

Withington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116748
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	393546
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Sherwood
Headteacher	Sue Woodrow (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2011
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	26–27 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed five lessons, met with the Chair and another member of the governing body, staff from the school, Marlbrook Primary School and from Aylestone Business and Enterprise College, pupils and a representative of the local authority. The inspector took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents provided by the school and local authority, pupils' work, and the records of pupils' achievements. Because the inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, there were no questionnaires issued. However, the inspector took account of the responses to questionnaires which had been issued by the school. The inspector also drew on evidence from the previous monitoring visit.

Information about the school

Withington is a smaller-than-average rural primary school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low but there are increasing numbers of pupils who arrive at the school from Eastern Europe. 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 is federated with the neighbouring high school, Aylestone Business and Enterprise College. There is a single governing body with representatives from both schools and the Principal of the high school acts as executive headteacher, with a head of learning, with responsibility for the daily provision and monitoring outcomes at the Withington School site. The school was judged to need special measures in October 2011. Since that time, the school has worked closely with Marlbrook Primary School, whose headteacher is a National Leader for Education. The school had a monitoring visit in February 2012.

Results for 2011 do not meet the government's current floor standard, the minimum expectations set for attainment and progress.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school has improved greatly and it now provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is not good because, although achievement and the quality of teaching have improved, as yet pupils do not make good progress over time. The Early Years Foundation Stage is good and provides children with a rich learning environment where they make good progress. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory and improving. The school's accurate records show that pupils often make good progress in lessons. They are making up for previously poor progress so that attainment is broadly average. Standards in writing have improved but pupils do not get a wide range of opportunities to write across a wide variety of subjects, nor do they get many opportunities to investigate mathematics to make connections for themselves.
- Behaviour around the school is good. A major factor that the school has improved is the way in which pupils are actively engaged in their learning, especially as lessons have become more interesting and engaging.
- Teaching is satisfactory: while there is much good and better teaching, this strong practice is not firmly established across all classes. There are good relationships between staff. When teaching is of the highest quality, learning stretches all pupils in the class and pupils make good progress. When teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is slower and more-able pupils are not fully stretched.
- The strong leadership and ambition from senior leaders has meant staff have been very well supported and challenged to improve their practice. The federation has worked very well, providing highly effective support both for

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teaching and for leadership. Performance management holds staff to account and has enabled the school to increase the proportion of good teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by:
 - giving pupils a greater variety of opportunities to write in different subjects
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to investigate mathematics so they are able to make connections for themselves.

- Build upon the improvements to the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by ensuring:
 - greater pace of learning across all lessons
 - greater challenge for the more-able pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress and enjoy learning in the rich, vibrant atmosphere. As a result, they join Key Stage 1 with attainment which is broadly average.

Target setting for all pupils is based upon their attainment at the start of Year 1. This has meant greater challenge. Year 1 pupils performed well in their recent reading screening assessments. Unvalidated results for Key Stage 1 assessments show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved greatly and is broadly average, although the number of pupils who attain the higher levels is relatively low. The school's systems to track pupils' attainment and progress show that the results expected at the end of Key Stage 2 will be above the floor standards and broadly average. The progress pupils make is variable across different years and is satisfactory overall. While this is a big improvement, many pupils still have to make up for previously poor progress. Writing shows clear progression, both in complexity of language and in pupils' handwriting. However, there are still few opportunities for pupils to write extensively across different subjects. Pupils who arrive new to the school, often from Eastern Europe, settle in well and, once they gain sufficient basic English, make good progress. The school has updated systems to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so that they make similar progress to their peers.

During the inspection, pupils were observed mainly making good progress in lessons but, at times, progress was satisfactory. Learning was best when pupils were motivated and excited about their work; for example, the enjoyment when pupils were measuring with scales and then cooking cakes. In the Early Years Foundation

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Stage, children were highly active and engaged as they prepared for a 'wedding' and were taking great pleasure in designing clothes for the bride and groom. In another lesson, pupils had used role play to better develop an understanding of a character in a book which then helped them to be more imaginative in their writing.

Pupils make improved progress in reading so that, by the time they leave school, attainment is average. In mathematics, pupils have improved their ability with the four operations and number problems. The school is developing a calculation policy in conjunction with the high school. Lessons often include practical activities but pupils are not often set problems for them to investigate so that they can identify patterns and relationships within mathematics

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, but it is not yet consistently good across all classes. Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Marking is good and includes advice on how pupils can improve their work. Pupils then respond to their teacher's comments at the start of the next lesson.

Teaching ensures pupils follow a variety of activities, including practical, group and independent work. Greater teacher confidence means that ongoing assessment is used well to adapt lessons to meet the needs of pupils, particularly those of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils are reminded of the targets in their individual education plans, which are discreetly displayed within the classroom. In the school's surveys, pupils, parents and carers say that lessons have become more interesting and have greater challenge. Observations during the inspection concur with these responses. Pupils say they find lessons more engaging and interesting and that they are able to complete practical activities as well as the usual written work.

The school has responded well to issues identified during the monitoring visit and now have clear procedures to help pupils improve their reading. One class were observed being very effective in identifying different possible spellings of a space monster's name based upon the sounds made by the combination of letters. The new library has been well received, with librarians taking responsibility including getting book reviews by pupils

Teaching ensures a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of different cultures. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, opportunities are taken to ensure that children understand the wide variety of different cultures within Britain of which they may not have had first-hand experience. In lessons, pupils often consider moral situations or are reminded of the school's values, including trust and respect. Pupils work well in mixed-aged classes to develop good social skills.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a well-ordered community. Pupils are considerate and courteous to each other and to visitors. They feel safe and older pupils have a good understanding of dangers of smoking and other substance abuse. Children within the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy role play by being members of the emergency services.

Pupils have a good understanding of the different aspects of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils say there is no bullying but, at times, there is name-calling. However, any such issues are quickly resolved. Pupils who arrive other than at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage integrate well, especially those from overseas. Attendance has improved and is average, with a big decrease in the proportion of pupils who have too much time off school. Parents and carers commented that behaviour has improved and is good. Pupils say this is because lessons are more interesting and, consequently, they are fully engaged in their learning.

Leadership and management

The school has been very well supported by the high school within the federation, the National Leader for Education and her school, and the local authority. This has been a major factor in the improvements to the quality of teaching, raising achievement and improving the abilities of leaders. The executive headteacher gives a very strong steer, and the ambition is supported by all staff. The rapid turnaround of this school since its last inspection shows its good capacity to improve. The head of learning has been successful in ensuring staff respond well to the challenges and that they feel well supported and valued. Parents and carers commented in the school's survey that they now have far greater confidence in the school.

Subject 'buddies' from the high school have started to develop a revised curriculum with the school. This has been mutually beneficial; high school staff's subject expertise identifies key areas to engage pupils and joint moderation of work has given high school teachers a better understanding of the levels at which primary pupils achieve as well as how they develop over the primary years. The school integrates aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well into lessons, and the rich display around the school enhances pupils' experiences. The school engages well with parents and carers, and responses to a recent questionnaire showed that they felt the school had improved a great deal of late.

The importance of supporting the federation is demonstrated by ensuring all staff who support on the primary site are of the highest quality. The Deputy Principals have been very successful in supporting literacy and numeracy as well as developing teaching and learning. Planning and teaching are closely monitored and any areas of development are quickly identified and support given. These are linked to performance management so that staff are held to account for their work and their classes' achievement.

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Members of the governing body are fully involved in supporting and challenging the school. The effective committee structure means that there are regular feedbacks on how well different groups are progressing to ensure equality of opportunity. They also ensure, with staff, that the school meets the current requirements for safeguarding. There is a clear action plan for further developments and to maintain the rate of improvement to date.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Withington Primary School, Hereford, HR1 3QE

I visited your school this week. As many of you are aware, I had also visited your school last term. In fact, some of you know me so well you greet me like a friend. As always, I was pleased to see how well you behave, how hard you work, and how polite and courteous you are. As one of you said when I met some of you at lunchtime, 'The school has got better and lessons are more interesting so I want to work harder.' Well done, as these attitudes have helped your school to improve, and you can help it further by continuing always to work hard and do your very best. It is with happiness that I tell you that your school has improved. It is now satisfactory and no longer needs special measures. Sadly though, for me, that means that I will not be returning to see how well you are getting on.

You are all doing much better in your reading, writing and mathematics. That is because the teaching has got better and lessons are exciting and interesting. This is also why attendance has improved. I was pleased to see you weighing in mathematics and I enjoyed my cake which one of you had made. Your teachers have concentrated on making sure that you all do well in lessons and have improved all you do. I have asked the school to give you more opportunities to write across different subjects and to get you to investigate more in. I have also asked them to make sure you always make good progress in lessons and that those of you who are capable of harder work are always stretched.

Your leaders have greatly improved and the work of all the staff from Aylestone and Marlbrook, along with Chair of the Governing Body, has been very effective in making sure the school is now in a position to get even better. All of your teachers and other adults in the school have worked very hard to bring about these improvements. I hope you all carry on improving and that you do well in the school.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

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