



Wistanstow CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123517
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292695
Inspection date 25 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Capper

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

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| Type of school | Primary | School address | Wistanstow |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Craven Arms |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 | | SY7 8DQ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01588 673347 |
| Number on roll (school) | 70 | Fax number | 01588 673347 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Paul Robson |
| | | Headteacher | Anna Clare Reynolds |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 March 2001 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small rural primary school takes pupils from the local village as well as surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is broadly average, although they are not distributed equally across the school. Children's attainment when they start school in the Reception class varies from year to year but is broadly average overall.

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 that meets the needs of pupils well. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their different starting points because teaching is good and they are given good support when they need help. Throughout the school, teachers have caring relationships with the pupils, are well organised and plan interesting activities. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and by the start of Year 1, most are comfortably meeting or exceeding the expected levels for their age. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average overall. However, in Year 2, standards in mathematics lag behind those in English. This is because adults miss opportunities to extend the learning of more able pupils, especially in how well they develop their problem-solving skills. Pupils' personal development is good and they are well cared for. Working within the school's calm, happy and welcoming atmosphere, pupils develop good social skills and grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education and learn how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils' learning is enhanced by a good range of activities outside lessons and members of staff are largely successful in ensuring that pupils are not significantly disadvantaged by limitations in accommodation. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility; for example, they make a good contribution to the local community by fund-raising for charities. There are good links with parents, who contribute well to pupils' achievement by supporting learning at home. The headteacher knows the school well and her purposeful leadership, despite a very heavy teaching commitment, has been instrumental in its success over the last three years. There are good systems for finding out how well the school is doing. Teachers have recently developed good systems for measuring pupils' progress from term to term, and have rightly identified that they now need to use this information more swiftly to help them identify things that are going particularly well or need improving. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher. Many are new to their roles and so do not yet do enough to find out things for themselves. The school has a good track record of improvement. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 by ensuring that more able pupils are challenged and given more opportunities to solve problems.
- Ensure that teachers and governors make better use of information about how pupils are doing in order to identify and tackle any dips in progress as soon as they arise.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are working at, or exceeding, the levels expected for their age. They

make especially good progress in information and communication technology (ICT), developing good skills for their age and using them well to support their learning. Children continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Standards have been improving, especially in English across the school and in mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, standards are only average in mathematics at the end of Year 2. Whilst the school is successful at getting most pupils to the levels expected for their age, too few achieve the higher levels and this slows the rate at which they can acquire new skills. Pupils in Year 2 have good basic counting skills but they find it hard to apply their knowledge to practical applications such as problem-solving or investigations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children settle into the Reception class quickly and become confident and keen to take part in a wide range of activities. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their good attendance and how they feel valued. As one pupil said, 'there are lots of friendly people here'. Pupils behave well in and around the school, although some boys are rather boisterous at playtime, letting off steam after being confined in the restricted space in the school. Most pupils listen well in class and show good attitudes towards their work. One pupil said, 'we get lots of work, but it just suits us'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils take responsibility for raising funds for charity by growing plants, and making and selling small gifts. They have a good understanding of the need to cooperate with each other and respect a range of views and beliefs. Pupils understand that fruit and exercise make them healthy, explaining clearly why the pears that they are given at playtime are good for them. Pupils' good basic skills and their well-developed levels of confidence prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In the Reception class, children are given good opportunities to share their ideas, and the teacher and teaching assistants provide sensitive support for individuals, enabling them to make good progress. Adults use ICT especially well to make learning interesting. Throughout the school, teachers get on well with the pupils and manage their behaviour well. Challenging questions are used particularly well in Years 4 to 6 to encourage pupils to think hard. Teaching assistants provide valuable support by working with groups of pupils, helping them to make good progress. Clear instructions enable pupils to focus on their targets in most lessons and teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to introduce new skills. However, in Year 2, there are occasions when work in mathematics is not matched closely enough to pupils' differing needs. As a result, progress is slower in this subject

than it is in English, because pupils do not always understand what they need to do and more able pupils are not always challenged enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with good additional activities to extend pupils' learning. In the Reception class, children are provided with a good range of activities across all areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, there are thorough plans for each class, with good coverage of most subjects. However, there are weaknesses in accommodation which are beyond the school's control. These restrict the curriculum that can be offered. In the Foundation Stage, the outdoor area is not easy to reach from the classroom and this limits children's learning experiences, and reduces opportunities for children to practise physical skills. The school is unable to teach all aspects of physical education because it has no equipment or space to teach gymnastics. The headteacher is aware of this issue and is working with a local secondary school to find a solution. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils especially enjoy dressing up as part of history topics and taking part in residential visits. Pupils spoke very positively about a recent wholeschool topic about 'Shropshire Myths and Legends' which gave them good opportunities to practise skills in subjects such as literacy, design and technology, drama and music. The school works closely with villagers to learn about and celebrate important community events such as the 'Vintage Motorcycle Show'. These have a good impact on pupils' cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for, guides and supports its pupils well. The school is particularly successful at supporting pupils' personal development. All pupils are treated as part of the 'school family'. The school works well with outside agencies to safeguard children. Pupils confidently report that they know what to do if they have a worry. Children are well supported when they first start school and their progress is monitored carefully in all areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, a relatively new system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics has enabled teachers to set class, group and individual targets that are well understood by the pupils. This system has already resulted in an improvement in pupils' progress as they begin to take more responsibility for their own learning. The school has suitable plans to extend the system to include other subjects. Teachers identify pupils with learning difficulties effectively and set clear targets for their improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The drive and commitment of the headteacher have been key factors in the good improvements in the school over the last three years. Her high aspirations for the school are shared by all members of staff. Systems

for finding out how well the school is doing are good. Members of staff work together well to monitor teaching and learning. Although many of these systems are informal, mainly because of the headteacher's very heavy teaching commitment which limits available time, they are effective. In the last 18 months, the school has introduced thorough systems for showing pupils' progress from year to year. However, members of staff do not yet make enough use of this information to ensure that all pupils are doing well enough so that they can respond to any underachievement as soon as it arises. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and they have done all they can to improve accommodation. They have rightly identified that more training about their roles and responsibilities will help them to take a more active part in planning for school improvement.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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? | 3 |
| 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

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| 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 | 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

- Thank you for welcoming us to your school in such a polite and friendly way and for showing us your work. We are pleased that you come to such a good school. We hope the Year 6 pupils had a good time on their residential visit. What your school does best:
- good teaching helps you to learn well
- your behaviour is good and you enjoy school and all the activities that teachers provide for you
- all adults in school are very kind and caring and they give you good support when you are struggling with your work
- you have a well-organised school council
- your headteacher and governors are working hard to make the school even better
- most of your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school. What we have asked your school to do now:
- help pupils in Year 2 to do better in mathematics by making sure that your work is hard enough
- use information about how well you are learning to make sure that you are doing well enough from year to year. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by working hard and trying your best.