



Muxton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123453
Local Authority Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number 292669
Inspection date 21 February 2007
Reporting inspector Graham Sims

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Marshbrook Way
School category	Community		Muxton
Age range of pupils	4-11		Telford TF2 8SA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01952 387690
Number on roll (school)	343	Fax number	01952 387700
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	R Pitt
		Headteacher	M Theobalds
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Muxton Primary School is a larger than average primary school. The great majority of the pupils are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds vary widely but are broadly average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and of those entitled to free school meals are below average. For the current school year, the headteacher has been seconded by the local authority to work in other schools as a consultant headteacher for two days a week. The governors have designated a senior teacher as associate headteacher to cover these absences.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Muxton Primary School is a good school which has some outstanding features. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive and it is easy to see why. It is a delightfully friendly school, where the visitor is struck by the excellent standards of behaviour and the enthusiasm pupils have for their school. Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school, and overall standards are well above average by the time they leave.

Excellent leadership and management have ensured not only that the school has maintained all of the positive features noted at the time of the previous inspection, but that it has adapted well to changing circumstances and shown a continuing desire to improve. Nowhere is this more evident than in the meteoric rise in standards in English over the last three years as a result of various improvement initiatives. Throughout the school, pupils are making outstanding progress in English and standards are exceptionally high by the end of Year 6. Although standards in mathematics and science pale in comparison with English, they are still above average and pupils have made good progress in recent years. However, the school is not content with this and is now successfully applying the same rigour to developing these subjects as it did with English.

The quality of teaching and learning and of the curriculum is good, reflecting pupils' achievement. Excellence is seen in the way the school has planned and staff have delivered the teaching of English. Whilst still good, the approach to other subjects is not quite as rigorous, and the feedback on how pupils can improve their work is not as detailed. Particular strengths of the curriculum are the range of additional enrichment activities and the school's emphasis on creativity and physical activity, which contribute so significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and the development of healthy lifestyles. However, not enough opportunity is provided for pupils to undertake extended pieces of work which require them to use their own initiative and develop real independence as learners.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and is a prime contributory factor to pupils' excellent personal development. Typical of many comments, one parent wrote, 'I cannot speak highly enough about the care and attention paid to my son on joining the school.' This standard of care and attention, which enables the youngest children to settle quickly into school life and reach above average standards by the end of their time in Reception, continues throughout the school. Pupils are very aware of the high standards expected of them; they strive to achieve them, and are helpful, friendly, polite and eager to please. With their well developed social skills and self-confidence, high standards of literacy and good standards in numeracy and information and communication technology, pupils are well prepared for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and standards in mathematics and science to the same level of excellence as in English.

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to exercise their initiative and to develop as truly independent learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with broadly average skills. They make good progress in the Reception classes, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, and standards are above average in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1.

Pupils of all abilities continue to achieve well in the rest of the school. They make exceptional progress in English and good progress in other subjects. Overall, standards are well above average at the end of both key stages. Standards in English are exceptionally high, having risen markedly over the last four years, particularly at Key Stage 2. Almost three quarters of the pupils in Year 6 exceeded the national expectations in English in 2006, with boys bucking the national trend and achieving better results than the girls. Standards are above average in mathematics and science, having improved since the previous inspection. The school's efforts to raise standards in mathematics to a similar level as those in English are already having an impact. Work on display around the school indicates that pupils reach high standards in art and design.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The pupils' excellent behaviour helps to create a very safe environment. Pupils show a high level of concern for others, particularly in the way older pupils help and look after the younger ones. Relationships at all levels are very good and pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in school. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities which contribute to the smooth running of the school, such as acting as sports leaders, prefects or members of the school council. They carry out these tasks in a mature and responsible manner, their development in this respect being limited only by the range of opportunities provided.

The level of attendance has improved markedly since the previous inspection, and is now good, reflecting more closely the great enthusiasm pupils show for school. The participation rate in extra-curricular activities is high, and attitudes in lessons and on formal occasions, such as assemblies, are excellent. Particularly noteworthy is the sensible way all pupils get on with their individual tasks whilst the teacher gives attention to a specific group of pupils. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities for physical activity and show a very good understanding of the importance of drinking water regularly and of maintaining a healthy diet.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have responded particularly well to the school's drive to improve standards in English. Excellent guidance from the subject leader and well coordinated planning in teams have led to a highly consistent approach to teaching. As a result, pupils are very clear about what is expected of them and what they need to do in order to be successful in their work. The teaching in other subjects is good, but teachers are not quite as rigorous in establishing what they are looking for in pupils' work or in providing critical feedback so that pupils know how they can improve their work. As a result, pupils' work in mathematics and science does not reach quite the same heights as it does in English. A particularly good feature of the teaching is the way teachers and teaching assistants focus their attention on different groups of pupils whilst other pupils work on their own. This enables teachers to address specific needs and ensures their time is used to maximum effect.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Whilst giving considerable time to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, the school has maintained a good breadth to its curriculum. The award of 'Artsmark Gold' and 'Activemark' status testify to strengths in the development of pupils' creative and physical skills. Pursuit of Healthy Schools status and the adoption of a new programme for personal, social and health education indicate a strong commitment to developing pupils' understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. The burgeoning relationship with the on-site Nursery and good induction procedures enable smooth transition to full-time schooling for the school's youngest children, who now enjoy richer experiences because of improved outdoor facilities. Parents comment appreciatively on the 'good after-school activities provided for all age groups', which contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school. Whilst there are some creative and enjoyable approaches to teaching aspects of history, geography and other subjects, and there is good investigative work in science, pupils are not given enough opportunity to use their own initiative to undertake extended pieces of work and develop real independence as learners.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

'The school has developed a very positive learning environment with lots of praise and encouragement', and 'The school offers all round support for my children', are typical of many comments by parents who appreciate the excellent standard of care, support and guidance provided by the school. Pupils feel very safe within the school environment and have every confidence in their teachers. Procedures for safeguarding pupils fulfil the latest requirements. Arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with

learning difficulties and disabilities are thorough and ensure that such pupils are well integrated and make good progress. Significantly improved procedures for tracking pupils' progress now provide staff with a very clear picture of how well each pupil is doing. Regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress in the light of this information highlight specific needs and give rise to targeted support work for small groups or individuals to ensure that none fall behind.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the school's leadership and management and the quality of the school's monitoring and evaluation of its own performance are seen in the very good improvements made since the previous inspection. Issues, such as improving the level of attendance, provision for ICT and pupils' cultural development, have been dealt with effectively, and the school now has distinct areas of excellence. The drive to improve standards in English over the last few years has been sustained and successful. This approach is now being applied successfully to the teaching of mathematics. School leaders show strong determination to bring mathematics and science standards up to the same levels of excellence as English. There is a much stronger focus than before on meeting the needs of individual pupils, and this is being achieved through improved procedures to track pupils' progress and identify any who may be underperforming. Governors have successfully adapted the school's management structures to meet changing staffing needs and the part-time secondment of the headteacher and, through the guidance of the headteacher and associate headteacher, have successfully developed leadership skills in other staff. They are also taking an important lead in specific initiatives, such as improving the school's communication with parents. Progress over the last few years demonstrates that there is an excellent capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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	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	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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	1

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?	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	1
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

I really enjoyed my visit to your school and would like to thank you for your welcome. I talked to many of you at lunch and break time, and you all said that yours is a good school. I agree with you. The school also has some excellent features. These are my main findings.

- You are all making good progress in your work, and your progress in English is exceptionally good.
- The standards you reach in mathematics and science are above those in many schools, and in English they are amongst the best in the country.
- You are polite, very friendly and very well behaved, and this makes it a pleasure to be in your school.
- The teaching is good throughout the school, particularly in English, and the way you participate in lessons helps you to make good progress in your learning.
- The school provides a good range of activities, many interesting opportunities in art and music and plenty of opportunity for games and PE, all of which you greatly enjoy.
- The staff take very good care of you, make sure that you are safe in school and know exactly how much progress you are making.
- The governors, headteacher and staff work together very well and ensure that your school continues to provide you with a good standard of education.

There are no major weaknesses in your school, but your teachers would like the school to be even better than it is. So, in order to make your school outstanding in every way, I have asked the staff to:

- help you to raise standards in mathematics and science to the same level as those you achieve in English
- provide more opportunities for you to use your own initiative, for example through undertaking some larger projects, so that you become even more independent learners.

I hope you will respond by continuing to try your hardest in all subjects, and that you will continue to develop habits that will make you into lifelong learners.