



Withington Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116748
LEA Herefordshire
Inspection number 279889
Inspection dates 21 November 2005 to 21 November 2005
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Withington
School category	Community		Hereford
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Herefordshire HR1 3QE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01432 850289
Number on roll	99	Fax number	01432 851791
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Margaret Soutar
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sheila McEnery

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Withington Primary is a small school. Most of its pupils live in or near to the village of Withington and are of White British descent with a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has a nursery that admits children from in and out of its area. Some children transfer to their own local schools at the start of the Reception year. The school has a large proportion of pupils with learning and physical disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Withington Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The attainment of children when they start school is wide but many children have standards below that found nationally. The strength of the school is the good provision in the Nursery and Reception, where children make good progress because of good teaching and the effective use of resources and outside space. Progress of pupils through the rest of the school is satisfactory, but not consistent across English and mathematics. Standards overall are influenced by the large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and are typically below average. Standards in English are improving because of concerted efforts by the school. Standards and progress in mathematics are, however, too low. This is recognised by the school and strategies are in place to support improvement. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but procedures for monitoring the progress made by pupils are unsatisfactory and this hinders the progress towards higher standards, especially in mathematics.

The headteacher's clear lead on promoting pupils' care, good personal development and well-being has ensured that the positive school ethos has been effectively maintained. Partnerships with parents are good and they are very supportive of the school. There is a good range of additional activities to extend and enrich pupils' learning, especially in music and sport. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. The school recognises what needs to be done to improve and has the capacity to raise standards further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards and progress in mathematics
- improve systems for tracking pupils' progress so that underachievement is identified and shared with pupils so that all pupils know what to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of abilities. They make good progress and are well prepared for the more formal aspects of learning that they meet in Reception. Those children who stay at the school continue to make good progress and most attain the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils' progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. Steady progress is made in reading and this is the strongest element of pupils' learning. Satisfactory progress has been made in developing pupils' writing skills, and standards in English, which were poor, are now broadly average by the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics are weak through the school and by Year 6 both standards and progress in mathematics are too low. The school has identified mathematics as the main aspect for improvement but the strategies used to promote pupils' better learning are still new and not yet having an impact on raising standards.

A significant proportion of pupils have learning and/or physical disabilities, and they make satisfactory progress towards their personal targets set out on their individual education plans. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress within the limits of their abilities. The above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties means that the school's overall standards are below that seen nationally. Pupils met the targets set for them in both English and science in 2005 but not in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils effectively reflect on their actions and consider the needs of others. They treat each other well, feel safe and agree that there is little bullying. Any problems that do occur are quickly sorted out. The 'PALS' scheme encourages pupils to play happily and safely together.

Pupils in Year 6 take responsibility well and develop leadership skills when given opportunities to show initiative. They organise their own fundraising schemes and several charities have benefited from this enterprising spirit and sense of community. The active school council is instrumental in making school improvements.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, their behaviour is good and they attend regularly. Pupils show positive attitudes to their lessons and are keen to learn. A feature of inspectors' discussions with pupils was their enthusiasm both for their lessons and after-school clubs. Pupils have good awareness of the need for keeping safe and the importance of eating sensibly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and support assistants work well together to provide a rich learning environment that stimulates children's interest and desire to learn. Children's learning is monitored effectively and used successfully to promote further learning.

Teaching across the rest of the school is satisfactory. A good range of strategies is now being used to promote pupils' language skills and this is raising standards. Teachers' effective use of assessment identifies areas of weakness in pupils' writing, and strategies, such as the use of 'talking partners' to encourage pupils' ideas and discussion, work well. The teaching of mathematics in the lessons observed was satisfactory but teachers' use of assessment to focus on what pupils need to do next is not crisp enough to ensure good progress. Pupils discuss their work with teachers in general terms. Targets for the next stage in learning are agreed with each pupil but not referred to sufficiently regularly to ensure they use them in their work; consequently, pupils are not always clear about how they are to improve.

The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. The support provided for pupils with significant learning and/or physical disabilities is often good and guidance from outside agencies is used well to enable pupils to take a full part in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The outside areas have been significantly improved with the tremendous support of local firms and parents. It is used very well to stimulate children's questions, observations and ideas.

The curriculum through the rest of the school is satisfactory. It meets national requirements and is suitably planned, except in mathematics, where it is not sufficiently challenging to promote good learning. The use of specialist teachers for games and music promotes pupils' skills and enthusiasm. The school has developed a good range of additional activities to enrich the curriculum. Special events, such as the 'Arts Fortnight', have effectively promoted dance, drama, art and music. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and activities and many participate in the wide range of lively after-school clubs. Pupils are encouraged to embrace healthy lifestyles. Healthy eating, for example, has been well promoted by the teaching assistants and influences the choices children make. Support from the school nurse and other agencies also promote these aspects of the curriculum. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop the skills that will support them in the next stage of their education, except in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All staff play an active part in establishing a very caring and welcoming atmosphere. Parents are appreciative of the good levels of care provided for their children and pupils feel safe and valued. Procedures for health and safety and child protection are good. Systems to support children as they start in the Foundation Stage and when pupils transfer to their next school are good and this ensures they settle easily. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. The school is developing effective ways to inform parents about what pupils are learning in school. A recent focus has been on mathematics and this is helping to guide parents' support for their children. The breakfast club and after-school activities provide good levels of care. This is very important to parents and pupils because there is very little to do in the village.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A large proportion of the staff has changed since the previous inspection. The headteacher's clear lead on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being has ensured the maintenance of the school's positive ethos.

The school's evaluation has correctly identified areas in need of improvement but the means by which progress is to be measured are insufficiently clear to ensure success. Satisfactory systems are in place to monitor pupils' attainment, but the information is not used sufficiently to evaluate pupils' achievement. This has resulted in slow progress in mathematics. Good strategies for improving pupils' writing have raised standards in English, but not yet in mathematics. Satisfactory monitoring of teaching and effective guidance from the headteacher has supported new teachers who are developing their professional skills well. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel it is doing a good job.

The governors are very supportive of the school and carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors have only a superficial awareness of pupils' progress. They have not been sufficiently informed about the quality of pupils' progress. This reduces their ability to judge the school's effectiveness. Satisfactory improvement was made after the last inspection in addressing the concerns identified. Staff are eager and enthusiastic. They have the capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Withington Primary School Withington Hereford Herefordshire HR1 3QE

22 November 2005

Dear Children

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about you and the school.

What we liked about the school

- you are happy at school and enjoy your lessons
- you behave sensibly and are kind to each other; we think you try hard to do well in your work
- you are given lots of opportunities to take responsibility and you do it well
- the teachers look after you well and help you to be healthy and safe
- there are interesting clubs for you to enjoy after school and activities to make your lessons more interesting.

What we have asked the school to do

- help you make better progress in mathematics so you achieve well
- for your headteacher and teachers to study how well you are getting on so they know whether you are doing well enough.

Thank you again for helping us find out about your school.

Best wishes

Hazel Callaghan Lead Inspector