

Apley Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123450
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	380656
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2012
Lead inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derick Lee
Headteacher	Allyson Brown
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gillian Weston

Additional inspector

Alan Dobbins

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by 13 teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's plans for improvement, assessment information, lesson plans, the school's monitoring information, school policies and 116 questionnaires from parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average and includes pupils with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A few pupils belong to minority ethnic groups and a small minority speak English as an additional language. The school meets the current government floor targets. The school has achieved several awards including Healthy Schools status and Artsmark silver.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school which provides a safe and happy atmosphere. Pupils are keen to help each other and are polite and courteous.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average in English and mathematics.
- Most parents and carers say that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. However, a small minority of parents and carers, and a small number of pupils, say that lessons are occasionally disrupted by bad behaviour.
- In lessons, relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and help promote a positive climate for learning. However, teaching overall is satisfactory mainly because in some lessons the work given to pupils lacks sufficient challenge, the pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not use ongoing assessment information to modify learning during the lesson.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with a good range of enrichment activities. However, opportunities are not taken for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Over the past two years, the headteacher has rigorously tackled issues of staff underperformance. Consequently, previous instances of inadequate teaching have been eradicated. All members of the senior leadership team take a full part in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance through lesson observations and checking on pupils' work in books. However, they do not use the assessment information rigorously enough to track the progress of pupils and evaluate the impact of initiatives and interventions on pupils' progress. The role of the middle leaders in monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of the school is under-developed.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons work given to all groups of pupils provides sufficient challenge
 - using ongoing assessment more effectively to modify learning during lessons
 - increasing the pace of learning in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure that the school's strategies for managing pupils with identified behavioural difficulties are consistently applied.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders make effective use of the assessment data to track the progress of pupils and evaluate the impact of initiatives and interventions on pupils' progress
 - developing the role of the middle leaders so that they play a greater part in monitoring, evaluating and improving the school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire or who spoke to the inspectors felt that their children were making good progress and many commented on how much the school had improved over recent years. The inspection found that, although many improvements have recently been made, they have not been in place long enough to have had a sustained impact on raising pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 2. Consequently, pupils' achievement is judged as satisfactory.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typical for children of that age. Close links with parents and carers help pupils settle quickly and confidently into school routines. Improvements to the quality of provision in recent years have been secured and mean that children make good progress both academically and socially. In lessons, they willingly take turns and show kindness and consideration to each other. By the time pupils enter Year 1, their attainment is now just above average.

Mainly because of consistently good teaching in Year 2, pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1. In lessons, pupils engage effectively with the tasks they are given and are keen to discuss their work. In one lesson observed, Year 2 pupils talked enthusiastically about the character from a story they had recently read and were proud to show their own writing. Most pupils in Year 2 read with confidence and enjoy their reading. Their knowledge of letters and sounds enable them to work out the pronunciation of new and difficult words. By the end of Year 2, pupils'

attainment is consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Because of the legacy of some previous inadequacies in the quality of provision, pupils' progress slows in Key Stage 2. Nearly all pupils are eager to learn, cooperate well with the teacher and show good attitudes to their learning. They are very supportive of each other and this contributes to their high level of enjoyment of school. Since the start of this school year, pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has started to accelerate for all groups of pupils and the gap is closing between the pupils in this school and those pupils nationally in schools where attainment is higher. However, there are still inconsistencies in the progress made by pupils in different classes in Key Stage 2. Although pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is typically average overall and just above average in reading, it is starting to rise.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. Effective work with external agencies helps ensure that pupils, especially those with physical disabilities, have the necessary equipment and skills to enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum. In lessons, targeted support from teaching assistants helps ensure that all pupils receive the guidance they need to take part in lessons with all other pupils.

Across the school pupils make better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. This is largely due to the regular and systematic programme which provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of letters and sounds and apply this knowledge to their reading. Regular group reading opportunities throughout the school help pupils reinforce and extend their reading skills. Individual tuition and small support groups help raise pupils' attainment in reading and improve their self-esteem. However, although lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 have a sound understanding of how to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read out words, their skills of comprehension are less well-developed.

Quality of teaching

Most pupils and parents and carers say that teaching is good. The inspection found that, although there are many examples of good teaching throughout the school, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and is satisfactory overall.

Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and say that they enjoy their learning. In lessons, there is usually a positive climate for learning because the relationships between teachers and pupils are caring and supportive. In most lessons, teachers make clear to the pupils what they are expected to learn and how they can check on whether the learning has been effective or not. Pupils talked enthusiastically about how these learning criteria helped them focus on the important parts of the lesson and helped them learn more effectively.

In many lessons pupils welcome the opportunities to work in pairs and groups, sharing ideas and discussing their work and thus promoting pupils' personal and social development well. In one mathematics lesson, pupils were very enthusiastic to share and debate with others their ideas for constructing a rule which could be applied to a number pattern. In the time they were given, they did this well and

were willing to discuss and explain their ideas. However, the discussion and time for formulating and testing ideas was not long enough because the teacher talked for too long which slowed the pace of learning.

Where teaching is no better than satisfactory, the work given to pupils does not match the range of abilities in the class and teachers do not use ongoing assessment to modify the tasks if they are too easy or too hard. In one lesson, after the teacher gave a very lengthy introduction about multiplying numbers, the higher attaining pupils found the work far too easy and completed the task in a very short time. Some pupils said that they understood how to complete this type of work even before the lesson had started. However, the lower attaining pupils were having difficulty understanding the concept, even with additional support.

The quality of teachers' marking and the effectiveness of the use of academic targets in writing and mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection and provide pupils with clear advice on how to improve. In all classes, pupils are encouraged and given time to reflect on the teacher's marking and make corrections.

Some lessons focus on pupils' personal, health, social and emotional development. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions about world events, tolerance and prejudice. In other lessons teachers develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through discussing personal relationships in a lesson mainly aimed at improving writing skills through the story of Goldilocks

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils receive some valuable support in their personal development. In particular, they gain a sound understanding of the dangers associated with fire, roads, railways, the internet and cyber-bullying. Pupils have every confidence in their teachers and are happy to confide in them if they have a problem or concern. Bullying is rare and most pupils and parents and carers say that it is dealt with effectively when it occurs.

Pupils usually behave well and treat each other with respect and courtesy. Most parents and carers say that there is a good standard of behaviour around the school. Pupils from different backgrounds play happily and get on well together. Those pupils with physical disabilities are cared for well through additional support from teaching assistants and people from external agencies. They are shown respect and courtesy by other pupils and say that they feel safe and secure. However, a small minority of parents and carers and pupils say that lessons are sometimes disrupted by the poor behaviour of a few pupils. The school's monitoring shows that this is because some of those teachers who are new to the school do not apply correctly the school's strategies for dealing with pupils with identified behaviour difficulties. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually.

Leadership and management

Over recent years, the headteacher's strong and determined leadership has eradicated all previous inadequate provision, raised staff morale and established a clear vision for the future. She regularly monitors the quality of teaching, rigorously holds teachers to account for pupils' progress and organises training to improve

teachers' classroom skills. Following reorganisation, new appointments and further training, the senior leadership team is playing a substantial role in monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school and leading other staff. Some other teachers are beginning to be developed as middle leaders but their roles are under-developed.

Members of the governing body visit regularly, talk with pupils, look at pupils' books, watch lessons and meet with senior leaders. In meetings, they are willing to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account for pupils' achievement. Senior leaders regularly track pupils' progress, discuss outcomes with teachers and provide additional support to those pupils who are not making the expected progress. However, leaders do not evaluate the assessment information with enough rigour to enable them and the governing body to have an overview of the progress made by classes and groups of pupils as they move through the school. This lack of fine analysis of the assessment information also means that senior leaders and the governing body do not have a measure of the impact of any initiatives or support programmes on raising pupils' achievement.

Each pupil is known as an individual and pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their lives are cared for and supported well through a good level of pastoral care. The strong links with external agencies to provide support for all pupils, and especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, show the school's determined commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched well. Visits to places such as the art gallery, the theatre, museums and churches, and outdoor activities on residential visits help promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and add to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were clearly excited about their lesson in the 'Forest Schools' area. One child said that they could not wait 'to sit on our logs and sing the Forest Schools song'. Theme days which help pupils celebrate important events in other cultures and faiths help pupils develop an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their mathematics and writing skills across the curriculum, such as using calculation strategies in science. However, this is not developed well enough in all year groups.

Staff and the governing body have received safeguarding training and all child-protection policies and procedures meet requirements. Nearly all parents and carers say that the school ensures that their children are well looked-after.

Although pupils' achievement is now beginning to rise, this is a very recent outcome. The lack of any previous substantial improvements in pupils' achievement since the last inspection, mainly due to much instability in the staffing and many staff and leadership changes, means that leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve are only satisfactory.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Apley Wood Primary School, Telford, TF1 6FQ

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We liked the way you play happily together and work hard in lessons. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing some of you read. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on well together.

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Recent changes are starting to have a positive effect on your learning.

We want the headteacher and governing body to make your school better and have asked them to make sure that:

- in all your lessons you are given work that is not too easy or too hard for you and you are given plenty of time to get on and work hard in lessons
- you are given many opportunities to apply your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
- all the pupils behave well in all your lessons
- those teachers who have special responsibilities in your school make even more regular checks on how well you are learning.

You can help too by telling your teachers if your work is too easy or too hard.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector

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