



West Felton CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123512
LEA Shropshire
Inspection number 281495
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 30 November 2005
Reporting inspector Dee Brigstock RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		West Felton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 4JR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01691 610388
Number on roll	71	Fax number	01691 610388
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Samantha Bray
Date of previous inspection	13 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr Matthew Copping

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small, rural school. There have been many changes to staff during the past year, including a new headteacher.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average, including those with a statement of educational need. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. There are few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds very few of whom are learning to speak English as an additional language. When children join the reception group their attainment is similar to children of the same age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Felton is a rapidly improving school, which offers a sound quality of education and satisfactory value for money. These findings reflect the school's view of its overall effectiveness. Standards have been very low for several years and progress has not been good enough but, since the arrival of the new headteacher and other staff, things have changed. The school has a 'buzz' of improvement about it. This inspection found that children get off to a good start in the reception group, where they make good progress. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' progress has improved rapidly in response to pacy and stimulating teaching. There are still some gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, but standards are on course to be broadly average by the end of the school year. The school's capacity to improve is clearly shown by the brisk progress pupils have made since May. However, because improvements are recent, they have not yet had a full impact on pupils' standards, which are average.

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and behave well. The school is working hard to improve attendance, which is below average. Care and support are good, and pupils receive clear guidance on how they can improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school knows that pupils have gaps in their mathematical and scientific knowledge and understanding, and in learning about cultures and traditions beyond their own. These gaps are now being filled.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities in science and mathematics to use and apply their knowledge and skills in investigative work.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the wide cultural diversity within Britain.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils are now making good progress but, taking into account the 'catching up' that is needed, achievement is satisfactory at present, rather than good.

Children make good progress in Reception. Their attainment is broadly average by the time they move into Year 1, although their progress is less marked in language and literacy skills than it is in their personal and social development.

Test results over the last four years show that pupils in Years 1 to 6 did not make enough progress, particularly in mathematics and science. During this period standards were very low. However, successful and rigorous systems for improving pupils' progress are now bearing fruit, and pupils are meeting challenging targets. Since May, all pupils have made rapid progress from their starting points due to stimulating, pacy teaching and high expectations from teachers. This is illustrated in pupils' work and in the school's assessments of how well pupils are doing. For example, one Year 6 pupil made the equivalent of two years progress in mathematics in just over a term. As a result, standards are moving towards the national average. The large proportion of pupils

with learning difficulties, and the few learning to speak English as an additional language, make good progress too. Standards in English have already improved over the last two years and the school is maintaining this momentum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are confident and work effectively on their own and with others. Year 6 pupils take on considerable authority when they organise lunchtime games for younger pupils. Behaviour is good. Pupils say they enjoy lessons and give their school '10 out of 10'. Parents feel that their children now have much better attitudes to learning.

Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Authorised absence remains above the national average, and this is due to family holidays being taken in term time. The school is working hard to remedy this issue. Links with the Church and local community are good, including those with the local pre-school. Pupils regularly take part in village activities, such as the Remembrance Day parade.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit, healthy and safe. They show this awareness, for example, during their lunchtime team games. They are regularly consulted about their views through questionnaires and the recently introduced school council. Pupils are quickly developing skills to prepare them for their future lives, for example in information and communication technology (ICT). They have fewer opportunities, however, to develop independent learning habits in mathematics and science. Activities that take place with other schools also focus strongly on raising pupils' achievement and improving their basic skills.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Older pupils care very well for younger children and they have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Their learning about other cultures in Britain is less well developed than other aspects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good. There have been considerable changes to staff since May, and the new headteacher has invigorated the confidence of teachers and pupils. All staff, including the learning mentor, have high expectations of pupils' progress. They plan work specifically matched to all pupils' abilities and ages, including those with learning difficulties or who are at an early stage of learning English. New teaching strategies make lessons interesting and stimulating. For example, teachers use interactive whiteboards skilfully to focus pupils' attention on their learning. This technology is very popular with pupils, and has the added benefit of extending their ICT skills. As a result of these improvements, pupils are very motivated to learn. On one occasion pupils in Years 1 and 2 cheered when the teacher told them they were

going to begin their numeracy lesson. These features account for pupils' swift progress, and are particularly successful in mathematics where the headteacher demonstrates effective teaching methods to staff. However, the school has yet to fully overcome the lack of opportunity for pupils to develop independent learning skills through investigation and problem solving.

Teachers' marking is good. This feedback explicitly refers to pupils' targets, insists on corrections being made where there are mistakes, and gives pupils clear pointers on how to improve further. Teachers' make effective use of the new assessment procedures to measure pupils' progress and plan the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Mixed-age classes provide teachers with challenges in planning, which the school has already started to resolve. The curriculum has been substantially revised to ensure that all pupils have full access to all subjects. For example, the time spent on mathematics has been increased and the whole curriculum now explicitly matches expectations for pupils' ages. Year 6 pupils say, 'We now have maths every day!'. The Reception group's curriculum is also well planned and meets the needs of these children well. However, despite these swift improvements, there is still more to do in order to ensure that pupils reach their full potential. For example, pupils do not yet have enough experience of investigative work in science and mathematics. There is a good range of additional extra-curricular activities. These include several sporting activities, such as cross-country. Pupils' personal, social and health education, including the strong focus on keeping fit, is good. As an example, the school has successfully encouraged about half of the pupils to cycle safely to school when the weather is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for its pupils well. Arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are well established. Staff identify children's personal and social needs at an early stage and give pupils good support. The work of the learning mentor has a considerable influence on pupils' willingness to learn. Links with a wide variety of external agencies are good. Good provision is made for the more able pupils because teachers plan separate, challenging work for them. The school is aware that more could be demanded of all pupils by directing them to take more responsibility for planning and investigating their learning.

The tracking of pupils' academic and personal progress is thorough and accurate. These improvements have had a positive influence on pupils' progress because they have highlighted weaknesses and allowed the school to target those pupils in danger of underachieving.

The school has effective systems for checking on absences. It is working hard to ensure that parents send their children to school regularly, and avoid taking their children away on holiday during term time, but authorised absence is still above average.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership is dynamic at all levels, establishing good teamwork among staff and governors. There has been effective consultation with parents and pupils, so that they have had a say in deciding the priorities for school improvement, and assessing their success. Systems for evaluating the school's work are streamlined and focus successfully on increasing pupils' progress and raising standards. The school's view is that pupils' achievement and the rate of improvement is unsatisfactory, and this stance reflects the school's historical picture of underachievement, as reflected in national test results. However, this inspection found that all the issues identified in the last inspection are being tackled with vigour and a determination to succeed. Crucially, pupils' progress is now good and standards are moving towards nationally expected levels, which demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve. However, as this improvement is recent, and there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in mathematics and science, pupils' standards are average. The confidence and effectiveness of capable teachers has been increased through a very specific programme of monitoring. In this way the school has ensured that all pupils benefit equally from the school's academic improvements.

Rapid improvement has also taken place in other areas of the school's work. For example, the school is freshly decorated and welcoming. The installation of interactive whiteboards and an ICT suite is also enriching pupils' learning.

Governance is satisfactory. Many governors are new but they are well aware of the issues facing the school. Their need for more training in challenging the school is explicit in the school's self-evaluation. The school's finances are managed well and governors made a sensible decision to increase the headteacher's time to lead and manage change.

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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?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	3	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?	2	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?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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

West Felton CE Primary School School Road West Felton Oswestry Shropshire SY11 4JR

30 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you all for being so helpful during our visit to your school.

We are writing to tell about what we found out about your school while we were with you.

These are the things we liked the most

- All the staff are doing a great job.
- You are happy in school and behave well.
- The new interactive boards and computer suite are really good, and help you to learn more quickly.
- You are working hard and are getting much better, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The school looks after you well and keeps you safe.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Give you more experiments and investigations in mathematics and science so that you learn even more about these subjects.
- Make sure that you come to school more often.
- Help you to learn more about how different people live in this country, and their customs.

With best wishes on behalf of the inspection team

Mrs Dee Brigstock Lead Inspector