

Pillowell Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115554
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311975
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Forster
Headteacher	Patricia Briggs
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2005
School address	School Road Pillowell Lydney GL15 4QT
Telephone number	01594 562244
Fax number	01594 564945

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • whether standards have improved in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school • how well information from assessment is used to move pupils on in learning and how well boys and girls of different abilities make progress • how well pupils develop personal, social and emotional skills and become equipped as effective learners ready to cope with the demands of secondary school • the ways in which the leadership and management of the school, including governance, help to improve the school. Analysis of national test data was undertaken. Evidence was also gathered from the analysis of pupils' work, teacher assessments, observations of lessons, parents' questionnaires and discussions with the headteacher, senior leadership team, parents and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own self-evaluation assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Pupils are taught in three mixed year classes and are set for ability for literacy and numeracy. Many children have not attended pre-school settings. In 2007, the school had a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Years 2 and 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. It has several outstanding features, particularly in teaching in Years 3 to 6 and in the provision it makes for some aspects of the personal development and well-being of its pupils. Pupils know a great deal about healthy lifestyles and are highly active participants in the local community. Partnerships with parents, other agencies and the local community are outstanding. 'We are delighted with the education this school provides, children are valued for their individuality. We are consulted on every aspect of school life and the school is the cornerstone of our community,' said one parent, speaking for many.

Entry levels of skills and knowledge for children in the Reception class are well below those expected for their age. On entry to Year 1 standards are still below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall but is good in personal, social and emotional development.

In 2007, results in Year 2 and Year 6 were below average, especially in writing, but pupils' achievement was good in relation to their low starting points. These particular year groups were made up of a high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This year, standards have improved and are average in reading, science and mathematics but writing still remains an issue. Pupils' rates of progress in writing are satisfactory but teachers are not using information from assessment to plan challenging tasks for more capable pupils, and too few opportunities are provided in the Reception class for pupils to record their letters and numbers. The school's recent focus on raising standards in mathematics has paid dividends. Pupils are now attaining average standards and achieving well, and this shows the school's good capacity to improve. Data show that there are differences in attainment of boys and girls in Years 1 and 2 but these differences are ironed out by the time pupils leave school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school because they receive good quality support from teachers and support staff and parents are kept very well informed of their progress.

Underpinning this good achievement are pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour, brought about by good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, good teaching and a broad and balanced curriculum enhanced by a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. Attendance is satisfactory but too many parents take their children on holiday during term time. 'We love coming to school, our teachers are great, learning is fun and we know that we can always get help if we need it,' said one member of the school council. Relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding. In an outstanding lesson in the top ability group in mathematics, the teacher consistently praised pupils on their understanding of decimals, and this made them glow with pride and try even harder. Teaching and learning are good with outstanding features in Years 3 to 6; as a result, teaching is stronger in Years 3 to 6 than that in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. This is because the youngest children are not always stretched to their limits, and on occasion repeat work that they have already covered due to inconsistent use of assessment.

The curriculum is generally well planned, good opportunities exist for pupils to learn using the outdoor facilities, and the school has outstanding links with France and other schools within the cluster. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of good care and

guidance. Pastoral care is outstanding but academic guidance is weaker because not all teachers mark pupils' work effectively. This results in some pupils not doing their best and presenting their work untidily.

Pupils are safe and secure in this school because of good safeguarding procedures. Pupils' weekly cookery lessons and the high emphasis placed on sport enable them to have excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles. Outstanding links with agencies, such as the fire service, networks of schools, fundraising for charities and links with the community ensure that pupils have a very good awareness of citizenship. The brass band and choir are a credit to the school for the endless pleasure they bring to the community. Pupils are well prepared for their future education and later world of work.

At the centre of this good school is a highly dedicated headteacher who, together with an effective senior leadership team and governing body, strives to improve on previous best performance. Leadership and management of the school are good and school self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher has been instrumental in bringing about a culture of accountability. 'She has all the time in the world for us and our children,' said one parent. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and is continuing to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with good features. Children settle in quickly because of the high emphasis placed on their welfare and make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas of learning, their rates of progress are good except in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, where progress is satisfactory. This is because too few opportunities are provided for children to record their work, and in self-chosen activities, adults do not always intervene sufficiently in children's play. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features, especially in the opportunities provided for children to learn about the natural world and solve problems such as those presented by 'Giant Jim' – a fictitious character used to help children solve problems. Children experience a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those which promote learning through exploration.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's rates of progress in writing and mathematics in the Foundation Stage by providing more opportunities for them to record their work, and by directing their learning more effectively.
- Raise standards in writing and improve the rates of progress of more capable pupils throughout the school by ensuring that better use is made of assessment data to plan tasks to meet pupils' needs.
- Improve the quality of all teaching to that of the best by ensuring that teachers mark pupils' work regularly and help them improve its presentation.

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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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

6 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pillowell Community Primary School, Lydney, GL15 4QT

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and to your parents and finding out about all the wonderful ways in which staff help you learn. Your plants look fantastic – well done to those of you who attend gardening club. You told me that your teachers are very kind, that learning is fun and that you are now making better progress in mathematics. You are right. Your school is a good school where you learn well, lessons are interesting and you have good teachers.

You have good attitudes to learning, you are well behaved and you are fantastic chefs. Thank you for my fruit meringue, it was delicious! You know a lot about healthy eating and you make an outstanding contribution to your community through your brass band playing, links with the church, singing in the choir and supporting charities. Adults care for you well and this helps you feel safe. I agree with you that your headteacher is very kind and that the school is well led and managed.

I think that your good school can be even better so I have asked your headteacher and teachers to make a few improvements. I have asked them to help the youngest children to form letters and numbers correctly and talk to them more when they are playing. I have also asked your teachers to help you to improve your writing and help those of you who find learning easy to make even better progress, by using the information they have about your individual progress more carefully when planning lessons and by marking your work regularly. You can help by making more of an effort in presenting your work neatly.

Thank you once again for all of your help and continue to enjoy learning.

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead inspector



6 June 2008

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Bogusia Matusiak-Varley
Lead inspector