

Little Dewchurch CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116828 |
| Local Authority | Herefordshire |
| Inspection number | 354769 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 November 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Brian Cartwright HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 43 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | A Bailey |
| Headteacher | T Kneale |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 September 2009 |
| School address | Little Dewchurch Hereford HR2 6PN |
| Telephone number | 01432 840645 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. He observed seven lessons taught by four teachers, and met with teachers, parents and carers, governors, and a representative of the local authority. He observed the school's work, and looked at records of monitoring by the executive headteacher and local authority, governing body minutes, analyses of school performance data and school records relating to safeguarding and health and safety. Parental and carer questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless the inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The quality of pupils' achievement across the school, especially in writing.
- The impact of leadership and management through partnership with Marlbrook Primary school.
- The progress of pupils with special needs, or identified as gifted and talented.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Information about the school

When Little Dewchurch School was inspected in September 2010, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on three occasions. At the last monitoring inspection the school was judged to be making outstanding progress. The school is much smaller than the average primary, with no pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. No pupils are from minority ethnic groups. No pupils have statements of special educational needs and there is a lower-than-average proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has formed a formal collaboration with Marlbrook Primary School. The headteacher of Marlbrook is also executive head teacher of Little Dewchurch. Since the previous inspection, two teachers have left, one has reduced their teaching time and three new teachers have been appointed. The day-to-day leadership in the school is delivered by a full-time senior teacher deployed from Marlbrook.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The impact of the partnership with Marlbrook Primary School has been outstanding. Standards are rising quickly to above average, the progress of pupils in all years is now at least good, and the quality of teaching and learning securely good, with some outstanding practice. As a result, the pupils are now enjoying good quality education. The executive headteacher identified weaknesses quickly and brought effective solutions to those weaknesses without delay. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is expertly managed by Marlbrook's special educational needs coordinator, who also conducts the monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work at Little Dewchurch. This pursuit of excellence at Little Dewchurch has been established in a short period of time and so the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Some simple building modifications now enable all lessons to take place inside the school building, rather than in a nearby hall. Safeguarding practices are now good, including good physical arrangements to secure the site when pupils are in lessons. The pupils enjoy school life a lot; in lessons, they work hard, often independently or in groups, showing excellent resilience even when the task seems quite tough at first. They play hard too; break and lunchtimes are tackled with gusto!

The curriculum is good enough to provide stimulating and challenging lessons in English, mathematics and science. The foundation subjects are also taught well, although there are limits to the depth of expertise in all of the curriculum strands, as a result of such a small staff, and a Key Stage 2 afternoon class containing pupils from all four Years. In some cases, the academic demand on the pupils reverts to focussing on literacy, rather than the subject's own particular key concepts. In addition, the pupils are not yet experiencing enough first-hand opportunities to meet other people from different backgrounds and faiths that would be representative of modern multicultural Britain.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Audit and then develop curriculum provision to ensure that the pupils experience and learn about life in modern multicultural Britain.
 - Develop strategies to improve the pupils' exposure to specialist teaching of foundation subjects, through existing partnerships, and with other local small schools.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The pupils join the Reception class with broadly average levels of development and make good progress throughout Key Stage 1, so that in 2010, Year 2 pupils attained significantly above average standards for the first time in the school's history. The principle reason for their success is the meticulous, personalised planning by the Key Stage 1/Foundation stage teacher for each pupil, in every lesson, that ensure a healthy mixture of challenge and interest for the pupils, particularly in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. In one outstanding mathematics lesson, one group of young children were getting to grips with the notion that 'five' is actually more than 'three'; tricky stuff when you are very young and new to school. In the same class, Year 2 pupils were working out what was meant by 'division'; using counters to share between 'groups'; also tricky stuff and at the edge of their understanding, but they persevered and worked it out for themselves, with gentle prompts from the teacher. All the time, there was a lovely background 'buzz' of children counting aloud in the slow and deliberate way that children use when concentrating hard. The teacher has high expectations for the children and inculcates an impressive sense of independence in the youngsters, so that they are insistent on showing that they can have a go by themselves, from a very early age.

Such independence and sense of taking some responsibility of their own learning is now a clear feature in Key Stage 2, which includes Year 3 to Year 6 pupils in afternoon lessons. The pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and ability to cope with spells of individual, paired and group work without second-by-second intervention by the teacher, play a strong part in ensuring their good achievement here. In 2010 Key Stage 2 tests, attainment in mathematics was well above the national average, and much improved in English to become in line with national averages. Standards of written English amongst the current Year 6 have improved further since the start of the autumn term. The school is successfully getting to grips with handwriting and punctuation weaknesses that were not eradicated in the last academic year. No pupil underachieves, irrespective of gender, talent, or special educational needs.

Pupils of all ages enjoy school a lot, commenting that 'nobody leaves each other out', and work and play very harmoniously together across the age groups. They feel very safe, know how to share with adults any concerns they may have, and enjoy being taught inside one building now. The school now provides after-school clubs every day. Parents and carers and pupils appreciate and enjoy them; they are run by the teaching and support staff and most pupils take part. They include sports clubs that contribute to healthy lifestyles. A family support worker from a local church coordinates an active school council, which organises well-attended fund raising and other social events. The pupils are involved in the local community, but do not yet demonstrate good understanding about life in wider modern multicultural Britain.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The teaching and the resulting learning of pupils have improved substantially in a short space of time. The teaching assistants are integral to the delivery of lessons in the youngest class, working in excellent partnership with the teacher across the age ranges, not just with foundation stage pupils. The teaching is good across the school, characterised by good planning and pragmatic matching of tasks to abilities, including demanding work for the most able pupils. Marking is very detailed, supportive, yet accurately identifies points for improvement. Sometimes, particularly in Key Stage 1, the pupils get explicit extra tasks to complete. In Key Stage 2, the pupils sometimes respond, but suggestions for improvements are not always sufficiently assertive. These suggestions should require the pupils to correct or improve their work when they get it back, not just to 'consider' the issue for the next time.

The good curriculum is contributing strongly to rising literacy standards. Additional after-school clubs have transformed the overall experience for the pupils as they access sports and arts activities run by staff. The pupils are taught all of the statutory national curriculum subjects and are rapidly developing good information and communication technology skills via input from specialist staff from Marlbrook. But it is unreasonable, with just four teaching staff, to expect expertise in every curriculum aspect and that occasionally shows, for example, when a Key Stage 2 history lesson became a good opportunity for imaginative fiction writing, and not an exploration of source materials

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relating to Elizabethan maritime exploration. The pupils do have a say in what themes to study, for example Key Stage 1 pupils have bravely and healthily chosen 'Vikings' rather than 'Chocolate' to study for the next couple of weeks.

Care, guidance and support are strong, because the staff in all roles know all of the children and their families well. Specialist expertise is brokered effectively through the special educational needs coordinator. Good arrangements to guide pupils into secondary education ensure that the pupils and parents and carers know what to expect when they move on. The school administrator plays a key role in maintaining a safe and good humoured working environment and is a constant on-site presence as part-time staff come and go. The pupils and parents and carers, rightly, see her as a key adult in whom they can trust. They and their parents and carers emphasised how safe and well looked after they feel.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Outstanding leadership skills and prompt action from the executive headteacher and her colleagues have swiftly improved provision and outcomes for learners. The skills and personnel now available to the school via the partnership have secured good teaching and learning. The local authority established the contacts initially and from then the governing body took decisive and effective action to cement the collaboration and therefore secure future capacity for improvement. The headteacher has been careful to maximise teacher continuity, so that the staff at Little Dewchurch are seen as the schools own. This has retained the village school character very well, while widening the horizons and opportunities for the pupils. Morale is now very high. All the staff share the headteacher's high expectations and as a result are extremely keen to further improve their own practice on behalf of the pupils at the school. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are run effectively by Marlbrook staff as part of their leadership. Improvements in teaching have mainly come about through changes in the staff. All pupils achieve equally well, with great care taken successfully to include several children whose circumstances mean they need additional help.

Robust safeguarding practices are in place, along with much better implementation of the health and safety policy, led by the executive headteacher. Parents and carers have a formal 'voice' through a forum instituted by the headteacher and they report excellent information and response from the school to their queries. A weekly newsletter plays a big role in keeping parents and carers and the local community up to date with school activities. The rapid pace of change has secured the fundamental quality of teaching and

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consequent good pupil learning. The governing body can now look to address other areas of school provision, particularly the extent to which the school promotes community cohesion. What it is already doing is satisfactory, in the sense of good working relationships and shared activities between school and village community. The school does try to respond to the expectations of its local community. It understands its local context well, but it has not yet systematically and formally audited what the pupils lack in terms of developing and understanding life in modern multicultural Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make good progress through the Foundation Stage, because they are challenged, engaged and included into the bigger Key Stage 1 class, with its effective teaching, from the outset. The provision is good, although the outdoor arrangements are cramped at present and require some forethought before wheeled toys can be used. There is a free flow, so long as you walk! The leadership and management of the Stage are good, with outstanding planning. The children, even at this early age, enjoy working independently; in one lesson, they were insistent that they could compete with the rest of Key Stage 1 in annotating and highlighting a drawing of a Viking ship and showed care and concentration in their work.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The school recently distributed a copy of Ofsted's parental questionnaire. Parents and carers returned 29 completed forms, although not under confidential cover. All of the returns agreed or strongly agreed with the questions, except for three that did not agree the school helped their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. The inspector explored possible reasons for this observation with the pupils. The school has rightly asked parents and carers to be responsible for lunchbox content, rather than a previous policy that led to children being reprimanded if lunchboxes were not 'healthy'. Several written comments affirmed verbal remarks from parents and carers that the school has been 'transformed' for the better through its partnership with Marlbrook. Many noted the prompt responses they received to questions, and the helpfulness of after school clubs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire:

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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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 | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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. |

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.



26 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Dewchurch CofE Primary, Hereford, HR2 6PN

Thank you for your kind, positive and enthusiastic conversations I had with you during my inspection this week and during my earlier visits. You will be pleased to learn that I think this school is now good and improving and I agree with you that it is much better than a year ago. That is because the teachers are giving you better lessons and you are getting more opportunities to tackle tasks that challenge and motivate you. The teachers mark your work well and give you suggestions for improvements that you should look to take at the earliest opportunity. Your handwriting is improving, as the teachers insist on higher standards of presentations. I noticed also how well you get on with your work, independently or in groups, whilst the teachers work with others. That will stand you in very good stead in your future.

Given such good teaching and your energetic response to it through good learning, it is no surprise to find you enjoy school a lot and that you are achieving well. I think that a couple of aspects could be even better. One relates to improving the opportunities you get to learn about life in the wider world, particularly other areas of Britain, where people from lots of different beliefs and backgrounds live. Second, in some of the afternoon classes, it is hard for the teachers to be expert in every different subject. I think the school should develop its partnerships with other local schools further to improve your learning of subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Good luck in your future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright

Her Majesty's Inspector

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