

Pollington-Balne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118044
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	326750
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Bennetts

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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	99
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Cyril Roberts
Headteacher	Mr Ron Dyson
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pollington Goole DN14 0DZ
Telephone number	01405 861916
Fax number	01405 869076

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a rural area. It is smaller than most primary schools; numbers have fallen since the last inspection and local predictions suggest that they will fall further. Over the last two years staff absence has disrupted some pupils' progress. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and some important aspects of its work are good. Parents appreciate what the school offers. A typical comment is, 'My child really enjoys school and feels well supported.'

Pupils make good progress in the development of their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They enjoy school and attend well. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and how to take care of their own safety and the safety of other people. They take pride in the contribution they make through the school council and by supporting charities. Behaviour is good and pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are well prepared for the next stages of their education. Pupils' welfare is a high priority for all staff and systems to protect and safeguard pupils fully meet requirements. Pupils are well looked after. Parents are appreciative of the support their children receive, stating for example, that the school 'is a loving and caring environment'. The needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well understood by staff who use the strong links with outside agencies to support their work. These pupils are given good support in their learning, and any other difficulties they might have are caringly attended to.

There has been a great deal of disruption to staffing over the last two years and the school has made considerable effort to minimise the impact of this on pupils' progress. This has included a successful strategy of flexible grouping of pupils in mixed-age classes, based on pupils' needs, where the mix of ages varies from subject to subject. The school is currently giving strong priority to literacy and numeracy in Year 6 by teaching that group separately. These pupils are now showing standards in these subjects that are broadly average for their age. There is a good system for keeping track of pupils' progress, based on secure assessment and straightforward record keeping. The organisation of the curriculum is sound.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. From Year 1 to Year 6, achievement is broadly satisfactory in relation to pupils' starting points. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some teaching is good and occasionally it is outstanding. However, a significant minority of lessons are not as effective as they could be. This is mainly because the key features of these lessons have not been thought through thoroughly in advance.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and this has enabled the school to weather a period of difficult staffing issues over the last two years. The headteacher has taken decisive action to limit the impact of these difficulties on pupils' progress and to sustain the morale of the staff. However, systems to formally monitor and assure the quality of teaching are not firmly established, which limits opportunities to tackle specific weaknesses in teaching and learning. The governing body has a clear understanding of how things stand in the school and support it well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The capabilities of the very small number of children starting in the Reception class vary from year-to-year. They are often a little below the levels found nationally in children of their age. Records show that, similarly, standards at the end of Reception vary year-on-year but that children make good individual progress and overall standards are broadly average at the end of the year. Children currently in Reception are learning well and their progress is good. They

are well taught. They have a good range of opportunities to learn with an adult and to choose activities for themselves. The outdoor area is attractive and the section arranged as a garden centre is enticing. Provision links with that for Year 1 pupils who share the classroom and this helps the Reception children settle to learning. However, some opportunities for the younger children to learn by playing are overlooked. Children are cooperative with their teacher and with one another and are enthusiastic about the things they do. Children's development is assessed closely and reliably. This informs discussion with parents and the planning of future work. The care provided is good and all requirements for children's welfare are properly attended to. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. Provision is very well planned and organised, and the nursery nurse and teacher collaborate very effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by improving the planning of teaching.
- Improve the quality assurance of teaching by sharpening checks on the planning of lessons and evaluation of classroom practice.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. The sizes of some year groups are small and, as a result, there are variations in standards from year to year. When pupils start Year 1, their standards are generally average. National assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards that are broadly average, though few pupils reach the higher level. Results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at age 11 have also been broadly average over recent years. Achievement relative to pupils' starting points is satisfactory, though in 2008 pupils made relatively weaker progress in mathematics.

The pupils at present in Year 6 are currently achieving standards that are in line with national expectations for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and achieve as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, though opportunities for broadening their cultural awareness are limited. Pupils participated in an assembly with interest and commitment. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and get on very well together. The 'peacemaker project' encourages pupils to be active in fostering good relationships. Pupils are very enthusiastic about vigorous games and other activities on the playground and school field. They generally like to eat healthily. They behave well in lessons and about the school and they learn to be careful of their own and other pupils' safety. They greatly enjoy school life and attendance is good. They are proud of the contribution they make through the school council and by fundraising for charities. Older pupils have a good appreciation of the transition to secondary school. With their mature attitudes and sound basic skills, they are well prepared for their continuing education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some teaching is good and occasionally it is outstanding. Lessons are characterised by good relationships and most pupils try hard most of the time. Learning is generally successful. In the best lessons, key points are explained succinctly, and pupils move on quickly to work briskly on individual tasks. Where pupils are closely guided by teaching assistants they make strong progress. Marking of pupils' work is often painstaking. There is encouragement, together with helpful pointers for improvement.

Teachers' planning is not always as refined as it should be. On occasion, teachers rely too much on what is proposed by published schemes, without considering sufficiently whether it is too challenging or not challenging enough for their pupils. Sometimes work from schemes lacks substance, but additional factual material is not provided. Teachers occasionally talk too long, and some pupils become a little restive. In some lessons, those pupils who most need to make headway are not prioritised sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Sensible arrangements are made about the flexible organisation of mixed-age classes. The planning cycle for subjects such as history, geography and science ensures that all pupils get continuity of provision as they move from one class to another. The school is venturing to link some subjects together, in accordance with national guidelines. A number of subjects, including personal, social and health education, follow published schemes. In the main, these provide a helpful framework for development of the curriculum, though sometimes teachers need to check more thoroughly that the proposed lessons are likely to go well with their pupils. The curriculum is extended with trips out, including a residential visit, and by visitors to the school. A range of extra curricular activities is offered and these are appreciated by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Teaching and non-teaching staff are vigilant in looking after pupils wherever they might be. Though some pupils can occasionally be boisterous, behaviour is appropriately checked and the school encourages an harmonious atmosphere with generally good behaviour. There is sensitive support and discreet assistance whenever a pupil is in difficulty. Meticulous attention to the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures they are well provided for in lessons and at other times. Support from other agencies is called in whenever needed. Consequently, these pupils get on at least as well as others. The school has reliable assessment records and these give a clear picture of the progress that pupils are making. Pupils know the level at which they are working in English and mathematics, and what they are aiming for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership maintains a caring ethos in which youngsters grow up to become mature and confident. Pupils are happy at the school. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are pleased with all the school provides. One says, 'You couldn't wish for a better school for your child.' There have been considerable staffing difficulties and uncertainties over the last year with supply staff, assignment of staff to new duties, and reorganisation of the leadership structure. The headteacher now teaches 50% of the time, which supports some issues but places other restrictions on the time available for management tasks. Through this difficult period, leadership has been resolute and the best arrangements have been made for pupils, including flexible age groupings throughout the school. There has been improvement in science since the last inspection. Firm action has been taken to ensure that the current Year 6 now makes optimum progress. In many ways, a clear direction has been set for necessary action and targets have been very much in mind. The school's self-evaluation is objective and helpful. However, whilst learning is generally effective, teaching is not always managed closely enough to ensure major improvement in standards and greater achievement.

All pupils get a fair deal and they have a sensitive awareness of one another's needs and difficulties. There are strenuous efforts to foster the community within the school and the school promotes community values in the locality. Pupils' wider cultural links are developed through learning some German and French and about festivals in other cultures. However, the school is aware that the wider aspects of community cohesion are an area for further development.

The school is shrewd in the deployment of teaching staff, teaching assistants and other resources, so that it gives good value for money. The school is braced for further change with the retirement of the headteacher next term, and with the rationalisation of classes because of falling pupil numbers. The governing body has a clear picture of how things stand and supports the school well. The school has sound capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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?	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

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

4 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pollington-Balne Church of England Primary School, East Riding of Yorkshire, DN14 0DZ

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school. I found that it provides a satisfactory education and that some important aspects of the work it does are good.

You are well looked after by all the staff. You become mature and self-confident young people by the time you move on to secondary school. The school provides you with interesting activities and there are sensible arrangements to group pupils of different age for different subjects. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and you make satisfactory progress as you move on through the school. Lessons are generally satisfactory and many of them go well. There have been difficulties with staff being away from school, but the problems have been sorted out. The way the school is run is satisfactory.

To ensure that you all make good progress, I have asked staff to consider more carefully exactly what is likely to go well when they plan lessons. I have asked the headteacher to help teachers with more advice.

You can help to ensure that progress is good by always doing your best.

I wish you, and the school, every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Jim Bennetts

Lead inspector