

# Palterton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112617
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	289346
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Frost
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynsey Hunter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2002
<b>School address</b>	Back Lane Palterton Chesterfield Derbyshire S44 6UN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 823143
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 824524

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Palterton is a small primary school. About a third of the pupils come from the village of Palterton and the surrounding area. The rest come from further afield. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is about average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year but is usually below national expectations. The current headteacher was appointed in April 2005 and two new teachers joined in September 2006. The school is organised into four classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, Palterton has made significant improvements during the last two years and its overall effectiveness is now good. Pupils are achieving well and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents hold very positive views about the school and are extremely pleased with the care and education provided. They praise the headteacher's leadership, the staff, children's enjoyment and the range of additional activities provided. Their many comments include, 'A well-led school with a dedicated staff', 'We are very pleased we chose Palterton' 'The headteacher has brought many positive changes' 'My child's confidence has grown and she enjoys going to school everyday'.

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is accurate. As a result, the school knows what it does well and uses the findings of evaluation well to identify priorities for improvement. The headteacher and her staff have taken effective action to improve assessment, teaching and learning and the curriculum. These positive changes have had significant impact on pupils' achievement. Team spirit among the staff is strong and there is a clear commitment to make the school even better. Leadership responsibilities have been revised effectively and shared in this small school. These roles have been strengthened so leaders are more active in monitoring and developing their areas of responsibility. The recent developments demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

Outstanding care, guidance and support, and a very positive school atmosphere contribute to pupils' exceptional personal development. They enjoy school and this is shown by their keen participation in all activities. High expectations by staff and very positive relationships lead to excellent behaviour. Pupils show a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. They willingly take on additional responsibilities which contribute extremely well to the school and to the wider community.

Children in Reception get off to a good start because provision is effective. They make good gains in all areas of learning and standards by the end of the Reception year are in line with national expectations. Good teaching and learning enable pupils to make good progress across the school. Assessment is used well to plan teaching and set individual learning targets in English and mathematics. Teaching is challenging and tasks are well matched to pupils' needs so they make good gains in their learning. However, there are minor inconsistencies in pupils' presentation of work and in teachers' marking. Effective action has been taken to raise attainment in mathematics through intensive support for lower attainers and through providing more opportunities for problem solving. Pupils' achievement in science has improved with more emphasis on developing pupils' skills through scientific investigations. In the current Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Assessment is good overall but the school has not established a clear system to assess pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, pupils are not using ICT sufficiently to support their learning in a range of subjects. School leaders have identified this as an improvement priority. An excellent range of additional activities, which are much enjoyed by pupils and appreciated by parents, enriches a good curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Establish effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment in ICT and increase opportunities for pupils use technology to support their learning.

- Ensure the pupils' presentation of work and the marking of pupils' work is consistently good.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Across the school pupils achieve well. Year 2 assessments in 2006 indicated that standards were below average in reading but average in writing and mathematics. In the current Year 2, standards are average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The school's drive to raise attainment in mathematics has been successful. Test results for Year 6 in 2006 were below average overall. National comparisons indicated that pupils were not making enough progress in mathematics and too few were attaining the higher Level 5 in science. Effective action has now been taken to raise standards in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics and science. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average and pupils have achieved well from their starting point. Those with learning difficulties and lower attaining pupils make good progress because of intensive small group teaching in English and mathematics and the effective support by teaching assistants. Improvements to assessment and teaching mean that the more able pupils are challenged and extended.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and this is reflected by their good attendance. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Clear expectations by staff and a well-known system of rewards lead to pupils' outstanding behaviour. Pupils have extremely positive relationships with staff and amongst themselves. They adopt healthy lifestyles and possess a very good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and of taking regular exercise. Those on the school council represent their fellow pupils very well and have made considerable contributions to improving playground arrangements and facilities. They have also worked with the catering service and have increased the choice of school meals. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community by raising funds for charities. They are well prepared for the future because by the time they leave they possess competent skills in literacy and numeracy and have excellent personal and social skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good with elements of outstanding practice. Across the school, teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the class well so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Interactive whiteboards are used well to illustrate main learning points. Skilful questioning challenges pupils' thinking and checks their understanding. Teachers provide good opportunities for discussion. As a result, pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing well. Teachers use assessment effectively to plan and match interesting tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged well, their interest is maintained and they make good progress. While most pupils take care and pride in their presentation, this is not consistently good in all classes. Occasionally, the pace of the lesson can decline with overlong introductions. Teaching assistants give good quality support, particularly to pupils with learning difficulties. The marking of pupils' work is positive and helpful in English and mathematics but is not always as effective in other areas.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 2

The recently revised and improved curriculum is now good. Effective strategies have been implemented to raise standards in mathematics and science, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have more opportunities to solve problems and investigate in these subjects. Interesting links between subjects add meaning to pupils' learning. For example, in Year 5 and 6 drama and role play were used very well to increase pupils' understanding of what it was like to be a Victorian child working in a factory or mine. The school is aware that pupils are not using ICT fully to support their learning. An outstanding range of additional activities, including choir, cricket, dance, fashion design, football, gymnastics, movie making and tennis add to pupils' interest and enjoyment. The vast range of clubs offered is much appreciated by pupils and parents. A parent wrote, 'Teachers put a lot of time into the excellent after-school activities'. Visits including a residential trip for Years 5 and 6 enhance pupils' learning and their personal development. Health and personal safety education receive good attention. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in Reception provides a good range of stimulating activities. However, the outdoor play equipment to promote climbing skills is limited, although there are suitable plans to improve this.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Adults know the pupils extremely well and have established outstanding relationships with them and their parents. 'I find it very easy to approach the staff with any concerns' was a typical parental comment. Procedures to ensure pupils' protection and safety are highly effective. One parent commented, 'Teachers nurture, encourage and make the school a happy and safe environment for all'. Pupils' pastoral care is excellent. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are good. Assessment information is used well to plan teaching activities and to set challenging individual learning targets in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils know what they are working towards in these subjects and there are plans to extend this good practice to science and ICT.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are successfully promoting good educational provision. The inspirational headteacher leads by example. As one parent wrote, 'She has brought a refreshing leadership style with lots of fun and excitement. The children love her'. A pupil remarked, 'Our headteacher is really good and always does what she can for us'. Other leadership roles and responsibilities have been revised effectively in the light of changes in the teaching staff.

Good use has been made of local authority advisers and consultants to help bring about improvements. Teaching has been improved through effective monitoring, support and professional development. A positive professional culture encourages the sharing of expertise and practice among teachers. Improvements to assessment, teaching and to the curriculum have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. However, leaders are aware that there is more to do to improve ICT. Governance is good; governors are supportive and are now better informed about the school's performance. Palterton provides good value for money.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Palterton Primary School, Palterton, Derbyshire, S44 6UN

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work.

I enjoyed the visit and would like to tell you what I have found. The school has made many improvements recently. Palterton is a good school.

These things are strengths of the school.

- You enjoy school and take part in activities with enthusiasm.
- The school has a very positive and friendly atmosphere.
- Teaching is good which is why you are learning well.
- You clearly enjoy the excellent range of clubs and additional activities provided.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you get on very well with others.
- The headteacher leads the school extremely well with good support from other staff.
- Staff know you very well; they take good care of you and give you excellent support.
- Your parents are very pleased with the care and education provided.

These are the areas the school has been asked to improve.

- You could use ICT more to support your learning and the school should find ways of assessing how well you are doing in ICT.
- Some of you could improve the presentation of your work and teachers have been asked to make sure that the marking of your work helps you to improve in all subjects.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards,

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector