

Pattishall Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121985
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314178
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	164
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	26
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Jones
Headteacher	Brian Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Pattishall Towcester NN12 8NE
Telephone number	01327 830301

Age group	4–11
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Fax number

01327 831134

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves local villages and surrounding rural communities. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few are at an early stage of learning English. Virtually all children enter the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision having attended a pre-school setting. Most attend the local playgroup and some attend the Nursery located on the school site. This organisation also provides the out of school hours provision before and after school. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools award, Activemark and a silver Eco-School award.

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. There is a strong commitment from all members of the school community to provide a caring, supportive yet stimulating environment where pupils thrive. As one pupil said, 'We all have plenty of friends at this school. We're like a large family.' This commitment extends effectively into the local community. The school is rapidly meeting its aim of providing a complete service for local families through a number of developments including plans for a family learning centre. Close links with local organisations ensure that the school responds well to local needs. As one parent put it, 'The school is very much part of the community.'

The school's leaders have effectively focused on raising standards by improving the learning environment, the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum, all of which are good. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils is good from their broadly average starting points. A number of well planned curriculum changes since the last inspection have contributed to improvements in standards in reading and numeracy. Lessons are usually lively and interesting. In all classes, the partnership between teachers and teaching assistants makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. There is usually a careful match between learning tasks and pupil's needs but occasionally work is set for the higher and upper average attaining pupils that is not challenging enough, and expectations are not as high as they could be. The school's provision in the EYFS is satisfactory and standards at the end of Reception are average. Tracking procedures have not been as effective here as in the rest of the school in improving the children's progress. The school is implementing plans to address this and there have been significant improvements in provision recently.

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour reflect their thorough enjoyment of school. The positive relationships that develop between members of the school and a well planned programme of personal, social and health education underpin the good personal development and well-being of pupils. Parents value the good care, guidance and support that the school provides. The school's tracking of pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 is thorough. As a result, staff identify lack of progress swiftly and put additional support in place. Challenging targets are set at a whole school level. The school has developed systems to share personal targets with pupils. This process is raising expectations among pupils and teachers of what they can achieve.

There are strong partnerships with the local secondary school and surrounding primary schools that enhance curriculum provision and staff development. Parents have every confidence in the safe and secure provision for their children, and they know that they enjoy school very much. There is a significant minority, however, who voice concerns over the effectiveness of communication between home and school. Good opportunities exist for parents to consult on their child's progress, and these are well attended. However, there is no systematic collection of parents' views on the quality of education provided through, for example, an annual survey, which can be used in the school's evaluation of its work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's levels of skills and understanding when they start school vary from year to year. They are generally around those expected for their age and include a wide range of abilities. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and most join Year 1 with standards that are average. The welfare and safety of children are high priorities and as a result, the

promotion of children's personal development and well-being is good. This was shown during the inspection when children who had been in school for only a very short time confidently worked with other children, taking turns, sharing and talking animatedly to each other about their scenery designs for a puppet show. Children also mix very well socially with older children at break times and enjoy these experiences very much. The leadership of the EYFS is satisfactory, but recent strengthening is leading to improvement through, for example, the introduction of a greater focus on children's understanding and use of phonics. There have been positive changes to assessment procedures that more accurately identify children's abilities on entry to the school. Previously, the use of these procedures has not been rigorous enough in all cases to ensure an accurate match between activities and an individual child's needs. Good induction procedures help children settle quickly into the day-to-day routines of school. Parents value these and feel welcomed into the school to help the process.

What the school should do to improve further

- Include more challenges for the higher and upper average attaining pupils throughout the school so that the rate of their progress increases.
- Make better use of information from assessments and tracking when planning activities to ensure children make good progress across the EYFS.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils reach standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. They make good progress from their entry to the school. In 2007, national test results dipped in the three core subjects, but unvalidated results from 2008 tests show that interventions to put the school back on track have been effective. Standards are highest in writing. They have improved at Key Stage 1. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their writing in other subjects, for example science, and the quality of pupils' creative writing across the school is very good. There have been recent improvements to standards in numeracy. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the very good support they receive in lessons and the opportunities provided for them to learn in smaller groups. The most able pupils attain above average standards and make good progress. However, there are a few occasions when their work does not fully challenge them and they achieve less than they might. Throughout Years 1 to 6, the quality of pupils' work in art and design is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good gains in spiritual, moral and social development enable pupils to appreciate the achievement of others and show care and consideration. Pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society is satisfactory. Pupils contribute well to school and local communities. They enjoy taking responsibility, as for example when helping younger children or acting as junior road safety officers. The school council introduces pupils to democratic procedures and, along with circle time, ensures pupils' views are heard. Raising money for charities gives pupils a good understanding of wider social and economic issues. As one pupil stated, 'It helps us to remember there are others who have far less than us.' Such activities, together with many opportunities to work in pairs and groups, and the clear focus and progress made in basic skills, prepare pupils well for their future. Pupils have a clear understanding of healthy eating and the need for exercise, from their involvement in gaining Healthy School status and achieving

the Activemark. They say bullying is rare and that adults deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly and fairly. Attendance has fallen since the last inspection and is in line with national figures. Much of the absence is caused by holidays taken during school time despite the school's best efforts to discourage this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lesson plans have clear learning objectives that are shared effectively with pupils and are underpinned by teachers' secure subject knowledge. Such features, combined with clear explanations at the start of lessons and teachers' good rapport with learners, result in pupils' enthusiastic participation in learning. Teachers mostly provide tasks matched well to pupils' stages of learning. However, work is not always sufficiently challenging for pupils that are more able or those within the upper average ability group. This sometimes reduces the quality, extent and pace of learning. In most instances, teachers' effective questioning, together with good use of 'talk partners', helps pupils clarify their thinking and consider their responses. There are occasions when teachers' questions do not do this because they lack focus. Occasionally, too much talk from teachers reduces time available for active learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to provide an effective visual stimulus for learning. Their regular and constructive marking, together with pupils' increasing involvement in evaluating their own performance as well as that of others, helps learners gain a clear understanding of how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An impressive range of out-of-class activities and a satisfactory number of visits and visitors enhance the broad and interesting curriculum. Provision is further supported by French being taught to pupils in Years 3 to 6. There is a good emphasis on teaching and using basic skills of literacy and numeracy in different subjects. Improvements made to the teaching of phonics, together with the introduction of a new mathematics scheme and whole school writing days, are having a positive impact on pupil performance. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and is used well to support learning. For example, Year 6 made effective use of computer technology to display work related to their dandelion project. Teachers make an increasing number of purposeful links between subjects to enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All adults in the school know pupils well and as a result, the pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Parents and pupils recognise this and pupils feel safe and well cared for at school. There are secure procedures to keep pupils safe and healthy and they are reviewed regularly. Support and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effective, particularly where teaching assistants give individual support. The school works closely with parents to ensure that additional needs are met. There are very effective systems in place to track pupils' progress towards their targets. This leads to additional support when they are not

being met. However, it does not always lead to additional challenge being made quickly enough to the small number of pupils who are comfortably meeting their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior staff work purposefully with governors to improve standards and the school environment, and have been successful in doing so. Development plans are clear and subject coordinators have a good understanding of their role. The school's leadership at all levels has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on regular monitoring of its work. This effective evaluation of its work leading to improvement indicates the good capacity of the school to improve further. The governing body is well informed and governors' active involvement in the school helps them to make an effective contribution to the school's work both in supporting and in holding the school to account. A recent 'listening tea', for example, gave governors an effective opportunity to hear the views of pupils' experiences in ICT. A significant number of parents do not feel that their views are taken into account by the school. The governing body has increased the number of parent governors to strengthen links with parents, but do not canvas views through an annual survey. There has been a good emphasis on training staff, and teaching assistants are highly skilled as a result.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pattishall Church of England Primary School, Northamptonshire, NN12 8NE

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly on our recent visit to your school. I would like to share with you what we learned.

It is a good school and there are a number of improvements since the last time it was inspected. You make good progress in your work and reach standards that are above average. The quality of your writing is particularly good and we enjoyed reading it.

You develop well in your time at school. You enjoy it very much and take part enthusiastically in all that the school has to offer. Most of you do your best to attend school every day although a few of you do take holidays in school time which is disappointing. You make a valuable contribution to the school community through the school council and by raising money for charity. You are very active at break times and play well together.

All staff care for you well, and you care for each other. As a result, you feel safe in school and told us that there is always someone to help if you need it. Your teachers make lessons interesting and this adds to your enjoyment of school. Many additional classroom activities and clubs stimulate your interest.

Most of you are aiming high but some of you could manage more of a challenge in some activities so we are asking teachers to make sure this happens. We are also asking them to track the progress of those children in Reception as well as they do in the rest of the school so that children make better progress. Your headteacher and governors will be looking at ways to make sure these things happen. We hope that you will respond to these challenges and this information with your usual enthusiasm and commitment so that the school can improve further.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector