

Pytchley Endowed Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122028
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314197
Inspection date	18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Tipler
Headteacher	Julia Havlickova
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	High Street Pytchley Kettering NN14 1EN
Telephone number	01536 790506
Fax number	01536 790506

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils come to this smaller than average sized primary school from the village of Pytchley and the surrounding area. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few are Travellers of Irish heritage. The school has recently undergone major building work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pupils receive a satisfactory education at this friendly school. Members of staff support pupils' personal development particularly well. Children settle quickly into the small and welcoming Reception class and good teaching enables them to make a good start to their education. Teaching between Years 1 and 6 is satisfactory with good features, enabling pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, including the Travellers of Irish heritage, and by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Standards are higher in reading than in writing. In writing, pupils are not always sufficiently inspired to do their best and they make too many errors in their spelling and punctuation. In addition, teachers do not always ensure that pupils take care with their handwriting and present their work as neatly as they should.

Pupils develop good values and thoroughly enjoy school. They are delighted with the new classrooms and are polite and friendly. Their good behaviour enables them to get on with each other sensibly. They contribute to the community well through the school council and 'playground group' and frequently take part in village events. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants are caring and use a variety of successful strategies to make learning fun. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well with valuable additional activities such as clubs, visitors and visits. These boost the pupils' enjoyment of school and help them to learn how to stay safe.

Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Teachers are using the recently improved assessment information more effectively to plan for pupils' differing needs, although this good practice is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and often provide detailed comments, but do not always expect pupils to improve their work quickly enough.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has been successful in managing the building work at the same time as running the school smoothly and teaching a class part-time. It is to her credit that she has maintained the calm and purposeful working atmosphere in the school throughout this time. The senior management team has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved, although school development plans are over-ambitious and have too many priorities. All members of staff and governors are fully committed to improving provision for all pupils, but do not always make clear how developments will help improve standards. Leaders have started to analyse the new information on pupils' progress so that they can tackle dips in progress swiftly.

Most parents are very pleased that their children come to this happy school. They make positive comments such as, 'We admire how the teachers encourage all the children to feel and understand that they are a valued part of the school' and 'My daughter really feels comfortable here.' These comments reflect what the school is doing really well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Reception Year is good. Children's attainment on entry varies significantly from year to year due to the small number in each intake. In the last two years, over half the children started school with skills lower than those expected for their age. Good teaching enables them to make good progress and they reach broadly average standards by

the start of Year 1. Children do especially well in personal and social development and learning letter sounds, because of the high expectations of all adults. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere in lessons with children developing good independence by choosing where they are going to work and learning how to get on with each other. There is a good curriculum and children are already benefiting from the very new outdoor area. This is giving them more opportunities to develop the full range of physical skills. They are already enjoying the easy access to bicycles and a large tent. Provision is well led and managed. Leaders know that the use of the outdoor area is still in its infancy and both adults and children alike are exploring how to use it to best effect in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Do more to capture the pupils' interest in writing so that they improve their spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve, especially in writing.
- Ensure that school improvement planning identifies a manageable number of priorities that are more sharply focused on raising standards.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the small Reception class, and standards are broadly average when they start in Year 1. Most pupils make satisfactory progress between Years 1 and 6. Pupils make good progress in learning to read because teachers provide good support and parents help their children at home. Pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting are comparatively weak because teachers do not always expect pupils to do their best writing or to check their work for mistakes. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to other pupils. The school sets and achieves realistically challenging targets and standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well when they are working together or playing outside. Good relationships ensure that most pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are confident in approaching teachers or other adults if they have any worries. They are keen to learn but do not always produce their best work when writing and consequently this is sometimes untidy and has careless errors. Although rates of attendance have improved in the current year, they are still slightly below average because a number of parents take their children on holiday during term time.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From starting school in the Reception Year, pupils quickly learn to care for each other. Pupils are friendly and thoughtful and show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charities. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility and they do this well, ensuring that they make a good contribution to the community. Pupils are rightly pleased that their views are respected by adults. There is a well-run school council and the 'playground group' is working hard to improve

facilities and resources. These activities, along with pupils' sound progress in developing basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and later life.

The school is working hard to promote healthy lifestyles but knows that more remains to be done. Although pupils are keen to participate in sport and understand the value of taking exercise, not all make healthy choices at snack times. In contrast, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe. For example, they explain clearly the rules they followed for avoiding danger whilst building work was taking place on the school site. Older pupils also benefit from being able to learn basic first aid skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, teachers form good relationships with their pupils and make learning fun by providing interesting practical activities. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed the 'Top Secret' mission when weighing various objects and those in Years 5 and 6 responded well to role-play about characters in a story. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution towards supporting groups of pupils. Teachers do not consistently expect high enough standards from pupils and this is especially evident in pupils' writing. When this happens, learning slows. In addition, teachers' marking, whilst often detailed, is not always followed up quickly enough by the pupils, so that they can make rapid progress. Children learn quickly in the Reception class because adults support them well and provide engaging tasks appropriate to their levels of ability.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to build steadily on what they have already learnt. The school is extending the satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills (ICT) to support learning in other subjects. Senior leaders know that writing tasks need to be more interesting and purposeful so that pupils are more inclined to produce quality work. Pupils appreciate the good opportunities to learn to speak Spanish.

A good range of visits, visitors and clubs enhances pupils' enjoyment of learning. Older pupils are particularly appreciative of their residential trip when they are able to try out new things such as abseiling and quad biking. There is good provision to promote the pupils' personal, social and health education, enabling them to know how to stay safe and well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils are right to be pleased with the good way that the school supports pupils' personal needs. As one parent wrote, 'The school provides very good pastoral care for its children.' Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very thorough and there are good links with external agencies to help support the Travellers of Irish heritage. The school does not do enough to discourage parents from taking their children on term time holidays.

Pupils feel safe at school and report that members of staff deal with the few instances of bullying to their satisfaction. Pupils who join the school in the Reception Year and other year groups are helped to settle quickly. As one pupil said, 'other children are friendly'.

There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers are starting to use these more effectively to plan suitable work for pupils of differing abilities. However, not all pupils are clear about how they can improve their work, because they are not always expected to read and act upon written advice.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and other senior leaders have a shared understanding of what they should do next to improve the school further. The school's systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory, although school improvement planning includes too many priorities and these are not linked closely enough to raising standards. The school has improved systems for monitoring teaching and learning although their impact on moving the school forward has slowed during the extensive building work. The school shows that it has a sound capacity to improve because it has consolidated provision since the last inspection and has initiatives, such as a more rigorous tracking system, that are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are enthusiastic and know the school's strengths. They are keen to extend their roles by becoming even more proactive in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils Inspection of Pytchley Endowed C of E Primary School, Kettering NN14 1EN Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some points about your school

- You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress, especially in their personal development.
- You behave well and know how to stay safe, but you do not all eat healthy snacks.
- You take responsibility well. The school council and 'playground group' are doing a good job in helping to make the school even better.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers work hard to make learning fun by giving you practical activities.
- You study a satisfactory range of topics, and benefit from interesting visits, visitors and clubs.
- The adults in the school care for you well and help you when you are finding your work hard.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know how to make your school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that writing topics are interesting so that you are keen to improve your spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Expect you to do hard enough work, especially when you are writing.
- Plan to improve only a few things at a time that will help you to do better.

What you can do to help your teachers

- Make sure that you take notice of teachers' marking, write carefully and check your work for mistakes in spelling and punctuation.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We are glad that you enjoy coming to this happy school and wish you well for the future.

■ Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector

19 June 2008

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Lead inspector