

Perton Sandown First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124184
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380826
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Higgins
Headteacher	Elizabeth Threlkeld
Date of previous school inspection	05 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 29 lessons taught by seven teachers. They also met with staff, parents and carers, groups of pupils, and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment data, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies and procedures. Inspectors also analysed the responses to questionnaires from pupils and staff, and on the 115 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How effectively does teaching sustain the high standards in Year 2, especially in writing, and ensure they continue to Year 4?
- What progress do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make in relation to the progress of other pupils?
- How good is the provision in mixed-age classes, and how well are children in the Reception year catered for when they are taught alongside pupils in Year 1?

Information about the school

In this average-sized school, the proportion of pupils known to eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds since the previous inspection, and it is now above average. An average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery class and in two classes in the Reception year, one of which is a mixed-age class including pupils in Year 1.

There has been a considerable turnover of staff since the previous inspection, and the headteacher is the only member of the teaching staff who was at the school at that time. The school has recently renewed its national Healthy Schools status, its anti-bullying pledge and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Privately-run before- and after-school clubs, and an afternoon crèche, operate on the school premises. A privately-run mother-and-toddler group uses the school hall for one session per week. They are inspected separately.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. Despite the many changes in staffing, good and in some respects excellent leadership and management have ensured that all pupils in Years 1 to 4, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic groups, make outstanding progress. Attainment has remained significantly above the expected levels for pupils' ages in Year 4, and significantly above average in Year 2, for several years. Well-established, rigorous systems for checking teaching and learning, and an exceptionally well-planned creative curriculum ensure that all pupils in Years 1 to 4, including those in mixed-age classes, make excellent progress, no matter who is teaching them. The quality of teaching in these classes is consistently good or better, and a substantial proportion is outstanding. New staff in these years have settled into their roles well. Excellent curricular planning has contributed greatly to improvements in writing, ensuring that more pupils reach higher levels in this aspect of English.

The curriculum is also planned well to meet the children's needs in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, it is not taught consistently well, and children make only satisfactory progress overall in that age group. Much support has been provided for the relatively new team, who are committed, reflective, and share the school's vision for improvement. Nevertheless, there are still differences in provision between classes in the Reception year which the school's leaders are working hard to eradicate. Overall, the school's self-evaluation is accurate and well-founded. It has too generous a view of the Early Years Foundation Stage because it is based on historical outcomes rather than on current provision and the more limited progress children are now making. The school's successes in addressing issues from the previous inspection and in sustaining high standards in the rest of the school have been excellent. However, the slow progress towards achieving consistently good practice across the Reception classes means that the school has good, rather than outstanding, capacity to sustain improvement in the future.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school. All parents and carers agree. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. It has a highly positive effect on their learning and personal development. Pupils state confidently that 'This is an anti-bullying school and there is no bullying because they [staff] teach us not to bully'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same excellent progress as other pupils, as do pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Both groups benefit from high-quality support that keeps them very focused on doing as well as they can. Pupils have an

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excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. This is fostered from the earliest age, with children in Reception classes explaining how eating fruit and vegetables is good for them.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Good-quality marking ensures they know how well they are doing in literacy and numeracy. Marking is not as consistently good in other subjects and pupils are therefore less clear about how to improve their learning in them. Pupils are successfully encouraged to contribute to the way the school is run, to take part in school and community events, and learn about the wider world and how to take their place in it. They are exceptionally well prepared for their future. All of this is part of the excellent care, guidance and support the school provides for them, and which parents and carers greatly appreciate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all children in the Reception year receive the same good-quality provision by:
 - establishing equally good practice in teaching and assessment in both classes
 - checking that support staff in both classes are well briefed, know how to contribute to children’s learning, and carry out their roles effectively
 - ensuring that, when children are working or playing independently, staff interact with them more effectively, to check and improve their learning.
- Spread the good practice in marking in English and mathematics to all subjects so that pupils are always clear about how to improve their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children start school with skills below those that are typical for their age. They leave having reached standards that are significantly above those expected for their age. This represents excellent progress overall. Pupils’ writing is engaging, and boys and girls are equally keen to read and to write. A group of boys declared one lunchtime that, ‘we can’t wait for guided reading after lunch because it’s really great’.

Pupils are very thoughtful, reflective and caring. These attributes also come through in their writing. As they studied ‘The Snowman’, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their previous knowledge of characterisation extremely well to explore the characters in depth. They made excellent vocabulary choices and used powerful verbs, adverbs and adjectives to convey meaning and reflect on the characters’ feelings. Some also reflected on whether the boy was keeping himself safe by going with the snowman, although they understood it was a story, not real life. Pupils have a deep understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrated their excellent literacy skills by using similes and personification to describe the mouse’s view as it walked through the ‘Gruffalo forest’. Pupils have excellent mathematical skills, which they use very effectively to

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solve problems. They have an excellent understanding of the use and application of mathematical skills in everyday life.

Pupils know how well they are doing, and how to improve their work. They refer proudly to their ‘rocket targets’ and explain what they need to do to reach them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities appreciate the small step targets they have to improve their learning, and they stress why it is important to ‘behave really well so we can learn really well’. All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire said the school keeps their children safe and teaches them to be healthy. Pupils have a highly developed understanding of what it means to follow a healthy lifestyle. Large numbers participate wholeheartedly in the excellent range of sporting activities available in and beyond the normal school day.

Unusually, the responses to the pupil questionnaire were one hundred per cent positive in every aspect. Pupils declare that ‘school is a very safe place because everyone cares, everyone behaves really well’. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those for whom English is an additional language, are fully integrated into the life of the school. They make the same excellent progress as all other pupils. Multi-faith carol services, visits, visitors, and links with schools at home and abroad give pupils an excellent understanding of different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. Pupils readily celebrate each other’s successes and know that if they make a mistake, they can learn from it. They thoroughly enjoy learning. Their high levels of independence help them to persevere when they find tasks challenging. They readily help each other to solve problems. The school ensures that all pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to take responsibility for different things around school as they learn how to become responsible citizens. School councillors meet with their counterparts in other schools to discuss how to fulfil their roles more effectively.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will	1

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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contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Rich opportunities within the creative curriculum give pupils many memorable learning experiences, in and beyond the normal school day, that lead to excellent progress and personal development. The recent residential visit by pupils in Year 2 and the visit by pupils in Year 4 to the Houses of Parliament are examples of this. Detailed curricular planning provides a clear progression in the development of key skills and concepts in all subjects. The strong focus on teaching pupils the importance of these skills in everyday life is helping to maintain high standards in Years 2 and 4. Information and communication technology is used very effectively as a tool for learning in different subjects.

Imaginative, engaging teaching contributes to pupils' successful learning. Most teachers teach in many different ways, constantly reinforcing learning objectives, referring pupils to their targets, and helping them to see that they 'will be successful if ...' they can show particular outcomes. This was especially successful in a mathematics lesson as pupils in Years 3 and 4 applied their knowledge of partitioning numbers to help with multiplication. Most teachers are skilled at reshaping tasks in response to what pupils have learned, although higher-attaining pupils occasionally mark time while waiting for others. Pupils' learning is assessed, tracked and recorded very well, and assessment information is mostly used very effectively to match pupils' work to their different ages and stages of learning. Feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is better in English and mathematics than in other subjects.

Pupils are very well known as individuals. They work and play in a very safe and secure learning environment. They and their parents and carers have high levels of confidence in the school's ability to help and support them. The school is extremely vigilant in its care, guidance and support for all pupils and their families, including where pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent links with other schools and external agencies ensure that all pupils are fully included in everything it has to offer, and that transition between different classes and phases of education is made as easy as possible.

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	1

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is passionate about bringing learning alive for the pupils and ensuring their excellent progress and personal development. Supported by senior and middle leaders, she has instilled in all staff a shared vision for improvement and a strong determination to maintain high standards, despite the current dip in overall progress among children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Checks made on teaching and learning are rigorous and accurate, and areas identified for improvement are followed up with support and training.

The governing body fulfils its role well. Visits to classes, and discussions with staff and pupils give it first-hand information that enables it to challenge the school and help determine its strategic direction. The school adopts recommended good practice in safeguarding, including child protection. All training is up to date, and staff, parents and carers, pupils and the governing body are all involved in ensuring the school is a safe and secure place. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. At present, however, there are some inequalities between Reception classes that prevent this judgement from being outstanding.

The school promotes community cohesion very well, fostering in pupils a high degree of respect for everyone. There is a real sense that 'the school is the community', shown by the excellent relationships with parents and carers, and with the wider community. Excellent links with different schools in this country and abroad ensure that pupils learn about and, where possible, meet, people from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. The school uses its own increasingly diverse intake to help in this. Its aim to 'bring the world into the classroom' is met exceptionally well, for example, through geography and religious education, visits and visitors, and the news board relating news items to their countries of origin.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	1
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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

In most years, children have learned and developed well in this age group, leaving the Reception year with broadly average attainment. At present, while they are making good progress in the Nursery class, progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage is only satisfactory because not all children in the Reception year are doing as well as they can. Variations in the quality of teaching and assessment between classes mean that opportunities are missed to promote learning at every opportunity. Nevertheless, children develop excellent personal skills, demonstrating a high degree of independence as they persevere with activities, and socialise with each other. Excellent attention is paid to their health, safety and well-being. Effective induction procedures and good links with parents and carers contribute to this, as do the good transition arrangements when children transfer to Year 1.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation have identified key areas for improvement, which have been followed up with support and training. The curriculum is well planned, with a good range of imaginative activities from which children can select. Learning in the outdoor areas is much more purposeful in the Nursery than in the Reception classes. When Reception children go outside, adults do not all interact with them well enough to promote effective learning. The large majority of children are clear about what they are learning indoors, as was evident when they proudly showed their developing literacy and numeracy skills in work associated with 'The Gruffalo'. However, a minority sometimes lose out on learning because adults do not interact with them frequently enough to assess, record and move their learning on.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the inspection questionnaire was much higher than in most schools. It showed that parents and carers feel very well informed about the school and are overwhelmingly satisfied with it. They also praise it highly for what it does for them and their children. Comments such as 'the school is wonderful', and 'the

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children have a great time' were typical of those received. Parents and carers also praised the leadership and management of the school, and said that staff are approachable, expectations are very high and that, when children join the school, 'it feels like they are joining a family'. A very small minority of parents made critical comments and, while these were explored by inspectors, there was no pattern that indicated issues of concern across the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Perton Sandown First 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 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	80	22	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	92	80	23	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	64	56	49	43	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	62	41	36	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	67	37	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	60	52	54	47	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	62	44	38	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)	64	56	45	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	64	56	49	43	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	42	63	55	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	54	47	41	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	58	46	40	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	77	67	36	31	2	2	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	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.



8 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Perton Sandown First School, Wolverhampton, WV6 7PS

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was a real delight to talk with you about what you do there, and to see how much you enjoy learning. We found that you go to an outstanding school, where you make excellent progress and reach high standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is because you are often taught really well, and those who lead and manage the school keep a very close check on how well you are doing.

Your behaviour is exemplary and plays a big part in your learning. You told us that yours is an 'anti-bullying school' and you very clearly intend to keep it that way. It was good to see how much confidence you and your parents and carers have in the school. We were pleased to hear that you all feel that you are kept safe, and taught to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. You are rightly very proud of your school, know how to improve your work, and follow the advice your teachers give you, for example, through their marking.

We found there are a couple of things the school needs to do to ensure that your excellent progress continues:

- ensure Reception children are taught equally well in both classes, and therefore can make at least good progress at all times
- ensure teachers mark all of your work as well as they mark literacy and numeracy, so that you are clear about how to improve in all subjects.

You can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best at all times. We hope you will enjoy learning as much as you do now for the rest of your lives, and we wish you well.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector

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