



Worthen CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123518
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292696
Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Worthen
School category	Voluntary controlled		Shrewsbury
Age range of pupils	4–11		SY5 9HT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01743 891320
Number on roll (school)	74	Fax number	01743 891320
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Robin Trimby
		Headteacher	Jerry Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006	Inspection number 292696
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school is situated between the villages of Brockton and Worthen, approximately 12 miles from the county town of Shrewsbury. It serves the rural community within the Rea Valley close to the border with Wales. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school has three mixed-age classes. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but with such small numbers it fluctuates from year to year. The school has an international reputation for its work on sustainability and has been awarded the Eco-School Green Flag.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Worthen is a good school because pupils make good progress, achieve well and attain above average standards. The school is an internationally recognised centre for eco-friendly education. This is used extremely well to enhance pupils' personal development, which is outstanding, and to allow them to gain an excellent understanding of issues regarding sustainability. Pupils are often asked to make presentations to visitors to the school and this has a significant impact on raising their self-confidence and self-esteem. This, along with very effective work on enterprise, gives pupils a very good preparation for future economic awareness. Pupils feel very safe in school. They receive excellent pastoral care and support which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Staff know pupils very well and pupils receive effective general guidance on how to improve their work. This is not always sufficiently focused on areas of learning because the system to track the progress of pupils in each subject is ineffective and in its early days of implementation. They understand the need to remain healthy. They eat healthy food and many walk to school in response to the school's travel plan which they helped write. All pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught how to swim and many older pupils successfully complete a certificate in cycling proficiency. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and attendance is high. They respond well to the exciting and engaging curriculum and very good use is made of topics to focus cross-curricular activities. For example, work within science, English and mathematics is enhanced by the work to develop an eco-friendly school. Pupils are given a great deal of responsibility for their own learning and this is very successful in developing them as independent workers. Pupils enjoy a variety of extra activities and many of them learn how to play a musical instrument. Achievement is good as pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Provision within the Foundation Stage is good and gives a good platform for pupils, who do better than the expected standard as they join Year 1. The school has excellent links with a local pre-school group so that children integrate well and joint planning helps highlight particular areas of learning for priority support when children start. Working in a mixed-age class supports children in making particularly good progress in developing their social and emotional skills. The school makes a positive contribution to the local and international community. It supports activities within the village and the local church. Pupils develop a very good understanding of their responsibilities and rights and how they can be part of a democratic process, helped by visits from local councillors and members of Parliament. Pupils enhance their experiences through residential visits and by visiting a variety of local venues, which are very effective in enhancing their understanding of multicultural issues. The very strong positive ethos in the school and the focus on environmental issues ensure pupils make excellent progress with their social and moral development. The very effective leadership of the school gives a clear steer and direction. It ensures the school is very inclusive and all pupils achieve well. The school's self-evaluation, including inputs from governors, accurately identifies the main strengths. However, leadership at all levels does not always identify all the specific reasons for the school's success. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and its strong leadership places it in a good

position to improve further. Governance is extremely supportive and holds the school well to account.

What the school should do to improve further

- Support pupils by implementing an effective system to track their progress across all subjects.
- Enhance the management and leadership roles across all staff to ensure a sharper focus to identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with broadly average standards. Pupils generally achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Because of the small number of pupils in a cohort standards fluctuate from year to year and comparisons with national figures are not always appropriate. Children make good progress in the Reception year, particularly in their social and emotional development. In Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and gain broadly average standards. Key Stage 2 test results in 2006 show a marked improvement in standards in mathematics and all pupils made good progress and gained or exceeded the expected level in English, mathematics and science. Many pupils do even better and achieve well above average standards. This ensured the school bettered its targets. Pupils with learning difficulties generally make similar good progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent and their attendance is good. They really enjoy coming to school and respect their environment, as demonstrated by their work in becoming an eco-friendly school. One parent said 'My child enjoys school and enjoys learning ... he tells me all the exciting things he does and he often wants to carry on at home'. Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. They have a very good understanding of the moral issues regarding sustainability and support both local and overseas charities. They enhance their social awareness through an excellent contribution to community with the school at the heart of the village and consideration of relevant local issues like the safety of the footpath by the school. The school ensures pupils have a very good understanding of a variety of cultures both through their international links and well planned visits to local venues and residential visits to Harlech and Liverpool. Spiritual development is good and is supported with effective links with the local church. Pupils are very aware of safe practices and all younger pupils are taught to swim whilst older pupils obtain a certificate for cycling proficiency. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well. All pupils enjoy fruit at morning break and many of them have a healthy lunch and play a variety of sports. However, a few bring in less healthy food in their lunch boxes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Very good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils ensure that pupils behave well, enjoy lessons and make good progress. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and good use is made of extension work to challenge them. Lessons often make good use of a variety of resources to stimulate the imagination of pupils so that they are able to write creatively and with feeling. Good questioning enhances learning by developing good reasoning and improving communication. Small group work for pupils with learning difficulties is very effective in supporting their learning and good use is made of classroom assistants in lessons. Books are marked regularly and give suitable encouragement and rewards when appropriate. However, marking does not always advise pupils how to improve or indicate the level at which they are working. In some lessons the pupils spend too long on a task and hence the pace is not brisk enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Excellent use is made of the work for the eco-school developments to enhance and extend the curriculum. Pupils often use real data or situations to extend their work in English and mathematics and they will independently use the Internet to research areas. For example, during a visit from a delegation from Kazakhstan a pupil had found out the weather in the capital city and other relevant facts which he was able to share with the visitors. Similarly, the local community and surroundings are used well to bring realism to the work covered. Preparation for future economic development is very well supported by involving pupils in designing and costing the school's eco-lab and by opportunities involving enterprise and links with a variety of external agencies. The school runs a young engineers club and this has recently won a national award, one of many awards the school has won. The school also runs a variety of clubs which are well attended. These include physical education clubs, some in conjunction with the local secondary school, French and art clubs and a church club. At the moment the majority of these are for older pupils and the school has plans to extend these to younger pupils. The curriculum has many outstanding features and is carefully planned on a two-year cycle to minimise the repetition of work in the mixed-age classes. However, the progress of pupils is not adequately tracked.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good because the school provides very good pastoral support. Pupils say they feel safe within the school because staff are so friendly and supportive. They say there are very few incidents of name calling or bullying and when

these occur they are swiftly and effectively dealt with. Good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties. Child protection and health and safety procedures are effectively in place and well understood by staff. The school works well with external agencies and parents, although a small number of parents say they are not always suitably informed of events in school. Staff support pupils well with their work. Pupils are encouraged to improve and given strategies on how to rectify problems. However, they are not always aware of the level at which they are working in different subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The dynamic and committed leadership of the headteacher gives the school a clear direction. The school's work in developing eco-school status has been the driving force to focus staff on improving the quality of the provision and raising standards. Governance is both supportive and challenging. Governors are involved with the accurate self-evaluation and in holding subject coordinators to account through their effective links to curriculum areas. Because the school has a small number of staff, and the headteacher has a large teaching commitment, the time available for management is limited and leadership roles are not fully developed across all staff. Hence there is sometimes insufficient explanation of why the school is as effective as it is. The school effectively monitors and improves its work and it has made good progress since its last inspection. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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	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

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	2
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	1

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.

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 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	1
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

You may remember I visited your school recently and I met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at playtime. What a delight and privilege it was for me to see how well you are doing. You are all extremely friendly, cheerful and keen to talk about your work especially how you support the many elements of the eco-school. Many of you told me how much you enjoy school and how friendly and supportive your teachers are. You also said you thought it prepared you well personally. You told me what a good school you went to and I agree fully. Your headteacher, all the teachers and adults who work in school with you take good care of you and make sure that you do well in your lessons. I was very impressed with the work some of you were doing using similes and adjectives with your space poems and the way in which the youngest of you were able to look at number patterns and multiply numbers. I was very pleased to see the way you look after each other and how proud you are of the international reputation you have for your eco-school. You also listen really well during conversations. The quality of some of your explanations in science was very good, especially when you were explaining why you thought different materials would be a conductor. You enjoy some good lessons and an exciting and engaging curriculum which allows you to consider local as well as national and international issues. Your headteacher and your teachers set a good example and are effective in making things better for you. They have lots of good ideas as to how they will do this. Of course they will also continue to need your, and your parents', help and support. Like all schools there are things which could be better. I have let the school know that it needs to make sure it has an accurate record of the level at which you are working and also to have a more detailed understanding of why the school is as good as it is. I shall take away lots of good memories about your school and have really enjoyed the time I have spent with you. I hope the 'Christingle' festival service went well in the church. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.