



Pocklington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117987
Local Authority East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number 290991
Inspection date 13 December 2006
Reporting inspector Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Maxwell Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Pocklington, York
Age range of pupils	4-7		East Yorkshire, YO42 2HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01759 302699
Number on roll (school)	200	Fax number	01759 306797
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Nigel Laws
		Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Sewell
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is an average sized school. Numbers are declining and the school has therefore had to reduce the number of classes. It serves an area that is socially and economically advantaged and a below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. When the children begin school their attainment is broadly average for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few learn English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. As the pupils say, 'It is a wonderful school to be in, especially at Christmas.' It is warm and welcoming and provides for its pupils a good education and some features of its work are outstanding. Pupils' personal development is excellent. Attendance is good because pupils love their school and enjoy every minute of the day. This is because the teachers plan a rich curriculum, which makes learning exciting and leads to pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their enthusiastic approach to their work. Behaviour is good and pupils have a wide circle of friends. Excellent attention is given to keeping pupils safe and healthy; they are keen to keep fit and, when weather permits, enjoy following the school's fitness trail at lunchtime. They take their responsibilities in school seriously and are keen to share their skills in the wider community by conserving the environment and raising funds for charities. The magnificently performed Nativity Play unites the school and local community in celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. Pupils grow in confidence and independence and these qualities, combined with their well-developed academic skills, ensure that the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and results in high standards. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and ensures that children get off to a flying start. From an average starting point, many exceed the learning goals expected at the end of the Reception class. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Teachers' accurate assessment at the end of Year 2 shows standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use assessment information successfully to group pupils according to their ability. This is most effective for the lower and middle ability groups and for some pupils in the top ability groups. It enables the vast majority to reach the level expected for their age and an average proportion reaches the higher levels (Level 3). Nevertheless, a few more able pupils, about 20%, have the potential to reach the higher levels.

Leadership and management are good with outstanding leadership from the headteacher. She has a clear vision for the school and very ably maintains a balance between academic and personal development. This enables the school to fulfil its mission 'to provide a quality educational experience for all.' Governors are supportive and well informed. They play a major part in keeping the pupils safe and in balancing the budget. Subject leaders manage their subjects well but do not always link their proposed actions to raising standards, especially in non-core subjects where little assessment information is available. The school provides good value for money and is well placed to improve further because of the school's accurate self-evaluation of its effectiveness and the headteacher's clear sense of direction.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all of the more able pupils reach the level of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics;
- Extend the monitoring role of subject leaders so that they make a closer link between proposed actions and their impact on standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well; they make good progress and standards are above average.

From an average starting point, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching and the teachers' good understanding of the children's needs. By the end of the Reception classes, many of the children have exceeded the standards expected for their age. Standards in personal and social development are very high and prepare children very well for Year 1.

Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good. Results of teacher assessments show standards are above average. The school's focus has been on the lower and middle ability group and this has gradually increased the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age. Most of the more able pupils reach above average levels but not all of them because they are not always set hard enough work. As a result, the number of pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to the national averages in each but could be higher. This is not the case in science, which is a real strength in the school, and two thirds of pupils exceeded the level expected for their age in this subject in 2006.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress owing to work that is accurately matched to meet their needs and good support from teaching assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language are very new to school but have settled well because of caring support from staff and pupils. Test results suggest that boys could be doing even better in reading and the school is now tackling this successfully with more boy-friendly books and topics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils show their enjoyment for school in their good attendance and eagerness to get on with the day. These are major factors in the good progress made by pupils and prepare them exceptionally well for the future. Pupils appreciate the importance of healthy lifestyles and their efforts have been rewarded with two Healthy School's awards. Pupils learn about possible dangers and as one pupil said, 'We feel safe because there are grown-ups everywhere and people are nice'. Membership of the school council, fulfilling monitoring duties and a willingness to raise funds for charity are just some examples of the way pupils learn about their role in the community.

Pupils' personal qualities reflect exceptional support for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spirituality is strong in class acts of worship. Teachers have created a world of magic at Christmas, keeping the story of the Nativity at the heart of their celebrations. One young child playing with model characters showed his knowledge when he explained, 'This is the angel who told Mary not to be afraid because she was having a baby.' Respect and consideration are central to the work of the school and lead to good behaviour and a caring school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching is the major reason for pupils' good achievement. Pupils say that lessons are exciting and that teachers always make it clear what they are expected to do. This is because teachers plan carefully and start lessons by telling pupils exactly what they want them to learn. Classrooms are stimulating, with many useful visual prompts to guide pupils as they work. A positive feature in all classes is the caring relationships and management of behaviour. Consequently, learning takes place in a calm and orderly atmosphere even when activities are practical and messy. Teachers of the Year 2 classes group their pupils according to their ability for literacy and numeracy lessons. This approach is most effective for the lower and middle ability groups and some of the more able pupils, because work is targeted at the correct level for them. However, a few of the more able pupils could work at a higher level in all their work. A key factor in the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is the skilled input from the teaching assistants. Detailed individual programmes and well-planned intervention ensures that they receive the help they need.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is rich and helps to make school an exciting place to learn. This was very evident during the inspection, which took place just before Christmas, and the teachers' planning shows that this is usual throughout the year. The curriculum is also enriched by special events, visits and visitors, all of which bring learning to life for the pupils. Attractive examples of children's artwork on display reflect the success of the school's focus on creative activities. Personal, health and social development is given high priority and leads to confident pupils who are eager to take part in all that is on offer. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and applied effectively in other subjects but opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) were missed.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. Teachers plan a stimulating variety of activities, which offer challenge and interest and result in children becoming confident, independent learners. The school's outdoor areas are used well; although too many activities make it difficult for the teachers to see how well the children are learning. Reorganisation of teaching and classrooms has successfully transferred some of this good practice in the Foundation Stage to Years 1 and 2. More opportunities for learning through play and creative activities have smoothed the transition between the classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The whole ethos of the school is focused on safeguarding pupils and enabling them to achieve as well as they can. The school's Christian mission underpins every aspect of the school's work. This is evident in the happy and caring atmosphere, which enables pupils to feel safe and secure. All essential safety procedures are carried out. Thorough checks are conducted to see that all working in school are suitable to be involved with children. Close links with external agencies enable staff to offer well-informed guidance, especially to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Systems for tracking pupils' progress are very good. The school uses assessment information well to track pupils' progress as they go through the school. Teachers involve pupils in their own learning and at the end of lessons pupils identify if they need more help and teachers use this information in their future planning. This is helping to accelerate the pupils' progress. Assessment procedures in reading, writing and mathematics are good. They are generally used well except work is not always matched accurately to the needs of all more able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and have enabled the school to sustain the high standards identified at the time of the previous inspection. The school's governance is also good. Real strengths are the headteacher's exceptional leadership and vision. Parents are unanimous in their respect for her, and the school has a very good reputation in the locality. She keeps the school at the cutting edge of educational change and as a result the school has gained several awards for many aspects of its work.

The school's self-evaluation ensures that the staff and governors have an accurate picture of what is working well and what needs attention. Systems for monitoring performance are good and producing useful information to identify future priorities. However, the subject leaders do not always make use of assessment information in non-core subjects well enough to identify how standards could be raised further. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and by their close links with subject leaders. The chair of governors is more involved than others in decision-making but all governors play a part in agreeing the school's priorities.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pocklington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Maxwell Road

Pocklington

York

East Yorkshire

YO42 2HE

14 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Many thanks for welcoming me into your school at such a special time. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of your preparations for Christmas. I could see by the excellent attendance of relatives and adults at your Nativity play that your school has a good reputation and you have every right to be proud of your achievements. You are lucky to attend such a good school. You help to make it good by the way you behave and work hard.

I know that the staff and governors are very keen to keep the school improving. I think that you do really well, especially in science, but I also think that a few of you could do even harder work in reading, writing and mathematics.

I am sure you will all continue to enjoy your time in school and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J E Platt

Inspector