

Short Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104939
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	355663
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Gordon Ewing

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	489
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Marmion
Headteacher	Sue Harris
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 20 lessons, observing 16 teachers. Some intervention groups were also observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, members of staff and groups of pupils. Informal discussions were conducted with some parents, carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, pupils' work and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 77 parents and carers, 45 staff and 111 older pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The steps taken since the last inspection to improve attendance and reduce the persistent absence of a few pupils.
- The relative rates of progress through the school of all pupils in English and mathematics, but especially high attainers, boys, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those of White British or Pakistani heritage.
- How effectively leaders at all levels monitor the quality of teaching and ensure that assessment information is used effectively, and the impact of the strategies to improve the quality of teaching and to secure consistently good rates of learning.
- How effectively the curriculum is matched to the needs of a diverse range of pupils.

Information about the school

Short Wood is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high. The largest groups of pupils are of Asian or Asian British and White British heritage. A high proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average; predominantly, these pupils have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. The governing body manages out-of-hours provision in the form of a breakfast club for up to 50 pupils. The school was opened following the amalgamation of an infant school and a junior school in 2006 and moved to its present purpose-built site in 2007.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Short Wood is a satisfactory and improving school. Its motto, 'Building the belief that you can,' is being realised in all areas of school life. Some features of the school's work, especially those related to making sure pupils are safe and well cared for, are good. The school works tirelessly to support vulnerable pupils and to engage 'hard to reach' families. A striking range of intervention activities is improving pupils' basic skills, self-belief and confidence. As a result, pupils' attendance, although below average, is steadily improving. Their behaviour is good and they display positive attitudes to learning. Good relationships ensure that everyone feels part of a cohesive and harmonious community. As one parent commented, 'This is a happy school. I have no worries.' The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree.

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because adults have created a welcoming and nurturing environment where children settle and adapt quickly to the new routines and expectations. Their diverse needs are effectively met through a range of activities that are enriching and engaging. Rates of progress through to Year 6, while satisfactory overall, are variable because the quality of teaching lacks consistency. The headteacher is tackling weaknesses in teaching with vigour and, though there is still much to do, current rates of progress are strengthening securely and quickly. However, pupils' attainment, although improving in the majority of classes, remains below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, boys, those of White British or Pakistani heritage and high attaining pupils make similar rates of progress, from their diverse starting points.

Teachers are becoming more confident in using the rich assessment data available to plan lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils but are less effective in tracking the progress of key groups of pupils. Furthermore, the use of assessment to support pupils' learning, to move learning forward or in adapting activities to better match pupils' day-to-day needs, is of variable quality. Teachers' marking is punctual and generally accurate but is not used consistently to accelerate learning. Consequently, opportunities are often missed to increase challenge and develop independent learning skills.

The good leadership of the headteacher is ensuring that the school is taking effective strides to raise attainment and strengthen levels of progress. Morale across the staff is high and the sense of teamwork is palpable. One member of staff's comment, 'There is a strong positive staff ethos,' reflects the views of most. Since amalgamation, the school's leadership has been particularly effective in ensuring that the impact of the subsequent turbulence has been minimised. As a result, the school's provision is increasingly effective in meeting the complex social, personal and academic needs of all pupils. That said, the school's leadership is only now beginning to track the impact of the school's work on the learning and progress of key groups of pupils and there is still some way to go in matching

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the teaching precisely to their needs. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and middle leaders are increasingly effective in monitoring the impact of the school's work on outcomes for pupils. Improvement planning is in place but lacks rigour in identifying precise targets against which the school's future progress can be accurately assessed. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are starting to evaluate the work of the school through systematic monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress. Taking into account key improvements since the last inspection, including the school's accurate self-evaluation, rapidly rising levels of attainment and progress, improving attendance and the successful school amalgamation, the school demonstrates good capacity to sustain further improvement.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- By July 2011, improve current systems to track the progress of key groups of pupils by:
 - using the existing range of data available more rigorously to track the progress of boys, girls, vulnerable pupils and other key groups
 - ensuring that all teachers use the tracking data to inform planning and provision so that lesson activities are well matched to pupils' needs
 - establishing rigorous systems to track the attainment and progress of key groups as part of a focused approach to monitoring their work.
 - By July 2011, improving the quality of teaching so that 65% of lessons are judged good or better and, by December 2011, 80% of lessons are judged good or better by:
 - providing intensive coaching from lead practitioners and mentors to all teachers so their practice is securely good
 - developing individual improvement plans for all teachers
 - monitoring teaching and learning to gauge the impact of the coaching and support.
 - By July 2011, improve the use of assessment to support learning and, as a result, improve attainment and levels of progress for all pupils by:
 - providing further training so teachers understand how to make rigorous use of assessment information to plan work that is better tuned to pupils' day-to-day learning needs
 - involving pupils in the setting of learning targets, to develop their skills in checking their own and others' progress to increase their independence
 - monitoring lessons systematically, scrutinising pupils' work and improving teachers' marking and feedback so that pupils are better prepared for the next step in their learning.

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Achievement is satisfactory. Levels of progress for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are satisfactory in the majority of lessons. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds respond well in most lessons, especially when activities are accurately matched to their needs. They are polite, courteous and play well together. They feel safe and well cared for. Pupils can confidently explain how to stay healthy and what they are doing to adopt healthy lifestyles. They particularly enjoy the varied sports and after school clubs on offer. Strategies to improve attendance, such as the class award for best attendance, are having a positive impact on attendance rates.

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is consistently good, even when lesson activities and teaching do not always provide them with sufficient challenge and motivation. In a good Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were confidently identifying the components of an effective play script. They understood the meaning of a rhetorical question and discussed their ideas confidently with their talk partners. The teacher's good subject knowledge, targeted questioning and well designed activities kept pupils of all abilities on their toes. Consequently, their behaviour and attitudes to learning were exemplary.

Pupils take on additional responsibilities with vigour and commitment. They are proud of their roles as school councillors, play leaders and eco committee members. Aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Their basic skills are securely improving, particularly in recent times, and they show increasing proficiency in using information and communication technology (ICT) skills in their learning, for example, in using digital cameras to create movies. Taking into account these factors, their positive attitudes and their improving attendance, the school prepares them soundly for their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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 variable quality of teaching has a direct impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Strengths of the good teaching seen include teachers' subject knowledge, the use of targeted questioning to check understanding, good use of resources and technology and a learning environment that celebrates pupils' work. A common weakness of some teaching is that work is not matched precisely enough to pupils' needs and the level of challenge is too low. In such lessons, rates of progress are inconsistent and some pupils are not doing as well as they can. Across the school, the use of assessment to track pupils' progress and adapt day-to-day activities to each pupil's stage of learning is inconsistent. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' skills in reviewing their own work and that of their peers. Furthermore, the marking system is not fully understood by some pupils and, as a result, opportunities to develop their independent learning skills are not maximised. Teaching assistants are committed and enthusiastic but are not always deployed effectively, for example, when teachers are leading the whole class.

The good curriculum is broad, balanced and is increasingly well matched to most pupils' interests and needs. Recent revisions to the curriculum, particularly to inspire boys, are beginning to bear fruit, for example in improving the quality of extended writing. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular visits, activities and 'themed' events. Sport is a particular strength. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in physical exercise and cross-curricular links are being strengthened so that pupils are now

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developing secure skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT across a range of learning activities. The use of intervention activities to support the learning of vulnerable pupils is very effective and, consequently, they are increasingly confident in making the most of the opportunities on offer. The well-attended Breakfast Club provides pupils with a stimulating start to the school day and boosts their confidence and readiness for the challenges ahead.

The school's evident commitment to the care, guidance and support of all pupils is at the heart of all its actions. Good quality support and care are provided to vulnerable pupils and their families. As a consequence, attendance is improving and pupils' engagement in lessons is strengthening. Pastoral care is a clear strength and pupils are very confident that staff are always on hand to help them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive sound support from their teachers and effective support in intervention groups. Transition arrangements within and beyond the school, for example, in the induction of pupils who join at other than normal times or those who have very little English, are strong components of the school's work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The senior leadership team share a passion for school improvement and work seamlessly in raising teachers' expectations and securing improved levels of attainment and progress. Inconsistencies, particularly in teaching, are being tackled through additional training and support, the impact of which is now beginning to be seen in some lessons. A collective spirit is now patent across the staff and the commitment to the leadership vision is reflected in teachers' enthusiasm for recent initiatives, for example, in new approaches to lesson planning. The leadership acknowledges that the school is 'data rich' but not yet 'data wise'. The school is at an early stage in tracking the impact of its actions on the progress of key groups of pupils. The school challenges any forms of discrimination or prejudice and incidents of bullying or racism are rare. However, key groups of pupils are placed at a disadvantage because the teaching does not consistently meet their needs. Consequently, the degree to which the school promotes equality of opportunity is no more than satisfactory.

Governance is good. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable. They are increasingly effective in monitoring the work of the school. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are good and, sometimes, exemplary, because leaders at all levels are well trained in ensuring staff and pupils are safe and well cared for. The school makes considerable efforts to engage with some 'hard to reach' families, with positive impact, for

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example, in improving attendance. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school's efforts to involve and engage them, for example, in running mathematics' workshops and family support activities. Good partnerships, for example with local community police and sports organisations, bring added value and relevance to the curriculum. Links with other professionals, such as the health service, support pupils' and families' growing understanding of health issues such as smoking and obesity. The school reaches out well to some other communities but has yet to evaluate the impact of this work on promoting community cohesion both locally and beyond.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Early identification of their individual needs ensures that provision is well matched to those needs and they develop positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Levels of care and support for the children are good so they make good progress and achieve well so that, by the time they move to Year 1, they have attained skill levels in line or very close to those expected in all areas of learning. Children develop a wide range of social, emotional and practical skills that prepare them well for the next stage. The close involvement of parents and carers in the education and development of their children is a key factor in the school's success. Children display evident enjoyment in the balance of activities directed by adults and those initiated by themselves. The indoor and outdoor environments are stimulating and learning activities flow effectively between the two. However, visual prompts to support language development are not a strong enough feature in the learning environment. Effective assessment and adults' planning ensure that children's learning and welfare needs are met well. The Early Years

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Foundation Stage leader, with the effective support of her team, has set a clear direction for the future with a strong focus on achievement, personal development and well-being.

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

Approximately one fifth of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. All parents and carers were happy with their child's overall experience at school. A very small minority expressed concerns about how well the school prepares children for the future and how effectively the school manages unacceptable behaviour.

Inspection evidence shows that pupils' basic skill levels are below those found nationally and the school works tirelessly to improve basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Recent strategies to improve the teaching of basic skills is having positive effect and pupils' attainment and progress are improving securely. A strong feature of the school's work is the quality of the intervention activities provided for pupils with extra support, for example, in reading, spelling, numeracy and social and emotional skills. Consequently, these pupils are gaining the key skills necessary to help them succeed in the future. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at break times. Inspection evidence indicates that the school's approach to managing misbehaviour is effective and that behaviour is improving rapidly and is currently good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Short Wood Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 489 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	78	17	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	81	13	17	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	48	36	47	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	42	42	55	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	57	32	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	49	34	44	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	45	39	51	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	34	42	55	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	49	37	48	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	42	36	47	6	8	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	40	38	49	6	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	42	55	28	36	6	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	58	31	40	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



23 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Short Wood Primary School, Telford, TF1 2JA

The inspection team really enjoyed our recent visit to see you at work. You made us feel very welcome and all of you spoke positively about your school life.

You clearly enjoy school. Your parents and carers are equally happy with the school. Your school is a satisfactory and improving school. This letter is to tell you what we found, including those aspects that we thought were good.

Your behaviour is really good and you get on well together as a community.

You make satisfactory progress overall, although we know that with extra help you can do even better.

You feel safe and secure and thoroughly enjoy your lessons.

The staff work hard to ensure that you develop as good citizens and develop good attitudes to learning.

You are keen to improve your school and you play your part well by taking on responsibilities such as being a school councillor and a play leader.

The school offers you lots of after-school clubs and support that improve your physical, creative and personal development.

The school community at Short Wood rightly wants the school to be even better and to help make this possible we have asked the staff and governors to:

Improve the way your teachers check on how different groups of pupils are doing so that they can plan more accurately how to ensure that everyone makes as much progress as possible.

Improve the quality of teaching across the school.

Improve teachers' marking, target setting and the advice given to you so that you confidently know what you have to do to improve your work.

We hope that you will continue to attend school every day and play your part in making Short Wood an even more successful school.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Ewing

Lead Inspector

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