

The Pochin School

School Lane, Barkby, Leicester, LE7 3QL

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress. From very varied starting points they reach standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 which are well above those found nationally.
- Teaching is very effective in promoting pupils' achievement. Teachers know their material well. They make sure that work interests both boys and girls and engages them deeply.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. Pupils from diverse backgrounds mix well with one another making the school a friendly and caring community. Excellent behaviour in lessons allows very effective learning to take place.
- The headteacher and all staff share high ambitions for the pupils and constantly strive for further improvement. The quality of teaching is checked closely.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted. Pupils and parents speak in glowing terms of the interest which teachers show in pupils.
- The school offers a wide range of out-of-school activities, which include competitive sport and visits abroad. Pupils have many opportunities to take on jobs and responsibilities to serve their school.
- The governing body is very effective in promoting pupils' high achievement. Governors know the school very well and hold it to account for its performance.

Information about this inspection

- Along with the headteacher, the inspector observed teaching in all classes. He carried out seven lesson observations and made brief visits to several other lessons. He closely examined the work in pupils' books and listened to a sample of pupils read.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and a representative of the Syston and Thurmaston Education Partnership.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents covering safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- He consulted the Parent View website, where 13 parents and carers had posted responses to the online questionnaire, and analysed the responses to a questionnaire completed by 19 staff.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion from other ethnic groups is average, but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional government funding which in this school applies to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is well below average.
- The school converted to become an academy school on 1 October 2012. It forms part of the Syston and Thurmaston Education Partnership, an academy trust which comprises 10 local primary schools. When its predecessor school, also called The Pochin School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen achievement by increasing the level of challenge offered to the most-able pupils so that more of them reach National Curriculum Level 6 in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching in all classes is as high as it currently is in the best by increasing opportunities for more experienced teachers to share ideas and expertise with their less experienced colleagues.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills which vary greatly but which are broadly typical. They make exceptionally good progress as they move from year to year. Taken together, their standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013 were more than two terms ahead of those found nationally by the end of Year 6.
- In 2013 pupils' scores in the Year 1 national check on phonics (the sounds letters make) were above average. Pupils develop a love of reading. 'I love reading fiction', said one, 'it paints a picture in your head'. Another preferred non-fiction: 'you get to find out lots of stuff', he said.
- The most-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with excellent expression, showing skills well above average. Less-able pupils in these years read more hesitantly, although they could show the inspector confidently how they cope with unfamiliar words by using the phonics techniques they have been taught.
- Pupils' progress in writing is rapid because they are given many opportunities to write about things which interest them. The importance of writing clearly and accurately is stressed not only in English lessons but in subjects such as history, geography and science as well. The presentation of pupils' work is of an exceptionally high standard.
- Achievement in mathematics is outstanding. Pupils find the subject interesting because teachers relate it to the real world. A Key Stage 1 class, for example worked eagerly as they calculated the change they should receive when they made various payments using pretend money. An older class, revising work on angles, plotted the bearings to be taken by an ocean liner which needed to visit various ports.
- The inspector looked closely into the achievement rates of boys and girls and was satisfied that there are no significant differences between them. In this school boys and girls achieve as well as each other.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium receive excellent support from the individual and small-group activities which the extra funding provides. There were not enough eligible pupils in 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. The recently introduced sport funding has also had a very positive impact on the quality of sport enjoyed by pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress in line with that of other pupils. Their needs are swiftly and accurately identified and they benefit greatly from one-to-one or small-group support. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and the small number who speak English as an additional language also make progress in line with their classmates.
- The level of challenge offered to pupils is high throughout the school, but the challenge offered to the most-able pupils has not been high enough to enable more than a handful to reach the exceptionally high Level 6 in reading, writing or mathematics by the end of Year 6. The school has identified this as an area to be strengthened.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and challenge them to work hard. They choose

topics and themes which they know will interest boys and girls. In a single English lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils avidly discussed the pros and cons of vivisection, zoos, dogs in parks, homework and being a couch potato, as they considered how to present a balanced article. In another class pupils were deeply intrigued by a 'mystery animal' which had been found nearby. The topic captivated their interest strongly and led to high quality work.

- Teachers do not 'talk down' to pupils but they expect them to rise to the challenge of using 'adult' terminology. Pupils quite spontaneously use words such as *significant*, *pungent*, *pugnacious*, and *carnivorous*.
- Teachers give crystal clear explanations. They inject humour and fun into their lessons so that pupils sustain concentration exceptionally well. They have excellent knowledge of what they are teaching. They question pupils very skilfully to ensure that all are keeping up and that no misunderstandings develop.
- Teachers mark work regularly and conscientiously. They show pupils very clearly how well they are doing and write comments which show the next steps pupils need to take in order to improve their work. They make sure that pupils read and act upon this advice. Pupils say that they find this particularly helpful.
- Teaching assistants and other adults give excellent support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They know their pupils' needs in detail. They are well organised when they give one-to-one or small-group support. When the teacher is addressing the whole class they do not simply sit and wait but look for opportunities to give support and to make sure that no-one is falling behind.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage promotes all areas of learning very effectively. Teachers and other adults interact constantly with the children, seeking opportunities to develop their language, mathematical and observational skills. Activities, both indoors and out, are purposeful and varied. Teachers insist on high standards from the outset.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school is a calm and orderly community where pupils from diverse backgrounds get along noticeably well. Pupils behave courteously towards each other and towards adults. Their excellent behaviour in lessons makes the school a place where teachers can teach, and pupils can learn, very effectively. Attendance rates are above average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils and their parents say either that there is no bullying, or, if any has occurred, it has been 'nipped in the bud' and very effectively dealt with. Pupils understand about the different forms bullying can take, and how to keep themselves safe from it. Older pupils know about internet-based bullying, for example.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school and willingly take on jobs and responsibilities. There is an influential school council, and older pupils serve as prefects, or help younger pupils with their reading. To help people less fortunate than themselves, pupils devise imaginative ways to raise funds for their class's chosen charity.
- The school provides excellent support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The inspector saw telling evidence of how this support has enabled such pupils to play a full part in the life of the school and make progress in line with that of other pupils.

- Pupils have many opportunities for thought and reflection, not only in assemblies but at other times. For example, at the First World War graves in France each year, older pupils take part in a simple remembrance ceremony which they say moves them deeply.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and all staff share extremely high ambitions for pupils. All aspects of the school's work are kept under close review. Immediate action is taken when areas for improvement are found. When the school became an academy, standards in writing were not as high as in reading or mathematics. Staff training and a sharp focus on developing pupils' ideas and imagination alongside their technical skills, have now closed this gap.
- The quality of teaching is checked very closely. All staff have personal targets for improvement and these relate, in turn, to the school's overall improvement plan. Teachers' pay rises are carefully checked and promotion is only given when the impact on pupils' achievement shows that it is deserved.
- Teachers speak enthusiastically about the high-quality support they receive as they seek to extend their skills. They value the training provided by the academy trust and the opportunity to share ideas with teachers from other schools. The more experienced staff also share their expertise with their less experienced colleagues, although the school had identified that this is an area which needs to be developed further.
- Pupils learn a rich and varied range of subjects. All pupils, for example, learn French from the Reception year, and all pupils have the chance at some stage to take swimming lessons. There is a good range of sports on offer, including competitive sport at which the school enjoys notable success. Pupils play a variety of musical instruments.
- A variety of visitors, including the local Member of Parliament and the Bishop of Leicester, relate learning to the real world for pupils. Visits include a residential visit for Year 5 where they enjoy team-and confidence-building outdoor activities, and an annual Year 6 visit to the school's partner school in France which extends pupils' cultural horizons.
- The school is using the new primary school sport funding to develop teachers' expertise in teaching sport and to extend the range of sports on offer. A recent review, which included taking the views of pupils, showed that it is being used very effectively.
- The school engages exceptionally well with parents and carers and is very highly regarded by them. They speak warmly of the care the school takes of their children and the interest the teachers show in them. Some parents serve as classroom volunteers. Attendance at meetings and other events is always high.
- Leaders make sure that there is no discrimination of any kind and that all pupils, regardless of background or need, can benefit fully from all the school offers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well organised. Its work is effective in promoting pupils' outstanding achievement. Governors have a clear and detailed understanding of the school and how its performance compares with that of schools nationally. They know about the quality of teaching and understand the basis on which teachers' pay rises are made and how these relate to pupils' achievement. They understand how the pupil premium funding is used and the impact this has had.

- Governors give clear examples of how they have held the school to account, offering challenge and helping to shape the school's direction. Some governors have specific responsibilities, for literacy or for special educational needs, for example. They visit the school regularly, holding discussions with staff and agreeing areas for further improvement. Governors value highly the support the school receives from the academy trust.
- Governors make sure that all requirements for safeguarding pupils are met and that all children are kept safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138838
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	425093

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Wheatley
Headteacher	Stephen Cotton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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