



Mordiford CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116832
Local Authority Herefordshire
Inspection number 290650
Inspection date 21 February 2007
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Ikin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mordiford
School category	Voluntary controlled		Hereford
Age range of pupils	4–11		HR1 4LW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01432 870258
Number on roll (school)	114	Fax number	01432 870258
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Liz Kearns
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	21 February 2007	290650

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This village school is smaller than most primary schools nationally. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The school is popular, with about half of its pupils coming from outside the local area.

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. It prepares pupils well for their future lives because of its good provision for both their personal development and well-being and their academic growth. This was summed up by one parent who said that he appreciated the 'caring and purposeful atmosphere' and the 'substantial and balanced education' that the school offered. Pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and most pupils achieve well. Teaching is good overall. However, there are variations between year groups which impact on pupils' rate of progress. Pupils get off to a flying start because of very good teaching in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2. Progress is satisfactory for most pupils in Years 3 and 4, where teaching is adequate. However, some lower-attaining pupils do not always do as well as they should because of insufficient planning for their needs. Progress picks up again in Years 5 and 6 as a result of good teaching in these year groups. In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils, make very good use of assessment to plan for pupils' different needs and use marking well to help them improve. These features are not as strong where teaching is satisfactory rather than good. There are good arrangements for tracking pupils' progress. Targets are set but they are too general and this contributes to the variable progress between year groups. The curriculum that the school offers is good. It has some outstanding elements which broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding and make learning come alive. The use of the 'Forest School', an area of woodland where pupils make use of natural materials and explore the environment, and the exceptional range of after-school activities are good examples of this. The school's warm and friendly atmosphere, and the good care, support and guidance that are provided are significant factors in pupils' growth in confidence and eagerness to learn. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe and they make a good contribution to school life through their work on the school council. The leadership and management of the school are good and there have been good improvements since the last inspection. There is strong teamwork, not only amongst staff but also involving governors, who are very strongly committed to the school. All are united in their determination to provide the best possible education that they can for the pupils. The school's capacity for future improvement is good because of this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good by improving the consistency of planning, marking and the expectations that teachers have of their pupils.
- Make targets more precise and use them to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress from year to year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' overall achievement is good and standards are above average by Year 6. Most children's attainment is at the level expected for their age when they enter the Reception class. They make very good progress during the year and many exceed the goals expected by the end of the Reception year. This very good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Although most pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4, some lower-ability pupils mark time because of insufficient planning for their needs. Progress accelerates again in Years 5 and 6. Although standards in mathematics are above average, they are not quite as high as those in reading and writing. However, improvements in the teaching of problem solving and mental calculations are having a positive effect. The use of a variety of stimuli, including drama, prior to writing, together with the wide range of opportunities that is given for pupils to read, contributes well to their strong performance in English. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well in relation to their starting points for learning, as do more able and gifted and talented pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the school's above-average attendance rates. Pupils respond well in lessons. They have good relationships with their teachers and concentrate hard because of the interesting ways in which learning is presented. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are particular strengths in moral and social development that are reflected in pupils' good behaviour and their thoughtfulness to each other in their work and play. Pupils report that no bullying occurs and occasional boisterous behaviour is quickly sorted out. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school, confidently taking on responsibilities such as working on the school council and organising fundraising events. Their wider social responsibilities are developed well in their environmental work. However, they are sometimes over-dependent on teachers for things they should be able to do for themselves in lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, as shown in their choices of healthy food and their participation in the many sporting activities which take place after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are very good in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2. They are good in Years 5 and 6. High expectations and good planning help all pupils to make good or better progress in these year groups. Typically lessons in these year groups are presented in lively ways which successfully engage pupils' interest. For

example, pupils in Year 6 were keen to write about their imaginary explorations of a far-off future world as a result of acting out this experience. These features are less evident in Years 3 and 4, where lessons are not always planned to take account of pupils' differing abilities and marking is not consistently helpful. The school has three leading numeracy teachers and as a result of their very good subject knowledge, standards have improved in mathematics. Good use of specialist teachers and instructors, for example in music and modern foreign languages, makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved in these subjects. Teaching assistants support pupils' progress well, in particular those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects. There are good arrangements to ensure that the most capable receive the challenging work that they need, but some lower-ability pupils sometimes miss out on being sufficiently challenged in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified at an early stage and there is good planning for their needs. The school offers an exceptional range of enrichment activities. This includes opportunities to learn three modern foreign languages and instrumental tuition. The extremely wide range of after-school activities offers something for everyone and promotes sport and the arts particularly well. The school uses a 'Forest School' site which gives pupils valuable opportunities to learn through practical experiences in an outdoor setting. In addition, very good use is made of visits and visitors to bring learning to life. The school's accommodation has been greatly improved since the last inspection and, together with the vibrant displays in every classroom, is used well to support the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has put in place good health and safety procedures, including those for risk assessment and child protection. Pupils receive good quality pastoral care and guidance because of the very good knowledge that staff have of individual pupils and their families. Parents are very supportive of the school. Good procedures when children start school contribute to this. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants and there are good links with outside agencies when additional support is needed for more vulnerable pupils. Pupils' achievement is tracked carefully. However, the targets set each year, in order to meet the challenging targets that are set for them in Year 6, are not precise enough. The use of assessment and marking to guide pupils' academic progress is very good in most classes but it is not rigorous enough in Years 3 and 4.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. Her clear vision for the future of the school and her commitment to involving everyone in the decision-making process have built a strong staff team who are keen to move the school forward. She is quick to provide training and advice where it is needed and to recognise and praise the good work of staff and pupils. She is well supported by senior staff, one of whom successfully stepped into the role of acting headteacher when the headteacher was on maternity leave. The school's plan for improvement is thorough and identifies the right areas for attention. Well-organised systems to support the school's improvement efforts have resulted in a much tighter focus on how pupils are progressing. The curriculum has been considerably enhanced and is having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and the standards that are being achieved, for example, in mathematics. Self-evaluation procedures are good, and the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. Subject leadership and the work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs are good. Co-ordinators monitor pupils' work carefully and look closely at assessment information to see where improvements are needed. However, more needs to be done to develop their skills in monitoring lessons. The governors support the school well. Their commitment to the school and their knowledge of how it works is impressive.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	2

Personal development and well-being

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

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?	2
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
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

- Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you like your school and we think that it gives you a good education. What we liked about your school
- You work hard and are making good progress and reach good standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You behave well and do a lot to look after the school and help make the school a happy place.
- Your teachers take good care of you and the school works hard to keep you safe.
- Your headteacher is doing a very good job in making the school a good place for you to learn and all the teachers and governors support her very well in this. What we think needs to be improved
- More use needs to be made of setting improvement targets for you to help you make even better progress.
- The ways that work is planned and marked in some of your lessons, especially in Years 3 and 4. You can help in all this by continuing to help make the school an even better place through your work on the school council, getting to know what your targets are and working hard to reach them.