

Lord Scudamore Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116683
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	290593
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	585
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert North
Headteacher	Paul Whitcombe Peter Box
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003
School address	Friar Street Hereford HR4 0AS
Telephone number	01432 273951
Fax number	01432 274168

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves a residential area with a mix of social and economic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils speak English as their first language. Whilst almost all pupils are White British, a very small but growing number are from a range of other minority ethnic groups. The attainment of children on entry is a little below that expected nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a little above that usually found. The school has two joint and permanent headteachers who share all aspects of leadership and management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that serves its community well. Some key aspects of its work are outstanding. A particular strength is the outstanding leadership and management by the joint headteachers who effectively promote a balanced and cohesive approach to pupils' personal development and academic progress. They, together with other staff and governors, have been responsible for significant and ongoing improvements. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is largely as a result of the outstanding curriculum with many innovative and imaginative activities. These help pupils to reflect on the ways they think about themselves and how they respond to those around them, which they do extremely sensitively. The school has exceptionally good systems for checking its own performance and has an accurate view of its strengths and areas in need of further development. These features have enabled it to make significant improvements since the last inspection. This, together with high expectations of the leadership team, means it is exceptionally well placed to improve further.

The achievement of pupils is good. In the Foundation Stage good provision leads to good progress by children in their first two years in school. This is maintained by pupils in Years 1 to 6. Pupils do well in reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 but their written work could be improved. In Years 3 to 6, innovative approaches to the teaching of writing result in good progress in this area. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make exceptionally good progress because of their carefully managed support programmes. Teaching is good with some outstanding elements. These include stimulating and imaginatively planned activities which help motivate the pupils and lead to their outstanding levels of enjoyment and commitment to the school. This view of pupils' enjoyment is endorsed overwhelmingly by parents. One summed it up by writing, 'My son could not be happier at this school'. Another wrote of 'the wonderful feeling to know that my daughters love school'. Pupils feel at ease in what is a very large school community. The care, guidance and support they receive are good, particularly the pastoral care and guidance about their work. The school works particularly well in partnership with outside organisations and professionals to meet the needs of pupils, particularly those with complex problems or difficulties.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher partnership is supported very well by an extensive team of staff with leadership responsibilities who have been well trained and are able to fulfil their roles very well. Governors are involved well in key decision making and in monitoring the school's performance. This monitoring involves a very effective programme of checks and balances within a culture of continuous improvement and a consistent focus on pupils' learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils make faster progress in writing in the early years of school so that standards of writing are higher by the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of Reception most children are in line and some exceed nationally expected learning goals for

their age. This good progress is maintained in Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading and mathematics are above average. By the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Pupils also do well in the creative arts and standards are above national expectations. The progress made by pupils in writing is less consistent than in other subjects, particularly in the early years, where learners have not yet benefited from the new approaches to teaching writing. As a result, standards of writing by pupils in Year 2 are too low. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making good progress in writing. Those at the top of the school achieve well having responded positively to some imaginative ways being adopted to make writing more interesting. Pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are well on track to reach their challenging targets, maintaining the recently established upward trend in achievement.

The very good ways of identifying and supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities throughout the school lead to excellent progress by these pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop an excellent range of skills and attitudes that prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education and adult life. Pupils reflect maturely on beauty in art and music, respond very positively to the promotion of values, such as humility, and in discussion take a robust stand against racism. They are aware of Britain's cultural diversity and very clearly recognise the ways in which different cultures are broadening and enriching their own lives.

The school has made strenuous efforts to raise attendance which is improving and is now average. Behaviour is good. It is often outstanding in lessons but occasionally it is boisterous in the corridors and play areas. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle based on sound scientific principle. They readily join in physical activities at school and at home and even the youngest do their very best to eat a healthy diet. Pupils take responsibility very well and many act as class monitors and prefects. They learn to make responsible decisions through the pupil council and talk with pride about their involvement in activities in the local community. Pupils show great concern for the wider world through fund raising for local and national charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and some lessons are outstanding. Teachers respond very positively and thoughtfully to imaginative developments in the curriculum and this strengthens their teaching. They plan very well together. Frequent and accurate assessments of their pupils enable them to carefully match work to the needs of different groups. The effective deployment of well trained and experienced teaching assistants contributes to the excellent progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Other strengths of teaching and learning include the way pupils are involved in assessing their own progress and reflecting on how they might improve. Good teaching is also underpinned by stimulating activities linking different skills and areas of the curriculum. Excellent examples of this were seen as Year 6 pupils enthusiastically and perceptively reviewed their performances in radio advertisements about the Black Mountains residential centre they had recently visited. No teaching is inadequate but in a few lessons the

high quality features found elsewhere are not always evident. This results in lower expectations of writing, limited challenge of passive pupils and only satisfactory management of behaviour.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An innovative approach and continuous development of the curriculum underpin the school's determination to provide exciting learning opportunities whilst maintaining a clear structure. Curriculum planning takes good account of pupils' needs and interests. Several creative curricular initiatives are becoming established following careful preparation and interim checks on their impact. These include imaginative ways to stimulate pupils' interest in writing and new approaches to unravelling some of the perceived mysteries of mathematics. Innovative approaches such as mind mapping help pupils clarifying their thinking. A high priority is given to personal and social development. In the Foundation Stage, an excellent range of imaginative activities engages children's interest and promotes their confidence as learners. Here, the strong focus on talk, carefully structured play and supporting personal development ensure that children settle very quickly and are helped to express themselves clearly. There is a very effective system to provide continuity of learning from Foundation Stage to Year 1. A wide range of high quality out of school activities, visits and visitors contributes very well to pupils' academic and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff care for pupils extremely well. Pupils say they can readily turn to an adult in school if they have a concern, knowing their problems will be dealt with sensitively. Pupils report that the very rare incidences of bullying are quickly and effectively resolved. Policies designed to safeguard pupils are securely in place although procedures for routine training are not totally consistent. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent support from adults who have a detailed understanding of the needs of each individual. The school has very effective links with agencies and other schools to support pupils' learning. This enables those with complex difficulties to participate fully in school life. There are very well developed procedures to explain to pupils what they need to do next in their learning and frequent constructive guidance on ways to approach their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The two headteachers provide excellent leadership through their clarity of vision and the way they lead, by their own example in the classroom, the adoption of innovative initiatives in the curriculum and learning. These initiatives are carefully planned, with senior staff and governors, and are being systematically introduced in order to ensure they are sustainable and will lead to improvements for pupils, academically and socially. An example of this is the recent development of new and highly effective systems for inspiring pupils to improve their writing in the older classes. The headteachers have successfully enabled other senior staff to share leadership responsibilities within small teams. All leaders fulfil these roles very effectively. The school has established extremely effective systems for checking all aspects of its performance. The self-reflection, that is part of the school's guiding principles, ensures that teachers and leaders analytically and regularly check practice within their areas of responsibility. This involves

frequent consultations with pupils and parents in order to check the impact of changes and seek ways to make further improvements. There are comprehensive systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils and specific groups and the information is used very well when deciding on how to deploy the large staff team. Governors have good systems for becoming informed about the school and are involved in ongoing training to enable them to hold the school to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lord Scudamore Primary School, Hereford, HR4 0AS

A team of inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with a number of you in lessons, looking at some of your work and meeting groups of you, including members of your pupil council. Thank you for making us so welcome. I am pleased to say yours is a good school and some things are exceptionally good. Here are some of the highlights we found.

- You work hard in lessons and make good progress during your time in the school.
- You are exceptionally responsible in the ways you think about and care for one another and the school, and learn to work alongside each other.
- You really like school. This is because your teachers plan lots of exceptionally interesting activities in the classroom and beyond and are always thinking of ways to make lessons fun, with work that is challenging but not too hard.
- All the adults in school work well together to care for and support you, especially when you have problems or are worried about something.
- The two headteachers and other leaders have lots of great ideas to keep improving the school and work exceptionally well together to make sure these things happen.

We have asked the headteachers, staff and governors to think about just one thing to improve the school even more.

- Help you more with your writing in your first few years in school so that you become better writers by the end of Year 2.

We know that you will do all you can to help your teachers with this and to keep up all the other very good things in your school.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at Lord Scudamore Primary School.

Yours faithfully

Martin Kerly Lead inspector