

Dorrington CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123545
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	380685
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2012
Lead inspector	Kathy Hooper

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 of pupils on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Gillions
Headteacher	Mandy Hopkins
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2009
School address	Church Road Shrewsbury SY5 7JL
Telephone number	01743 718462
Fax number	01743 718462
Email address	admin.dorrington@shropshirelg.net

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kathy Hooper

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Eight lessons were observed over four hours and four teachers were observed teaching. Additionally, pupils were observed learning phonics (letters and sounds work) with teaching assistants, and using information and communication technology. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspector looked at pupils' work, heard them read, and analysed the school's data on their progress. The school's monitoring records and minutes of meetings were examined. Twenty four questionnaires from parents and carers, ten from staff and 18 from pupils were analysed.

Information about the school

This is a small village primary school. Pupils come from the immediate surrounding areas. The number of pupils on roll has declined over the past three years, but is now stable. Pupils are predominantly White British. The proportion of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals is lower than other schools, but the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is slightly above average. There is a private nursery on site but provision is not managed by the governing body. Pupils are taught in two mixed age classes, one class contains Reception children and pupils from Years 1 and 2, the other has pupils from Years 3 to 6. The school has gained Healthy School status, Gold Attendance Award, and is accredited as a Safer School. The school exceeds current government floor standards for attainment and progress in both English and mathematics.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school because teaching is effective and the curriculum meets pupils' needs well.
- Significant improvements in provision over the last two years have halted the downward trend in achievement and rising standards have been welcomed by parents and carers.
- Pupils achieve well. In English and mathematics, attainment has improved this year. Attainment in mathematics is above average, but is not as high as in English.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Parents point to the benefits for their children of the small classes.
- Teaching is good. The small classes allow teachers to maintain good oversight of pupils' progress. Younger pupils benefit from working alongside older pupils, but occasionally older, more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress well. Opportunities are missed, however, for pupils to assess their own work and that of others against success criteria.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a broad and rich curriculum. Pupils demonstrate very high social and moral awareness. Individual needs are well addressed and there is an exceptionally warm and enabling ethos in which pupils thrive.
- Pupils' are extremely cooperative and their high levels of social skills ensure that behaviour is good at all times. Opportunities are missed to enable pupils to question, take responsibility for their learning, and develop their initiative.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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- All parents and carers agree that their children feel very safe in school and their view is endorsed by the vast majority of pupils.
- The good leadership and management of the school is recognised by parents and carers, all of whom would recommend the school to others. Achievement, behaviour, safety and accommodation, and links with parents and carers and the community have all been improved under the leadership of the new headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics to match that in English by ensuring that activities in all lessons challenge older higher attaining pupils.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning by:
 - evaluating their own work and that of others
 - framing questions
 - taking ownership of tasks around the school.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Pupils' attainment is above average. Their good achievement is recognised by parents and carers and captured in a typical comment. 'This school is very caring, catering for children's individual needs. The small numbers at this school have been a real bonus ... enabling [our] child to make the best possible progress. It has a broad curriculum including many fun activities over all aspects – physical, cultural, emotional, academic.'

Many children in Reception enter the school with low levels of communication, language and literacy skills. They make rapid progress in their learning and maturity as a result of being included in the class with older Key Stage 1 pupils. The vast majority achieve their Early Learning Goals. For example, they grouped fruits in various ways using vocabulary such as 'rough', 'smooth' and 'juicy'. Having carried out a survey of their favourite fruits, they reported their findings clearly and confidently to the whole class, referring specifically to their conclusions.

The excellent social climate within classrooms effectively supports disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They make good progress, working where appropriate with different ability groups. Pupils with behaviour, social and emotional difficulties make considerable strides because adults negotiate skilfully and use consistent strategies to maintain their concentration and move learning on at a good pace.

A dip in attainment, particularly in mathematics, at the point at which the headteacher changed, has been addressed. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is above that of similar aged pupils nationally in writing and reading.

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The improvements are the result of the school's strong focus on developing literacy skills across the curriculum. Standards in mathematics have also risen to above average, but are not as high as those in English. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is accelerating, particularly in Key Stage 1. All parents and carers agree that their children make good progress in school and their views are endorsed by pupils.

Each class has pupils from an exceptionally wide range of ability. In an English lesson there was a lively discussion among pupils in Years 5 and 6 who worked very cooperatively, writing different perspectives on explorations in space. Their writing was fluent, interesting and accurate. Year 3 and 4 pupils wrote good explanations, considering 'what', 'how', 'why', using a varied range of connecting words and accurate punctuation. Pupils often use information and communication technology to learn and to present their work for different audiences.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching throughout the school is recognised by pupils who say that they learn a lot in lessons, and parents and carers agree. A parent summed up their opinion, 'My daughter is enthusiastic about what she is learning and any weak areas she has are promptly spotted and worked on by her teachers.'

Lessons are planned to help pupils to make links between subjects and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's values are strongly Christian. International links help pupils to gain an understanding of cultural diversity and promote tolerance and harmony. Pupils value learning and are very proud of their achievements.

Adults ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are fully included in all activities whilst working at an appropriate level. Good opportunities are provided for children to choose activities for themselves. As a result they make rapid progress. The learning of Key Stage 1 pupils is very effectively extended in the context of the Forest School, where classroom learning is applied to real problems and there are good opportunities for pupils to use their initiative. Ends of lessons in both classes are used well to share learning but opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to assess their own work and that of others against the lesson's success criteria.

Teachers and their assistants show great respect for pupils and this is repaid by their excellent attention and perseverance, particularly when they are actively involved and have suitable resources that support them. For example, in a Key Stage 2 English lesson, excellent prompt sheets helped pupils to understand how to improve their use of connectives and punctuation. In a mathematics lesson, Key Stage 1 pupils' understanding of grouping was reinforced and extended by drawing Venn diagrams on the ground in the playground. In occasional lessons, pupils' progress is limited because of extended whole class discussions.

Teachers reinforce pupils' reading, writing, mathematical and communication skills well. Teaching assistants are well briefed and very competent. Information and

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communication technology is used flexibly to promote pupils' learning, including that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Key Stage 1 pupils used a range of computer games to reinforce reading and mathematical skills, and others use facilities such as a search engine. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils introduced a picture into the text. Pupils with special educational needs are fully engaged because adults support their needs unobtrusively, questioning well and pre-empting difficulties.

The small size of the classes and improved use of assessments enable good oversight of pupils' progress, particularly in reading and writing. This practice is beginning to be applied to mathematics. The majority of pupils know how well they are doing in school, but there is scope for pupils' better use of peer and self-assessments.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behave well because they enjoy school and there is a calm and enabling atmosphere conducive to learning. The recent introduction of initiatives designed to help pupils behave in a safe way and to understand their feelings, have led to a dramatic drop in incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are biddable and cooperative. They have excellent social skills and a strong moral ethic. Bullying is rare. Any bullying, including cyber-bullying, or discrimination is quickly addressed and pupils are very supportive of each other. They are helped to behave appropriately, and understand how to keep themselves safe through activities and discussions in circle time, personal social and health education lessons, and visits from outside agencies.

Pupils learn to respect individual differences and capacities. A 'buddy' system operates at playtimes so that no pupil is left isolated. The majority of pupils and their parents say that behaviour is good in lessons most of the time. However, there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and organise events for themselves.

The vast majority of pupils feel safe in school, and all parents and carers strongly agree that the school keeps their children safe. Rigorous safeguarding procedures are well understood by all staff and they are vigilant. The Safer Schools project has been a useful vehicle for raising the profile of safety throughout the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's consultative approach is having a significant impact on the development of provision. Accommodation for outdoor play for the youngest children has been developed in collaboration with the Nursery, providing a safer and more age-appropriate environment for them. The curriculum is good because it is rich and creative and engages pupils' interests well. Activities before and after school and at lunchtimes are well attended. It is designed in consultation with pupils, to help them to make connections between different subjects. The Forest School has proved to be a huge success and pupils love the experiences.

Celebration evenings and after school activities are very well attended by extended

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families and friends because they are so enjoyable. Staff development, linked to rigorous performance management, has enabled all staff to improve their practice. This is evidenced in the improvements in pupils' achievement, their high attendance and their great enjoyment of school. The role of the governors has been extended and the governing body is closely involved in all the school activities. Parents and carers are delighted by developments and report that the headteacher 'has transformed the school, the school has reasserted itself as a key feature in our community. The staff have a renewed respect from parents, carers and community members... The children are blossoming in a fun, safe and interesting learning environment.'

There are good monitoring systems, and strategies are swiftly implemented to support any under-performance. There is a very clear understanding of individual pupils' progress, including the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Priorities for further development are accurately identified and imaginatively addressed. Safeguarding is a priority; it is extremely robust and very well monitored. Close working relationships at all levels ensure that any discrimination is promptly addressed and each pupil flourishes. The school is becoming a significant focus for the community. There are good links with the on-site Nursery and improving links with the local secondary school. The recent rapid improvements in provision and standards indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.

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.



13 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dorrington CofE (Aided) Primary School, Shrewsbury, SY5 7JL

Thank you so much for a very enjoyable visit to your school last week. I was very interested to talk to you about your school, to see your lessons, to listen to you reading, and to look at your work.

Yours is a good school because each of you is making good progress, particularly with your reading and writing. I understand why you say you enjoy school and that you learn a lot. Teachers plan rich and varied experiences for you and there is a good range of activities before and after school, and at lunchtime. I enjoyed watching the Zumba class where many of your parents and carers joined in. You are learning to become polite, mature and sociable young people through a better understanding of yourselves and others. You behave well and enjoy taking responsibility for yourselves and others.

All the good things about your school are because of the energy and imagination of the headteacher and the great care and commitment of all the staff in the school. In order to make your school even better, I have asked your teachers to:

- help you reach the same high standards in mathematics that you achieve in English
- ensure that teachers always set challenging tasks for older pupils in each class
- give you more opportunities to take responsibility and show your initiative by
 - evaluating your own work and that of others
 - being better involved in improving the school.

You can help them by asking for more challenging work if you have understood so far, and thinking about imaginative ways that would make your learning and your school even better, and telling your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Hooper
Lead inspector

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