

Dothill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135496
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	381895
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Ward
Headteacher	Nick Renshaw (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2009
School address	Severn Drive Wellington Telford TF1 3JB
Telephone number	01952 386870
Fax number	01952 386874
Email address	debbie.cawte@taw.org.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-eight lessons were visited and 15 teachers seen. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, groups of pupils, and leaders at all levels. The school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation, assessment records, planning and the school improvement partner's reports were scrutinised, as was pupils' work in lessons and on display. In total, 99 parental questionnaires were analysed. The returns of 96 pupil questionnaires and nine staff questionnaires were also considered.

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

- Inspectors investigated whether the decline in attainment at the end of both key stages has been halted and if there is evidence of good progress for pupils throughout the school.
- They explored what is needed to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Inspectors considered to what extent leaders and managers at all levels have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- They sought evidence to confirm the good effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This large primary school is part of a 'learning community', aiming to provide more integrated education for children from ages 2 to 16. This means the school works closely with the on-site pre-school provision and is federated with Charlton Secondary School. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average. A few pupils have English as an additional language. A low proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for school meals free of charge is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in three Reception groups. There are five Year 1/2 classes, three Year 3/4 classes, two Year 5 and two Year 6 classes. The school has a number of awards including National Healthy Schools status and Activemark. Since the previous inspection, five new teachers have joined the school.

The pre-school on site is privately managed and a separate inspection report is available for this setting.

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

3

Main findings

Dothill Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education. All pupils are known well to staff and the school provides a secure, welcoming environment. Pupils say that they feel safe, and parents and carers agree that their children are well looked after. Safeguarding arrangements are good. There are strengths in pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and their contribution to the community. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and relationships throughout the school are good. Children make a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result of good leadership and management and good teaching, they make good progress in this key stage.

Attainment overall and in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 declined from above average in 2009 to broadly average in 2011. Attainment at the end of Year 2 also dipped in 2011. However, current assessment information shows this decline has been halted at the end of both key stages and attainment is rising in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading attainment in particular shows good improvement as a result of the school's focus on improving pupils' reading skills. A useful system for tracking pupils' progress and showing attainment levels is available, but teachers do not consistently use this information to accurately match work to pupils' learning needs, including those of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who have English as an additional language. This means teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory, although there is an increasing amount that is good. Strengths of teaching include the effective use of strategies to involve pupils in their learning, the deployment of support staff and the review of pupils' learning at the ends of lessons. At times, teachers support pupils' learning too much, limiting the opportunities pupils have for independent writing. Marking is completed regularly and there are some good examples of how it helps pupils to move forward in their learning. Such practice is not consistent throughout the school and marking does not always relate sufficiently to the identified learning intention of the activity. Additionally, pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond to teachers' marking.

School leaders are committed to improvement, and as staffing is stabilising, the school is moving in the right direction based on a clear understanding of what needs to be done. The school improvement plan addresses the correct priorities, but self-evaluation is overly generous. This is because monitoring and evaluation, although satisfactory, do not focus sufficiently well on the impact of teaching on outcomes,

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including pupils' progress and their written work. A number of useful initiatives such as 'assertive mentoring' have begun to improve teaching, but feedback to teachers does not consistently focus on how well teaching is accelerating pupils' learning. Nevertheless, the improving picture of attainment and of teaching shows the school has a satisfactory capacity for 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?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 so that a minimum of 87% of pupils make at least expected progress in English and 86% in mathematics in all year groups by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information rigorously to inform the planning of pupils' learning
 - increasing pupils' opportunities to write independently and to record their ideas
 - ensuring that marking links to the intended learning of the lesson, provides pupils with useful information about how to improve and time is given for them to respond to the useful comments made
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' written work when writing in other curriculum areas.

- Sharpen monitoring and evaluation procedures by:
 - ensuring the feedback given to teachers focuses on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
 - establishing a cycle of regular work scrutiny linked to planning and information about pupils' progress
 - ensuring all leaders including the governing body focus increasingly on holding all staff to account for pupils' achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most lessons, pupils enjoy learning. They collaborate well in pairs, as seen in an English lesson in Years 3 and 4, when pupils explored the features of story writing. They made good progress as they identified the criteria to help them to write a good piece of writing. In a mathematics lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils discussed their ideas for making simple and more complex repeating patterns involving two-dimensional shapes. In this lesson, the range of activities planned matched pupils' prior attainment well. However, good progress is not consistent throughout the school, as work is not matched carefully enough to pupils' learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers when working in class, which sometimes accelerates when working in withdrawal groups. For example, pupils withdrawn for issues relating to dyslexia follow a

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developmental scheme which ensures they make good progress. However, pupils withdrawn to work with a teaching assistant to learn unfamiliar words were not encouraged to sound out letters, resulting in them just guessing at the vocabulary. No significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls or of pupils with English as an additional language was observed during the inspection.

Pupils’ behaviour is good. They say they are free from harassment. Pupils show a good understanding of the dangers of smoking, drug taking and the factors which may lead to emotional difficulties, such as peer pressure. Pupils identify the benefits of physical exercise, such as walking to school, and eating a healthy diet. They make sensible choices about the food they eat and a significant number participate in extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils get on well together, and are aware of the needs of others. They eagerly take on responsibility as peer mentors, ‘jumping jacks’ or playground pals and librarians for example. They are actively involved in the local community and are proud of the displays of their work at the Telford Day Centre. They have a strong moral and social code, as shown in an assembly, when pupils sensitively considered how children in Africa would benefit from their donations. Pupils’ good personal skills, above-average attendance, along with their satisfactory progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills, prepare them soundly for the future.

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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Observations of lessons confirmed that some teaching is good. In these lessons, for example a Year 6 mathematics lesson, a purposeful learning atmosphere was evident

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

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and pupils had a clear understanding of what they were meant to learn. The use of 'talk partners' helped to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and enabled them to learn effectively from each other. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning slows when there is too much teacher talk and not enough attention is paid to pupils' prior learning. Leaders are taking action to strengthen the quality of teaching, but there is still some way to go before it is consistently good. In subjects other than English, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils applying their literacy skills.

Staff are working hard to provide a curriculum that engages pupils' interests. Visits, such as those to Dudley Zoo and Chester, are used to enhance pupils' learning experiences. A good variety of extra-curricular activities are available including football, dance and yoga. However, although the curriculum is interesting, it is not matched well enough to the needs of all pupils, and teachers' timetables suggest that the time allocated to some subjects is only just satisfactory.

Strong staff teamwork and close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals underpin the school's caring and supportive environment. Case studies of pupils whose circumstances mean they may become vulnerable show how effectively the school cares for pupils' pastoral needs. Pupils leaving school are well prepared for the demands of the next stage of education, with organised activities for smooth transition.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders give a high priority to ensuring pupils' well-being and strategies for ensuring good care, support and guidance are effective. All statutory requirements regarding pupils' health and safety are met. Good safeguarding procedures are in place, and the checks made when recruiting staff and welcoming visitors are robust. The school site is safe and secure. However, the effectiveness of leaders in embedding ambition and driving improvement is satisfactory. Although regular monitoring of teaching takes place, leaders do not evaluate the impact of teaching on learning well enough. The scrutiny of pupils' work and meetings to review pupils' progress are not frequent enough to enable staff to rectify any emerging underachievement quickly. Staff are not held sufficiently to account for the progress of their pupils.

The governing body brings a breadth and depth of experience to the school and fully

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understands its statutory responsibilities. However, its role of checking the school’s performance and holding leaders to account for pupils’ progress is satisfactory rather than good. For example, there is limited evidence available of the governing body asking why attainment has declined at the end of Year 2 over the last three years. Governance is, therefore, satisfactory.

Good links with a range of partners, especially the federated secondary school, have been helpful in bringing about the gains that are securing improving outcomes. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily promoted and performance monitored carefully to ensure there is no discrimination. This work has done much to ensure equal opportunities for those with specific needs, but it has been less successful in providing consistently good progress for all. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils have extensive opportunities to work with others in their own and local communities, and to raise funds for international charities. Opportunities to engage directly with others in different parts of the United Kingdom and overseas, although less wide-spread, are increasing.

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	3
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

Effective induction arrangements help children to settle happily into everyday routines and to thrive in a supportive and caring environment. All welfare requirements are fully met. As a result, children quickly become confident, independent learners. Teaching and learning are good. There is a good balance between activities where children make choices and select activities and those where they work with an adult. Indoor and outdoor provision is good and the ‘forest school’ is used effectively to further enhance outdoor learning experiences. Ongoing observations of each child are used carefully to record their learning journey and to

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plan future learning. Staff work closely together, regularly sharing this information and responding quickly to any areas of weakness. For example, weaknesses in children’s early mark-making skills resulted in a wide variety of activities being available to support this aspect of development. Children excitedly used salt, shaving foam and other media to develop hand-to-eye co-ordination and to practise forming letters. Good leadership and management ensure children’s good progress. Although attainment on entry matches age-related expectations in most areas of learning, attainment is often below that expected in emotional development, writing and calculation. As a result of targeted work, progress is good and attainment is broadly average on entry to Year 1.

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

A low percentage of parents and carers returned the Ofsted questionnaire. However, of those who did, most are unanimous in believing that the school keeps their children safe. They think the teaching is good and that this helps their children to make good progress. They feel the school helps their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that although good teaching is evident, this is not consistent enough to be resulting in good progress. A very small minority of parents and carers have concerns about the management of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour of the vast majority was good. Those pupils with behavioural issues are supported effectively to manage their own behaviour, through a variety of behaviour management strategies. Detailed documentary evidence is kept about pupils’ behaviour, including records of the few racist and bullying incidents. Over time, these incidents have significantly reduced. Temporary or fixed term exclusions are low and have remained so.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dothill 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 411 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	62	32	32	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	64	34	34	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	37	37	53	54	8	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	39	54	55	3	3	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	54	55	42	42	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	45	45	47	47	4	4	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	47	48	48	3	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)	40	40	48	48	4	4	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	42	42	51	52	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	36	43	43	10	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	38	44	44	7	7	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	44	44	47	47	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	56	57	38	38	3	3	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dothill Primary School, Telford, TF1 3JB

Thank you for the warm and enthusiastic welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We have written a report about your school that shows it provides a satisfactory education for you. These are some of the things we found out.

You get off to a good start in the well-led Early Years Foundation Stage because staff take good care of you, and teaching and the curriculum are good. We found out staff know all of you very well and the systems for keeping you safe are good. Your parents and carers agree that this is true. You behave well and have a good understanding of right and wrong. You all get on well together and it was good to see how your teachers used lots of different ways to involve you in your learning. You are keen to help others in school through the school council, 'jumping jacks' and peer mentors. You also try to help those less fortunate than yourselves by collecting money for children in Africa for example. You told us lots about keeping healthy and how it was important to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise.

Although you all try hard in lessons, you are not all making the fastest progress possible. This is because information about the things you know already is not used carefully enough to plan your next steps of learning. So, we have asked the leaders of your school to ensure that you make at least good progress by checking that activities ensure you think hard during all parts of the lesson. We have asked for you to have more opportunities to write independently, and teachers to give you clear advice about why your work is good and how to improve. We also want teachers to make sure you are all using your writing skills carefully when writing in subjects other than English. We have also asked leaders to sharpen up the way they check your learning.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and asking your teachers to give you time to respond to their marking comments. I wish you all the best for the future and thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness
Lead inspector

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