



Dawley Church of England Primary School with Nursery

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123544
LEA Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number 281501
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mary Hamby HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Doseley Road North
School category	Voluntary aided		Telford
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Shropshire TF4 3AL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01952 270505
Number on roll	250	Fax number	01952 270505
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mike Clarke
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sue Thomas

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 28 February 2006 - 1 March 2006	Inspection number 281501
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is composed predominantly of White British children and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly higher than average. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average. There has been some instability in staffing at the school since the last inspection, including a succession of three headteachers in the past two years. The current headteacher and deputy were appointed to their posts in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection team agrees with the school's own judgment that it is satisfactory. The school offers a welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and well cared for. Parents hold positive views of the school and the majority of them are pleased with what is provided; making comments such as 'the staff are friendly and helpful'. However, there are areas for improvement.

The children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and, because they are taught well, they make particularly good progress in their personal development. Teaching in the rest of the school is satisfactory. The teachers have good relationships with their pupils, care for them and have good strategies to manage their behaviour. Although they plan most lessons to take account of the different abilities in their classes, occasionally all the pupils do the same work. This slows progress, particularly of the more capable pupils, and consequently these pupils do not achieve well enough. The teachers value what the pupils have to say, but do not provide enough opportunities for them to improve their speaking and listening skills. Most pupils make sound progress; however, standards through the school are below average. The curriculum is enriched in interesting ways, but there are too few opportunities for practical and investigational work.

Since the last inspection, the school has faced a number of significant difficulties, particularly regarding staffing, which have had led to a decline in its effectiveness. However, the appointment of the current headteacher marks a turning point for the better. She has introduced effective systems that have started to turn the school around. Other members of the leadership team are taking on their responsibilities well and their actions have started to have a positive impact on school improvement. However, it is still early days and the team need to continue to work together to secure further improvement. The school has sound capacity to improve further and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise attainment by improving the opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, and providing more opportunities for practical work.
- Ensure lessons are closely matched to what pupils already know, and increase the challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Continue to develop the leadership skills of staff to consolidate recent improvements and promote further school development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. When the pupils start school, their knowledge and skills are significantly below that expected of 3 year olds. The children make good progress through the Foundation Stage, with very good progress in their personal development. However, few reach the expected goals for 5 year olds and this handicaps

later attainment. In Year 1 to Year 6, the attainment of many of the pupils is below average, in part because of their low starting point, and in part because many of them have learning difficulties. Consequently, although most of them make steady progress, standards in national tests are below average, particularly the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels. The school sets challenging targets which were reached last year in English, but missed in mathematics.

The school tracks the progress of various groups well and there is little difference in the ways in which most groups progress. For example, boys do as well as girls, and pupils with learning difficulties reach their expected targets. Most pupils have made reasonable progress, and there are signs of good progress for some pupils since the start of the current academic year. However, achievement for some of the more capable pupils is still not good enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of pupils is satisfactory. Behaviour has been improved effectively and the school is a settled and orderly place. A few pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, but this is managed effectively and rarely affects the learning of other pupils. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that any bullying is dealt with firmly and quickly. Relationships between pupils and with staff are respectful and positive. Attendance is satisfactory with no incidence of unauthorised absence.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with some good features in moral and social development. This is particularly evident in the Foundation Stage where the good quality of provision in these classes helps the children to make rapid progress in their personal development.

The school encourages pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and most know how to choose a well balanced diet and understand the importance of regular exercise. The pupils are interested in their work and are occasionally quite enthusiastic. However, in some lessons they are expected to sit quietly and listen for lengthy periods, which leads to loss of concentration and lack of enjoyment.

Pupils learn to work together successfully, to take responsibility and to show independence. Basic skills are developed soundly from a well below average starting point and pupils have a growing understanding of citizenship. They have suitable opportunities to work with other people in the community which helps to prepare them for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The most effective teaching is in the Foundation Stage where there is a well balanced mix of independent, investigational

work and adult-led activity that enables the children to develop new skills systematically.

Teaching is satisfactory in other parts of the school. The teachers work hard to set down detailed plans, but their expectations are not yet high enough for the most capable pupils in their classes. The tasks for these pupils are either identical to those set for other pupils, or the expectation is for them to complete more work, but not more difficult work. Consequently, some of the pupils find the work easy and do not apply themselves well enough to their tasks. In many lessons, too much time is spent with the teacher talking, which does not encourage the improvement of thinking and speaking skills consistently or effectively enough. A clear strength is the recent improvement to marking. This is very thorough and focuses on what the pupils have done well and what they should do to improve. This is appreciated by the pupils and helps them to make clear progress. Another consistent strength is the way that staff manage the pupils' behaviour so that lessons run smoothly and the pupils learn to respect each other's opinions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum is good; it is well focused on the development of simple, but essential, skills and includes plenty of opportunity for structured play and exploration. The curriculum for other pupils is satisfactory and is enriched by the inclusion of French for pupils from Year 1 to Year 4. It is planned diligently, but is not always explicit in identifying how learning will be developed to a higher level of skill when topics are returned to in later years. Consequently, when some of the topics are revisited, the more able pupils remember what they have learnt previously and are not challenged enough by the tasks.

The school is developing investigation, practical and problem solving work. However, in the past, this aspect of study has not been covered sufficiently well and so the pupils have not developed their thinking and reasoning skills well enough.

There is a good range of other activities which contribute very well to the pupils' overall development. Pupils visit a variety of places of educational interest, including the Year 6 residential visit, which kindles their interest in learning. The programme of sports and other clubs outside school time is enthusiastically supported. The pupils would like to learn rugby football skills; otherwise, they are pleased with the choice of clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all its pupils. They feel safe and respected and know that they can turn to the staff if they are unwell or troubled. Child protection arrangements are effective and vulnerable children are supported well by the school and other professionals. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and methodically. All staff have a clear understanding of pupils' medical and dietary requirements and

respond to these needs sensitively. Parents report that their children are well cared for and appreciate the opportunities they have to contribute to their children's progress reports. There are good procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress and identify pupils with potential difficulties early on. Transitions are well thought out and pupils move smoothly from one stage of education to the next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the school is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection, the leadership team recognises its weaknesses and are taking appropriate action to remedy them. Long-term illness has beset some of the key staff and there has been a high turnover of staff in senior positions. This has had a negative impact on school improvement. However, leadership is now more stable and there are good plans in place to promote school improvement.

The headteacher shows remarkable determination and dedication and the initiatives that she has introduced have been very effective. For example, she has introduced a secure method of analysing data to help the leadership team understand what is working well and where further improvements are needed. The subject managers understand their roles in school improvement, are now starting to work together more productively, and show sound capacity to improve further. They are starting to check the quality of lessons, but need to follow this through carefully to ensure that points for development are implemented consistently. The governing body is developing its role and is led well by the chair. He has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and supports the school well.

The school is committed to partnership with parents and their views are canvassed regularly. Action is taken on issues which arise, such as parents' requests for more information about the curriculum. The senior team ensures that the pupils are nurtured effectively and the team work well to care for and guide the pupils.

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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	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?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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?	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?	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?	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

I am writing to tell you about our visit to your school. My colleagues and I really enjoyed talking to you and we would like to thank you for being so friendly and helpful. Your parents helped us too, by filling in a questionnaire, and this gave us a clear picture of their views.

We found out lots of good things about your school, for example, that:

- Mrs Thomas knows you all very well and has worked very hard since she became your headteacher
- the staff care for you all and know what to do if you are ill or upset
- the teachers work hard and think carefully about your lessons
- the children in nursery and reception get off to a good start in school
- your parents appreciate what the school does for you.

We thought that there were some things which would help your school to improve. These are that:

- all of you need work that builds on what you already know, and that means that some of you need harder work
- you need more chances to talk about your learning and to experiment and explore activities
- the teachers need to get together to build on what they have achieved and make sure that the school continues its recent improvements.

You could help by making sure you try your hardest and telling your teachers if you are finding the work too easy. We hope that you enjoy the rest of your time in school and wish you well for the future.