have supported the school in making effective use of the information collected about pupils' achievements. Teachers use these systems to monitor pupils' learning well.
- The school is determined that there is no discrimination so teachers intervene quickly if they suspect any pupil is not maintaining good levels of progress. Where pupils are provided with additional support, teachers continue to check and adjust these programmes to enable pupils to make maximum progress.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors are committed to developing their expertise. They regularly attend training courses so they have an increasingly accurate view of the standards to be expected in the school. More of them are now able to judge the quality of provision and the impact on pupils' achievement objectively from their own analysis of data on pupils' progress and attainment. In conjunction with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body has made sure that a systematic timetable for governors' visits is part of the termly monitoring schedule. Governors are developing an independent view of the quality of teaching, including the effectiveness of marking and assessment procedures. They are aware of how teachers take responsibility for promoting pupils' progress in line with their individual performance targets. Governors make sure the information gathered to evaluate teachers' success in enabling pupils to make progress informs decisions on pay progression. Any underperformance has been managed robustly yet sensitively. Finances are well managed. Those responsible for overseeing the use of pupil-premium funding check the information about pupils' achievement to make sure that this money is being well spent. Decisions about the allocation of primary school sports funding have also been effective in raising the already high standards in physical education. Members of the governing body bring considerable professional expertise to managing their responsibilities about pupils' welfare. They conduct their own audits on a routine basis and ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112565
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	430694

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

<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>	36
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rob Machen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Solman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2890330
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