

Withington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number116748Local AuthorityHerefordshireInspection number379294

Inspection dates12–13 October 2011Reporting inspectorUsha Devi HMI

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

Type of school Primary **School category** Community

Age range of pupils3-11Gender of pupilsMixedNumber of pupils on the school roll77

Appropriate authorityThe governing bodyChairChris Sherwood

Headteacher Sue Woodrow (Principal)

Date of previous school inspection 27 March 2009 **School address** Lock Road

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Age group 3-11

Inspection date(s) 12–13 October 2011

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors observed 10 lessons and five different teachers. In addition, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work with the head of learning. Inspectors met with senior leaders, pupils, staff, a local authority representative, the Chair of the Governing Body and two governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance information and monitoring records. Inspectors considered inspection questionnaire responses from 32 parents and carers. They also analysed questionnaires completed by pupils in Key Stage 2 as well as those completed by members of staff.

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

- Current levels of attainment and rates of progress.
- Pupils' attendance and the effectiveness of the school's actions to encourage pupils to attend regularly.
- How well teachers make use of assessment information to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- The impact of leaders and managers at all levels on raising attainment and accelerating progress for all pupils.

Information about the school

Withington is a smaller-than-average primary school located in a rural area of Herefordshire. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides for children in a morning Nursery and Reception class. Some children join the school in the Reception year. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in three mixed-aged classes. The school has achieved Healthy Schools Status. More pupils than average leave or join the school other than at the usual time.

There have been some significant changes since the last inspection. The previous headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term in 2010. In September 2010 Withington Primary School was federated with the neighbouring high school. At the same time, a single governing body was formed with representatives from both schools. The headteacher of the high school was appointed as the Principal of Withington: she is responsible for leading the school. The governing body also appointed a head of learning who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. During the last two years, some classes have been disrupted because of changes in class teachers and by staff absence.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Since the previous inspection the school has been through a period of instability. There have been significant changes at leadership level. Moreover, changes in staffing and staff absence have disrupted pupil's learning. Pupils' attainment has declined and is currently low in reading, writing and mathematics. Too many pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not make enough progress. In contrast, the quality of provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

There are a number of reasons why pupils' achievement is showing limited signs of improvement. While the quality of teaching in some lessons is satisfactory or better, in too many lessons it is inadequate. This is because teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan activities which provide a sufficient level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Teachers' expectation of what pupils, especially the more-able, can achieve is often low. The curriculum does not meet pupils' needs well enough. Teachers miss opportunities to reinforce pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, which are weak. For instance, errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not always brought to the attention of pupils as they work. In particular, opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are underdeveloped. Teachers' marking is inconsistent. It does not always clearly identify how pupils can improve their work.

The head of learning is a good role model for staff and ensures the school runs smoothly on a daily basis. She has gained the confidence of pupils, staff, parents and carers. One parent commented that discipline and general organisation have improved since her arrival. The school provides a safe and friendly environment. As one pupil explained, 'Everyone is kind and takes good care of us.' Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of sporting opportunities on offer, some of which are provided through the federated high school.

The Principal and the head of learning have introduced a number of initiatives in an

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

effort to raise attainment and improve the quality of teaching. These include a new system for tracking pupils' progress, together with regular meetings to discuss pupils' learning and progress with class teachers. In collaboration with the local authority, staff have received training to improve their teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. These are positive developments, but have yet to have a significant impact on tackling the school's weaknesses. Self-evaluation of the school's work is generous because the systems for monitoring and evaluation lack rigour. For instance, when observing lessons there is too much focus on what teachers are doing rather than the impact of teaching on learning for different groups of pupils. The Principal and the head of learning cannot secure the required improvements on their own. Leaders and managers at other levels are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluation. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is therefore inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and increase rates of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan activities which provide a sufficient level of challenge for all pupils, and especially those who are more able
 - extending opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - check pupils' understanding during lessons and use this information to move learning forward
 - use a range of techniques to engage pupils fully in their learning
 - create more opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning
 - clearly identify through marking how pupils can improve their work.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are sufficiently rigorous and lead to accelerated rates of progress
 - developing the role of middle and subject leaders so that they are better able to contribute to self-evaluation and school improvement
 - ensuring that strategic plans with measurable success criteria, identify the specific actions that will be taken to accelerate progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Children in the Nursery and Reception class make good progress from their starting points which are just below those expected for children of their age. They start Year

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

1 with average levels of skills and knowledge. Lesson observations and work in pupils' books shows that pupils make inadequate progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. Consequently, attainment is low by the end of Year 6. This means that pupils are not adequately prepared for the future.

Lessons observed during the inspection showed progress ranged from good to inadequate. Too often, activities did not take account of pupils' prior learning and the work was easy. As a result, pupils made insufficient progress. In some books, inspectors found earlier work which showed that pupils were using the correct punctuation, interesting vocabulary and neat writing. However, by the time of the inspection, the same pupils' work had deteriorated steadily with pupils omitting capital letters and full stops, using simple language and writing untidily. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make insufficient progress. In lessons, they are often given activities which do not build on what they already understand and can do. In one lesson for example, pupils were asked to describe and name shapes, even though they could already do this competently. Occasionally, their work is too challenging because they have to complete the same activity as their peers.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and say that if problems arise, they are dealt with swiftly. Behaviour around school and in lessons is satisfactory. Pupils become distracted when the pace of learning slows and activities are uninspiring. Behaviour is good in lessons where pupils are actively engaged and activities are suitably challenging. Pupils enjoy organising fund-raising activities. They spoke enthusiastically about making 'smoothies' to raise money for Comic Relief. Pupils' contribution in the wider community is developing. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, although stronger in the social and moral aspects. The vast majority of pupils come to school regularly. Despite the school's emphasis on attending regularly, a few pupils are absent on a frequent basis. For this reason, attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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

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

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There is not enough good or better teaching to raise pupils' achievement. The pace of learning slows in many lessons because teachers talk for too long. This reduces the time pupils have to work independently and take responsibility for their learning. More-able pupils are often asked to complete the same work as their peers before being given challenging work. This restricts the progress they make. The use of effective questioning to check pupils' understanding in order to move learning forward is inconsistent across the school.

In a few of the better lessons observed during the inspection, progress accelerated because activities were well matched to pupils' different capabilities and captured their interest. Teachers also used strategies, such as peer discussions, to engage pupils during all parts of the lesson. This effective practice is not sufficiently widespread. In one successful example in Years 5 and 6, the teacher used photographs, sounds and examples to help them learn about personification. Pupils worked with enthusiasm and used a range of vocabulary to give human qualities to inanimate objects. 'My writing is much more interesting if I say that the moon beamed,' explained one pupil.

The curriculum is broad and balanced but not well matched to pupils' learning needs, with a number of pupils reporting that their work is too easy. In some classes there is an over-reliance on a published mathematics scheme. In almost every lesson, pupils are given worksheets to complete, rather than activities which are modified to build on previous learning. The school's focus on improving writing has started to have an impact, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where the quality of teaching is stronger. However, there is still much more to do to ensure that writing skills are taught systematically by all teachers. Pupils enjoy attending after school-clubs such as multi-skills and karaoke. Visits to places like the Malvern Theatre and Craven Arms are appreciated by pupils. They promote pupils' enjoyment and enhance their learning experiences.

Many aspects of care, guidance and support are good. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. 'A warm and welcoming school,' commented one parent when asked to describe Withington Primary. Links with a range of external agencies ensure pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive the support they need. The school has effective systems in place to ensure that pupils who join the school other than at the usual time, settle quickly. Similarly, the small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language benefit from the targeted support they receive. This enables some of these pupils to make at least

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequatePlease turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

satisfactory and occasionally good gains in their learning. While there are effective transition arrangements for pupils who join the school and those moving onto high school, arrangements for pupils moving from Reception to Year 1 are weak. As a consequence, pupils do not always get off to a speedy start and begin to fall behind in their learning. The help and guidance that pupils receive to improve their learning is not as effective as it could be.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The Principal and head of learning are determined to bring about school improvement. They have introduced an appropriate range of strategies to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. However, these have not had a significant impact. This is because there are not enough checks to ensure that staff implement the actions that have been identified. This is leading to inconsistencies in provision. The current improvement plan and subject action plans do not identify the precise actions that will be taken to raise achievement. Moreover, the plans do not always contain criteria against which success can be measured. The school tackles discrimination well and all pupils have access to the extra-curricular activities on offer. However, the promotion of equal opportunities is inadequate because the gap between standards attained by pupils in the school and pupils nationally is not closing quickly enough.

The governing body has strengthened since the federation. It is well placed to support and challenge the school in making the necessary improvements. Governors are asking more incisive questions about the work of the school. Some are finding out at first-hand about the school's performance. Pupils' safety and well-being are given a high priority. Staff are well trained and risk assessment procedures are thorough.

Partnerships make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, but have yet to make a sufficient contribution to pupils' learning. Parents and carers are positive about the work of the school although opportunities for them to influence developments in the school are limited. The school promotes pupils' understanding of different communities satisfactorily.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
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	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-established links with parents and carers ensure that children settle in quickly. Relationships between staff and children are positive. Consequently, children behave well and develop good attitudes to learning. Children make good progress in all six areas of learning for a number of reasons.

- Staff work together well effectively to meet the pastoral and learning needs of the children.
- Assessment information is used carefully to plan the next steps in children's learning.
- There is a structured approach to the teaching of letters and sounds. This enables pupils to develop the skills required for reading and writing.
- There is an appropriate balance between independent and adult-led activities.

Resources in the indoor and outdoor area engage children's interest and successfully promote learning across all areas of the curriculum. In the 'Withington kitchen' children baked an assortment of cakes and described the different ingredients they were using. Activities such as this make a successful contribution towards pupils' learning. Occasionally, during directed activities adults talk for too long and do not give children the chance to discuss their work. This restricts children's language development. There is scope for improving the Early Years Foundation stage action plan so that it identifies the precise actions that would further improve provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2

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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A below-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The large majority, including those who spoke with inspectors, are positive about the work of the school. All parents and carers agree that they are happy with their children's overall experience at the school. Many of the written comments praise the staff of the school and, in particular, the way in which staff care for their children. One parent wrote, 'My child is very happy and it has been lovely to see her grow even in the short period she has attended Withington.' A few parents and carers told inspectors that they would like more help with supporting their children's learning at home. Inspectors have asked the school to consider how it can build on the opportunities it already offers. The very few individual concerns raised by parents and carers were investigated. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Inspectors judge that pupils do not make enough progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Withington 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 77 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		ents 5' Aaree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	78	7	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	69	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	81	6	19	0	0	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)	24	75	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	75	7	22	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	59	11	34	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	53	14	44	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	75	8	25	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)					
Type of school	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.

the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and Attainment:

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.

the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, Leadership and management:

> 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: 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.

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.

the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and Progress:

> 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.

14 October 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Withington Primary School, Hereford, HR1 3QE

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking with you and looking at your work. Your school does some things well, but needs to ensure that you all receive the best education possible. For this reason, we have decided that your school needs 'special measures.' This means that your school needs extra help to improve. Inspectors will visit your school regularly to check how well it is improving. These are the things that your school does well.

- The children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start and make good progress.
- Staff work hard to make sure you stay safe. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and know who to go to if you have a concern.
- You understand the importance of staying healthy. We enjoyed hearing about all the different sporting activities that you take part in, such as athletics.

We have asked the staff and governors to help you make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked teachers to make sure that activities are not too easy or too difficult. We have also asked them to provide more opportunities for you to practise your writing and number skills, and give you more regular feedback on how to improve your work. We could see that, in some lessons, you had the chance to talk to each other about your work and to use mini-white boards during class discussions. We have asked all your teachers to give you the chance to be active in lessons and to give you more responsibility for your learning.

The Principal and the head of learning have started to make some important changes to help improve the school. We have asked all the adults who work with them to share the responsibility for regularly checking how well you are learning and to make sure you make as much progress as possible. You can all help by working hard and doing your best in lessons.

We wish you, the staff and governors the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi Her Majesty's Inspector

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