

# Penny Acres Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112565
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310925
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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 on roll</b>	
School	36
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Machen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G Trend
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	Main Street Holmesfield Dronfield Derbyshire S18 7WP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 289 0330
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 289 0330

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a very small primary school. It serves the village of Holmesfield and surrounding area. A broadly average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and there is one with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and very high in some year groups. Attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year due to the small cohorts, but is typically broadly in line with that expected.

## 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 where staff work hard to give the pupils an effective education. The school has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. It provides an outstanding level of personal care and guidance for pupils. Its work to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. The parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One said, 'Penny Acres is an excellent school. The staff are dedicated and excellent at what they do'. The pupils are also extremely happy at school and this has a positive impact on their attitudes towards learning and their excellent behaviour. The school provides good value for money.

The inspection evidence shows that progress throughout the school is good, and by the time pupils leave the school most have reached above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress while other pupils make good progress. In 2007 most achieved above average standards, especially in mathematics and science. The standards of the current Year 6 pupils are clearly above average in all subjects. Standards in writing are not as good as in reading, however, and pupils' skills in writing factual or descriptive accounts remain weaker.

The good progress made is the result of a good curriculum and good teaching and learning. Teachers work hard to plan appropriately for the mixed age classes, although the work in some lessons is too easy for the more able pupils. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants, especially to support the youngest children, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and this helps create the positive ethos.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They care for each other and have a good community spirit. This extends to care for others, especially those less fortunate than themselves, as shown by their charity work and by the way they care for friends with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, and they say that they feel safe at school and have adults that they trust to talk to if necessary. They say there is no bullying and this is supported by the evidence of the inspection. The good basic skills achieved help prepare them well for their future education and lives.

Pupils' strong personal development is helped by the excellent personal guidance the school provides. Teachers have developed some good assessment systems that provide good information about how well pupils are progressing. However, they do not use this information sufficiently to set targets for groups or individuals or to help them understand what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the direction of the school and places a strong emphasis on the creation of its supportive ethos. This is reflected in the very inclusive nature of the school. The staff work together well as a team, making good use of each other's strengths. Subject leadership is good and has a positive impact on standards. The governing body have had a number of recent changes and currently offer a satisfactory level of support and challenge to the school. The improvements made since the last inspection, alongside other changes made, show that there is a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

When children enter the school they are assessed on an individual level to provide staff with an early picture of their knowledge, skills and understanding. Although attainment on entry varies widely it is often the case that early writing skills are underdeveloped. Children work as a small group within a Key Stage 1 class, or separately as appropriate. The good quality provision helps them make good progress and the majority are working within the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. Children are looked after well and they are clearly happy at the school. The staff work hard to overcome the lack of easy access to an outdoor area.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring pupils have more opportunities to write factually and descriptively.
- Use the available data about pupil progress more effectively to set targets and help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure all lessons provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start school with a wide range of abilities and the school correctly tracks all children as individuals. The assessment of pupils' progress shows that most achieve well during the Reception Year. This continues into Years 1 and 2, where standards are rising over time and are largely average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the key stage. Good progress continues through Years 3 to 6. By the time they leave the school, standards are largely above average and achievement is good. Standards are strongest in mathematics and science. Standards in reading are also good but many pupils' writing skills remain too low even though the school has worked to improve them. The inspection evidence shows that there are good standards in pupils' design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and musical skills.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The good progress made by pupils is directly related to their positive attitudes towards school. They talk about how happy they are at school, and maturely discuss what they see as the school's strengths. They are pleased and proud to be involved in the recently introduced 'School Meeting'. They enjoy lessons, and say the teachers help them learn new things. One said that the history lessons were 'Brilliant!' Pupils' behaviour is excellent in and around the school. The pupils make a good contribution to the school community and to the local and wider community. The school has a central role in various village activities, such as well dressing and maypole dancing. Attendance is currently broadly in line with that found nationally and the school emphasises to parents the need for full attendance.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The good teaching and learning is the result of teachers who are experienced at planning for such small cohorts and mixed age classes. Even so, there are times when the planning does not provide more able pupils with sufficiently challenging work. Relationships built with pupils are very positive and supportive, and this helps them enjoy their learning so much. This is especially true for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All staff work well together and this helps create a very supportive family ethos. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to use ICT in their work and the resources have improved since the last inspection.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The good curriculum is well planned for the mixed age classes except when the activities provided are too easy for the more able pupils. The school also has good links to other small schools in the area and this enables teachers to share ideas and expertise. Recent work to develop pupils' problem solving skills has successfully helped raise standards in scientific and mathematical investigative work, as well as developing pupils' thinking skills. Good links are made between subjects so, for example, literacy and artistic skills are developed through a history or geography topic. There is good enrichment of the basic curriculum through visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, which pupils clearly enjoy and talk about with interest and excitement. Pupils have good opportunities to join a wide range of clubs and out of school activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils' academic guidance is good overall. Teachers offer pupils a good level of support and help them when they struggle. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support to help them make progress and excellent support to aid inclusion. However, the setting of targets for improvement to help pupils be clear about what they need to do to improve is at an early stage and inconsistent between teachers. The personal guidance provided for pupils is excellent. This is a very caring school where pupils' safety and well-being is of high priority. All requirements for safeguarding pupils through adult checks, risk assessments and race equality are met. Health and safety checks are regularly made by staff and governors.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well and has a major impact on the happy but hardworking ethos found throughout the school. The subject leadership is effective and staff evaluate their own and each other's work in some detail. This leads to good professional discussion and support where needed, resulting in clearly improved practice. The school is not complacent and is willing to look outside for appropriate expertise or advice. Links with parents are very good. The leadership of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective in helping those pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and ensuring their full

inclusion in all school activities. The governing body has had significant membership changes recently. Although supportive of the school, the governors have not yet developed sufficiently rigorous systems for monitoring the success of the schools' work.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### 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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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

8 December 2007

Dear Children

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

I am writing to thank you for the way you made me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I especially enjoyed seeing some of the Christmas rehearsal, and was very impressed with the percussion players. I hope the Nativity goes well and that the Church is full! I also enjoyed eating my lunch with the younger children and meeting with some of the older ones who told me a lot about the school.

Like you and your parents, I think Penny Acres is a good school. It is a very friendly place for you to work and play. The adults are very good at keeping you safe and helping you learn. You help the teachers teach you by behaving so well. You are very happy at school.

Mr Trend and the staff work very hard to plan your work and try to make lessons interesting for you. Recently they have tried to provide more opportunities for problem solving activities and these are helping you learn. Since the last inspection you have become better at using computers and other technology.

To help the school get even better in the future I have asked the teachers to do three things:

- Help you get even better at writing.
- Set you targets to help you know how to improve your work.
- Make sure that lessons are not too easy for you.

Many thanks once again for your help. Enjoy your time at Penny Acres and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector