

Market Drayton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123411
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	292653
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	6–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Pitt
Headteacher	Edward Edge
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2004
School address	Alexandra Road Market Drayton TF9 3HU
Telephone number	01630 652769
Fax number	01630 658347

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues:

why the performance of pupils in English is relatively weaker than in mathematics and science

how effectively teachers check the progress that their pupils make

the extent to which pupils are involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, assessment and tracking records, observations of the school at work, and discussions with staff, the chair of governors and pupils.

The parental questionnaire responses were analysed. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The attainment of pupils on entering Year 3 is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

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 has some outstanding features. Parents are rightly proud of the stimulating learning experiences provided for their children. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, with the following parental comment capturing the views of many, 'The school is a pleasure to go into. The whole environment emphasises quality and high expectations. I always find the staff to be very responsive and supportive.'

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has been the driving force behind the significant improvements since the last inspection. These include higher standards, increased progress, improved behaviour and better quality teaching and learning. His inspiration has helped create an excellent ethos in which all pupils are cherished and valued as unique individuals. All involved in the life of the school share his vision for school improvement and a strong sense of teamwork is evident. The strong senior leadership team carries out its responsibilities with enthusiasm and diligence. Although improvements have been made, the school is not complacent and there is a relentless drive for further development. For example, some subject leaders have been challenged to improve their effectiveness further by ensuring that procedures for checking pupils' progress in their subjects are as strong as in English, mathematics and science. Governors play an active role in school improvement, being very supportive and willing to ask relevant questions of the proposals of the senior leadership team. The school's track record shows the capacity for making any necessary further improvements is excellent.

Pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school. As a result, by the end of Year 6 they attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average. In recent years, the performance of pupils in English has been relatively weaker than in mathematics and science. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to bring about improvement. This has led to a better use of assessment information by teachers to set more challenging targets in writing and a more consistent use of marking to guide pupils to improve their performance. These actions are proving to be successful and evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 6 will attain standards in English comparable to those in mathematics and science this year. Pupils' standards in the presentation of their work, especially in handwriting, are a weaker aspect of their performance. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the well-targeted extra support they receive.

Pupils behave in an exemplary manner and this plays an important part in the good progress they make. They really enjoy coming to school, which is reflected by their above average rate of attendance. Pupils are very polite, courteous and considerate towards others. They make a very positive contribution to school life by their willingness to take on a variety of responsibilities. This is shown by the way members of the school council have helped make improvements, for example by supporting the introduction of playground friends and developing the tuck shop so it provides healthy snacks. Pupils also contribute very well to the local community by, for example, organising fund raising activities for local charities. They are very effectively adopting healthy lifestyles, being very aware of the need to eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise. They have an extremely good understanding of how to stay safe, as is shown in the great care they take in moving responsibly in and around the school. Pupils make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and so are well prepared for their future lives.

Relationships are excellent and contribute greatly to the calm and friendly working atmosphere to be found in all classrooms. Teachers use questioning well to effectively involve pupils in class discussions and develop their speaking and listening skills. They encourage pupils to share their ideas in pairs and small groups and this makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. Pupils have positive attitudes and show much enjoyment in their learning. As one of them commented, 'Our teachers are really nice and make lessons fun.' Teachers check carefully the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science. This enables them to set work that effectively challenges them to improve further. In other subjects, pupils' progress is less well tracked. As a result, teachers do not always have a clear view of how to ensure pupils make good progress in their learning. Teachers effectively involve pupils in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and what steps they need to take next to improve. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how they are encouraged to set their own targets for improvement and also decide how well they have met them. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

A wide range of enrichment activities effectively extends the good curriculum. These include out-of-school clubs, visits to places of educational interest, and a residential stay. These play an important role in pupils' personal development. Pupils also have opportunities to work with a variety of visitors, such as professional sports coaches, to further develop their skills. Visitors reinforce messages about safety, for example the police talk about 'stranger danger' and the community support officer talks about traffic dangers. There are good links with the local specialist language college. As a result, a teacher from the college comes into school weekly to teach Spanish to pupils in Year 6. Pupils in other classes are given lessons in French. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work. This is seen in the way pupils run the tuck shop, having to consider the financial implications of purchasing supplies and how to make a profit to be financially viable.

The very strong pastoral support and care of pupils underpin their excellent personal development. Safeguarding procedures are very rigorous, with pupils commenting that they feel very safe and secure in school. All staff are firmly committed to ensuring pupils' health and well-being while in school. The care taken of their children is greatly appreciated by parents. The academic guidance given to pupils in English, mathematics and science plays an important part in the good progress they make. It is not as well developed in other subjects in terms of helping pupils improve their performance. There are very strong links with outside agencies to provide extra support for individual pupils, when required.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the way pupils present their work, especially in the standard of their handwriting.
- Provide more rigorous checks on the progress pupils make in subjects other than in English, mathematics and science.

Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Market Drayton Junior School, Market Drayton, TF9 3HU

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a good school that has some excellent features. You make good progress and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average by the end of Year 6. Your parents are very pleased with the way the school looks after you and the way staff give their time to let you take part in the wide variety of after school activities.

What I liked most about your school.

- You say you really enjoy coming to school and that teachers make learning fun.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and help make the school a very friendly place in which to work and play.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and you are kind and considerate to others.
- You have excellent attitudes to your learning and this helps in the progress you make.
- There is a good range of out of school activities for you to take part in.
- All adults take very good care of you and make sure you are safe whilst in school.
- The people in charge of the school are working hard to help the school improve even further.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Help you to improve the way you present your work, especially in the standard of your handwriting.
- Check more carefully the progress you make in subjects other than in English, mathematics and science.

A special word of thanks to members of the school council who gave up their time to talk to me. You are a credit to your school and your teachers are rightly proud of you.

All my best wishes for your future and I hope you continue to enjoy your learning.

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector

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Lead inspector