



Redditch, St Luke's CofE First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116844
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290655
Inspection date 11 December 2006
Reporting inspector Don Mason

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

Type of school	First	School address	Plymouth Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Southcrest
Age range of pupils	4-9		Redditch B97 4NU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 541219
Number on roll (school)	140	Fax number	01527 547714
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	T Heaselgrave
		Headteacher	S Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The majority of the pupils are from White British families. The remainder are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbean origin. A few of these pupils are learning English as an additional language. Children start school in the Reception Year with skills below expectations. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. A nurture group provides support for a small number of younger pupils who are experiencing temporary difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school with good features. Children start school with skills below those usually found. They make good progress in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2. As a result, standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and average standards are maintained through these year groups. Whilst pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, the school has recognised that a significant number could be making better progress. It is taking appropriate action to remedy this situation. Teachers are using assessment information more effectively to provide pupils with work matched to their ability. They have been successful in improving pupils' enthusiasm for writing and problem-solving activities in mathematics. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4 have recently made very good progress in reading. Good support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good, and sometimes very good, progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and some lessons are good, but there is variation in the quality. The good curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy their lessons. The school has received a number of awards which acknowledge the breadth of opportunities provided. The range of visits, visitors, theme days and special events organised is outstanding. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through fund raising, links with the church and activities such as the 'Make a Difference' day in which pupils and adults worked together to improve the school grounds.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and reflected in their good behaviour, the good attitudes they display in lessons and their enthusiastic appreciation of the opportunities the school provides for them. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils feel safe, adopt safe practices and know that someone will help them if there is a problem. Pupils are given targets in literacy and numeracy but the understanding of some pupils of their achievements and what they have to do to improve is limited.

The leadership of the school is satisfactory overall. The school has well-established strengths in the areas of personal development, the creative aspects of the curriculum and the excellent range of enrichment activities. In the last four terms, there has been a specific focus, led by the headteacher and fully supported by staff and governors, to raise achievement. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses very well and is using assessment information to check pupils' progress and provide appropriate support where necessary. Well-trained teaching assistants make an important contribution to raising achievement. The high morale and good teamwork of the staff and the progress already made in improving standards in reading demonstrate that the school has sound capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school to the level of the best.
- Develop pupils' understanding of their achievements and what they have to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. From a below average starting point, children reach average standards at the end of Year 4. However, the rate of progress varies across the school. It is good in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 but, although satisfactory, is slower in Years 3 and 4. Effective systems have been put in place to check the progress that pupils are making and identify those who require support. Rigorous use of this assessment information brought to light the fact that the progress made by a number of pupils was not good enough. A number of measures have been introduced in recent months to seek to remedy this situation. A specialist mathematics teacher provides challenging work for more able pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. A teaching assistant has been re-assigned to work with lower-attaining pupils, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and more able pupils. These arrangements are too new to have made an impact on standards overall. However, pupils receiving this extra support are displaying increased self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning when they return to the classroom. The school is also seeking to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics generally. Achievement in reading is improving rapidly and pupils' growing enthusiasm for writing and for problem-solving activities in mathematics is leading to improved progress. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive good support and generally make at least as much progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is good. Their appreciation of the wider world is enhanced by a link with a school in Peru. Pupils from all backgrounds work and play together well. The school's relationship with the local church and the Diocese, and opportunities to learn about the wonders of the natural world in subjects such as science and art enhance the pupils' spiritual development. Attendance is satisfactory but, despite action taken by the school, a significant number of pupils still arrive late. The pupils demonstrate a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. The recent receipt of a 'Healthy Schools Award' is recognition of this. The pupils understand the benefits of exercise and take full advantage of the many sporting opportunities available to them. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They are able to express their views in circle time. The school council has its own budget and recently visited the Houses of Parliament to meet their member of parliament. The representatives of the school council feel proud because 'we feel important and we can help others to solve problems'. The skills which pupils will require in their future lives are satisfactory overall. They make sound progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). However, there are few opportunities for pupils to work together in teams and to make decisions about their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Reception and Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory and improving rapidly in Years 3 and 4. Whilst it is satisfactory overall, there are still some inconsistencies in practice. Teachers are making better use of assessment information to plan activities which match pupils' needs effectively. Lesson introductions, when teachers talk to the whole class, have been shortened, with the result that pupils have more time to work on activities related to their ability levels. These improvements together with the good targeted support provided by teaching assistants, is improving pupils' achievement. However, the impact is not yet apparent in test results and some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. Teaching assistants, in whole class lessons, are not always used to best effect and activities provided for pupils do not always meet their needs well enough. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons. Many are becoming enthusiastic writers and the quality of their work is improving as a result. More able pupils are beginning to demonstrate an ability to persevere with challenging problems in mathematics. Pupils appreciate the support they receive, saying 'if you are struggling, teachers don't tell you the answer, they break things down or give you a clue'. In the Reception Year, there is a good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities, and children make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Art, physical education and sport and music are strong features of the good curriculum. Curriculum enrichment is outstanding. An extensive range of activities, including modern foreign language clubs, reading clubs, writers' groups, theme days, visits, visitors, joint activities with the high school and a Year 4 annual residential visit, help to promote pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm. Visits from the school nurse, fitness classes run before school, a weekly 'healthy food' club, free fruit for younger pupils and water available at all times are some of the initiatives which contribute to the pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The curriculum for Reception children is good. There is an effective emphasis on providing opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills and to develop confidence as learners. However, there is scope to improve the outdoor area to make it a more attractive learning environment. Throughout the school, the provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT has been improved. Teachers are providing interesting opportunities in subjects such as history and geography for pupils to write for a purpose, thereby increasing the motivation to write well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

In this caring, supportive and inclusive school, pupils feel happy and safe and they grow in self-confidence. Adults know their pupils very well and intervene quickly if problems arise. In the nurture group, children take part in activities which successfully promote their self-esteem and sense of security at times of emotional difficulty. Policies related to child protection, health and safety matters and risk assessments are securely in place. Information on pupils' progress is being used to set group targets but the impact of these on pupils' understanding of their achievements and what they have to do to improve is limited. Marking is mainly congratulatory and is seldom related to the targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has a clear plan of action to bring about improvements. The headteacher and senior staff have observed lessons and provided good advice about how teaching can be improved. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared by the staff who work well together as a team. The school is checking pupils' progress more frequently and providing appropriate support for those pupils who need it. The impact of the improvement measures and targeted support can be seen in the pupils' improved self-confidence and attitudes to learning. The school is committed to inclusion. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well organised by the special needs' co-ordinator. It works well with outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being and achievement. Parents are very supportive of the school, saying that they appreciate, for example, 'the efforts made by staff to make the whole learning experience fun for the children'. Governors are proud of the school and provide strong support.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing, and talking to you about your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We found that your school provides you with a sound and improving education.

Good things about your school:

- you make satisfactory progress in your work and reach average standards at the end of Year 4
- the teachers are making some changes to the way they teach you and you are making better progress as a result
- you behave well in school. Generally you enjoy your lessons and get on very well with your teachers
- the staff look after you very well
- you are proud of the wonderful range of activities, events and clubs that you take part in
- your school is well organised and adults are working hard together to make it even better than it already is.
- What we have asked your school to do now:
 - try to make sure that all the lessons are taught as well as the best ones
 - talk to you more about your targets and give you more detail about how you can improve.

Some of you could help your school to be even better by making sure that you always arrive on time. This would help you to make a good start to the day and would be good training for your future lives in school and in work.

We wish you all the best for the future.