



Apley Wood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123450
LEA Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number 292667
Inspection dates 9 May 2006 to 10 May 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	Pool Farm Avenue
School category	Community		Leegomery
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Telford TF1 6FQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01952 256593
Number on roll	398	Fax number	01952 246961
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Philip Graham
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Coggins

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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 has grown rapidly since its last inspection and is now larger than average. It has more boys than girls and the proportion of children entitled to free school meals is lower than average. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than in other mainstream schools.

There has been significant turnover in staff since the last inspection and currently four of the teachers are on a temporary contract. The school has been led by an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher over the last year. A new headteacher has been appointed to start next term.

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 which knows its strengths and weaknesses very well and gives good value for money. The school's accurate view of its effectiveness is based on a broad array of reliable evidence and a clear analysis of data.

The acting headteacher leads the school very well and is supported effectively by a dedicated governing body and a committed senior team. The leadership team has worked well to bring about continued improvement during a period of rapid growth and staffing changes. However, they do not yet check the quality of teaching well enough to identify minor inconsistencies or share the good practice that exists.

The school has tackled successfully most of the issues identified at the last inspection and implemented a raft of other improvements. One such improvement is the way that the school assesses children's work systematically and then sets targets in the light of this information. Standards have risen consistently in recent years and the school has good capacity to improve further. Improvements have also been made in the Reception classes and the quality of this provision is now satisfactory.

This is a caring school with a strong sense of teamwork and a culture of respect for all who are part of the school community. The children feel valued and make good progress in their lessons and personal development. They enjoy lessons and the teaching is good in most classes. However, teaching in the Reception classes is less motivating and the curriculum there does not always take enough account of the age and needs of the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to improve the teaching and curriculum in the Reception classes so the children learn quickly through activities which engage their interest and meet their needs.
- Extend the skills of key staff so that they check the teaching thoroughly and share the good practice in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. The children enter school with average skills and leave in Year 6 with above-average standards. Achievement through Key Stage 2 is particularly good and last year was in the top five per cent nationally. A good aspect of achievement is that the children apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects and this helps them to cement their learning.

The school sets challenging targets and these are achieved because the teaching is effective and the children are well motivated to learn. The school has been successful in reducing the underachievement of more able pupils so that most of these pupils now achieve well. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are confident

learners, show pride in their work, and progress well. Good support is given to children learning English as an additional language to help them make good progress.

Achievement through the Reception classes has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Progress through most areas of learning is reasonable but aspects of children's writing and creativity are being hampered by the overuse of printed worksheets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a good feature of the school. Attendance is good and the children enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes, behave sensibly in lessons and get on well with each other. Bullying is not an issue and minor upsets amongst pupils are dealt with quickly and effectively. The good provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps the children to think carefully about their behaviour and their personal aims and consider how they might contribute to school life. It also helps them to consider others' points of view. This lends depth to their thoughtful written work which contains interesting reflections.

The children know how to stay safe and healthy and put their awareness into practice by eating healthily and taking plenty of exercise. The children respond very sensibly to the wide range of opportunities to take on responsibilities within school life and to contribute constructively to the community. A striking example of this occurred recently when a group of pupils was involved in interviewing candidates for the post of headteacher. The questions they posed really tested the candidates out and the way the children's panel conducted their interviews helped them to practise important life skills. Pupils' growth in independence and their ability to work in teams, together with good progress in basic skills, are preparing them well for their future adult lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

This is satisfactory in the Reception classes and good in the rest of the school. In Years 1 to 6, lessons are enjoyable occasions where there is a good balance between teachers talking and pupils working on set tasks. Good use of modern technology engages the children's interest but could be used more effectively in some classes by involving the children more in its use. Lessons are diligently planned and shared with the teaching assistants, who know exactly what they have to do and who give good support to children with the greatest needs. Targets are set based on accurate assessments and most work is marked so that children understand what they must do to improve. However, there is some inconsistency from class to class in the children's understanding of their targets and in the helpfulness of the marking.

Teaching in the Reception classes helps children to make the progress expected of them. The teachers are keen to make sure the children are well prepared for Year 1,

but their approach is not well adapted to the needs of the youngest. These children spend too much time on the carpet and consequently some of them become restless and do not learn as quickly as they might.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum for the children in Years 1 to 6. It is particularly effective in engaging the children's interest and promoting their personal development. Personalised programmes for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are appropriate and contribute to their good progress. The curriculum successfully promotes links between subjects and this helps the children to make sense of their learning. For instance, in a literacy lesson, the children had to evaluate different sorts of pop-up books, which drew together their understanding in science, and design and technology.

Clubs and school visits provide good opportunities for the children to develop a wide range of interests and add much to their enjoyment of learning. The emphasis on environmental projects, such as the new wildlife area, contributes well to their development as the citizens of tomorrow.

The curriculum for children in the Reception classes has improved and is now satisfactory. However, some of the activities are dull, links between the areas of learning have not yet been adequately explored, and there is too little emphasis on creativity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good, caring and safe environment. Parents are pleased with the care their children receive. One parent described the school as 'A truly caring environment where the child's welfare is paramount at all times.' Pupils feel safe and know whom to turn to with any problems or concerns. Break and lunch times are well managed and a range of activities and equipment is provided to encourage pupils to play well together. Procedures for safeguarding children are good and reviewed regularly. The school makes effective use of the expertise outside school to supplement its provision. This expertise helps children with particular needs and also helps to ease transfer to the next school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher has an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is supported well by the governing body. Together they have assiduously implemented the school's plans and achieved ambitious targets. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

Staff with leadership responsibilities are growing in confidence and work well together, showing a firm commitment to the school's improvement. However, they do not monitor

the quality of teaching and learning rigorously enough so that good practice can be shared and minor inconsistencies ironed out.

A very good feature of the leadership of the school is the way in which it includes all the children in the curriculum, regardless of their abilities. The senior team are tireless in their efforts to ensure that the children feel valued and that their efforts are celebrated and rewarded. The pupils and parents are consulted and their views are taken carefully into account when changes are suggested. Resources within the school are managed very well and so the children have all they need to do their work.

Self-evaluation is accurate and there is an appropriate plan for further school improvement. A very good feature of the self-evaluation is that resources are targeted quickly at identified needs and this has helped groups of children to achieve well, for example, the children who are learning English as an additional language. The school also identified the need for continued improvement to the Foundation Stage and has an action plan to tackle this.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we came to visit you and see all the work you were doing at your lovely school. We thought that there were lots of really good things about your school. One of the things we noticed straightaway was how well behaved and hard working you were and how much most of you enjoyed your lessons. We noticed how much all the staff care for you and take your views into account.

Mrs Coggins has worked very hard since Mrs Baxter left and she knows what needs to be done to make your good school even better. She knows that the children in the Reception class are sometimes a bit fidgety when they have to sit on the carpet and listen for long periods of time and so they don't learn as much as they should. She agreed with us when we suggested that the things they learn need to be made more interesting and that there shouldn't be so many worksheets.

Mrs Coggins does lots of things herself and so we have asked her to make sure that some of the other teachers help out a bit more. The sort of things that we think they could help with are checking the work in your books and coming to watch your lessons. So, watch out if the teachers come into your class and make sure you are trying your best at all times!

Good luck with your future and enjoy all the good things that Apley Wood School has to offer you.