



St Peter's CofE VA First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116877
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279929
Inspection dates 27 February 2006 to 28 February 2006
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Marshall AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Church Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Droitwich
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Worcestershire WR9 7AN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01905 772138
Number on roll	447	Fax number	01905 794659
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Karen Cowlshaw
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Liane Billingsley

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized first school. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. This reflects the advantaged backgrounds of many of the pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the levels expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

This school is not providing an adequate education for its pupils. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness supports this judgement. The school is not giving acceptable value for money. The quality of provision and the standards reached in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. However, results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 show standards fell in 2005 to below average and indicate that this group of pupils made unsatisfactory progress. The school's own data shows that pupils make inconsistent and patchy progress as they move up through the school. This slow progress is also evident in pupils' work. The school is working hard to improve pupils' achievement, but weaknesses in teaching have led to pupils under-achieving in the past, and some are still not doing as well as they could. There are some strengths in the school. Inspectors agree with pupils and parents that this is a very welcoming school and that pupils are well cared for. When children join the school in the Reception classes they are happy and keen to learn. These positive attitudes are built on successfully in subsequent years. Consequently, pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school, and this is shown by the higher-than-average attendance rate. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since her appointment less than a year ago and supported by the Local Authority, the school's leaders have demonstrated that the school has the capacity to improve. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has effectively identified the right areas for the school to work on. As a result, there have been improvements in both the quality of teaching and learning, with less unsatisfactory teaching than there was and more pupils now making satisfactory progress. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make consistent progress throughout the school by improving teaching so that more is expected of pupils.
- Use assessment procedures more consistently to check whether pupils are making the progress that they should, to plan challenging learning tasks and to help pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory. This is because pupils are making inconsistent progress through the school and are not doing as well as they should. Children make steady progress in the Reception classes. Most reach the levels expected of them by the end of the year. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2005 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics because these pupils, including

higher-attaining pupils, made inadequate progress from Year 1. The school's data shows pupils' progress until recently was not good enough in Years 1 to 4. However, recent improvements in the quality of teaching mean that more pupils are now achieving satisfactorily, although the achievements of higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficient. Recent assessments and systems to track pupils' progress, as well as the inspection evidence, shows pupils in Years 1, 2 and 4 are now more consistently working at appropriate levels and most are on track to reach their targets. Whilst the school has taken actions to address the quality of teaching, inconsistencies still remain. As a result some pupils, especially in Year 3 and more able pupils in some other classes, are still underachieving in their day-to-day work. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the well-planned support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, a view strongly supported by a very large majority of parents. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to join in all activities, a fact reflected by their good attendance. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral and social development. Their enthusiastic singing in school assemblies reflects well on the school's religious character, for example. In discussions, they show respect for others' views and applaud their achievements. Pupils willingly take on duties, such as school councillors, that involve them in the life of the school, the parish and local community. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are developing a sound economic understanding through raising funds for an orphanage in Africa and other charities. They behave safely and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In lessons, pupils generally respond quickly to instructions and cooperate well with others. They understand the fairness of the school's behaviour system, and particularly enjoy the reward of 'tea with the headteacher'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching is inadequate. In the last academic year a significant number of pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Despite the school achieving some success in eradicating inconsistencies in teaching, there is still too much teaching that is not helping pupils learn at a fast enough rate. Teaching and learning although generally satisfactory in Reception, and Years 1 and 2 classes, remains inconsistent in Year 4 and ranges from inadequate to satisfactory in Year 3. There are some strengths in the teaching. Pupils have good relationships with staff and behaviour is generally well managed across the school. In good lessons, teachers know exactly what they expect pupils to learn and provide them with effective support. They ensure that pupils have good opportunities to talk about their ideas, such as in a Year 1 literacy lesson where pupils enthusiastically contributed to a discussion on 'WOW' words. Teaching assistants

are well briefed and provide valuable support, particularly when working with pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are some common weaknesses. The pace of learning is too slow in some lessons and opportunities are missed to probe pupils' understanding through carefully targeted questions. Tasks are not always well matched to pupils' needs and so pupils are not always supported or challenged effectively. Appropriate strategies have recently been introduced to improve the accuracy of assessments and check pupils' progress. However, teachers' marking does not always give pupils clear guidance on what they have done well and how they need to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curricular provision is satisfactory. Work planned in the Reception classes is satisfactory, with all areas of learning addressed. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy to address falling standards. Good use is made of special support programmes to help pupils with learning difficulties. The use of information and communication technology to underpin learning in other subjects is satisfactory and improving following the recent updating of resources. French is taught in addition to other subjects from Years 1 to 4. There are some clear strengths. Provision for the arts and religious education (RE) is good and the school has achieved the 'Artsmark Gold' and RE development awards in recognition. Involvement in many projects, for example, the 'Voices and Visions Festival', gives pupils the chance to perform to a wider audience. Pupils' enjoyment and positive attitudes are successfully boosted by the good range of enrichment activities, including clubs, special events such as 'Arts Week' and regular visits out of school. The personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' overall development well and helps them to learn about staying healthy and safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a caring school which welcomes all children, whatever their needs. Pupils and parents recognise this and it is a key factor in the pupils' positive attitudes to school. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well understood and any pupils who are at risk are identified and supported well. Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to if necessary. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good and outside agencies and parents are involved effectively. Assessment procedures were a weakness at the previous inspection. There have been some recent improvements, notably in using assessment to set targets for individuals in mathematics and English. Whilst these are still being bedded in, both pupils and parents say that they are useful in pointing the way to improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has provided a clear direction for improvement based on the review she initiated soon after her appointment less than a year ago. As a result the school's leaders know what they need to work on next and have taken actions to halt the decline in the school's performance. A close partnership with the Local Authority has allowed the school to draw on them successfully for additional expertise where needed. Other initiatives include improved arrangements for assessing how well pupils are doing, the use of these assessments to set more challenging targets, and extra support being given to pupils who have made particularly slow progress. Improvements are showing in pupils' progress this year. The school is working to further improve key skills in checking and evaluating the quality of the work in the school. Whilst some of the school's leaders, including governors, are relatively inexperienced, they are learning fast. These relatively new procedures have still to become embedded before their full effect can be seen. Both parents and pupils comment very positively on the changes that have been made in the last 11 months. The vast majority of parents feel that the school now seeks their views and acts upon them.

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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?	4	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	3	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	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	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?	4	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	4	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

Dear Children, Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We are pleased to hear that you like school and that the grown-ups are kind and look after you well. We think that they help you to know just what you have to do to keep safe and healthy. We were happy to hear that there are plenty of things for you to take part in, such as the Arts' Week and sports clubs. We think you are polite to adults and behave well. We especially liked the way you say well done to each other with your 'Bravissimo' song! We know from talking to some of the older children that 'there have been lots of changes' in your school over the last year. You think that 'these have been for the better' but 'some things are taking longer' than others. We have asked all the adults in school to keep on making things better by:

- always giving you work at the right level that helps you to do your very best
- making sure that teachers are helping you to know what you need to do to improve your work.

To help you, other inspectors will visit your school in a year's time to see just how you're getting on. Yours sincerely,
Mrs J Marshall Lead inspector