



Perton Sandown First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124184
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292916
Inspection dates 5–6 February 2007
Reporting inspector Frances Gillam

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

Type of school	First	School address	Sandown Drive
School category	Community		Perton
Age range of pupils	3–9		Wolverhampton WV6 7PS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 742686
Number on roll (school)	208	Fax number	01902 742686
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Elizabeth Threlkeld
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003		

Age group 3–9	Inspection dates 5–6 February 2007	Inspection number 292916
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized first school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. Staff appointments, due to promotion and retirement, have been high in the last two years.

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 has established a positive climate for learning and has a clear and strong agenda for improvement. Many children commented, 'This is a great place for learning, playing and sharing.' How right they are! Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and well-being, and achieve well in their work. Pupils really like school and their attendance is good. They behave extremely well and take very good care of themselves and others. Care, guidance and support are good, with a number of strong features. Parents rightly feel their children are well cared for. Pupils flourish in the warm and friendly school environment and this builds their self-esteem and confidence. All pupils receive very good care and guidance to support their personal development, health and well-being but some are less sure about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work further. Pupils make good choices about their diet and take regular exercise because of the very good emphasis that the school places on healthy lifestyles. Pupils have a say in how their school could be improved and they are especially proud of how their views have brought about improvements to the outdoor environment. A strength of the good curriculum is the extensive range of activities outside normal lessons and the very good use of visits and visitors which enriches the curriculum further.

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is average. Children do well in the Foundation Stage and most achieve or exceed the goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Good teaching ensures that most pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups, make good progress and reach above average expectations by Year 4. Lessons are often exciting and fun. They provide a good balance of listening, discussing and doing, which enables pupils to reflect, share ideas and play a full part in their learning. This leads to most pupils concentrating well and producing good quality work. Pupils appreciate encouragement and rise well to a challenge but there are times when teachers' marking could provide better information for pupils about the next steps in learning to help them improve and do even better. Efforts to improve pupils' writing are proving successful, particularly for girls, but the failure of some activities to motivate and engage all boys leads to a slower rate of progress for some of them in writing.

Good leadership and management ensure that staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. The headteacher is the driving force behind school improvement. With the recently-established leadership team, she works very effectively with staff and governors to ensure the right action is taken to bring about change for the better. The school's capacity to improve is good and shows in the recent improvements in reading and the good progress pupils make now in Years 3 and 4.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop better ways to motivate and engage boys in their learning in order to improve their achievement in writing.

- Make sure that teachers provide better guidance for pupils about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good for most pupils throughout the school and standards are above expectations by Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. Activities in the Foundation Stage build well on children's experiences, and the youngest children quickly settle into school. Children make good progress because of the lively activities, which enable them to explore and find things out for themselves. Basic skills are taught well and most children achieve or exceed the goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, make good progress by Year 4. Improvements in the teaching of reading have increased the rate of progress pupils make now but some boys could be doing better in writing. The school rightly identified that boys were not doing as well as girls. They have put in place some good strategies to help all pupils improve their writing but not all writing activities grab boys' interest. This leads to a lack of effort on the part of boys and slows the progress they make. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support. This builds their self-esteem, increases their confidence and enables them to build successfully on their previous learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and this enables them to think carefully about their actions and how these may affect others. Pupils welcome responsibility and school council members take their role very seriously. They are rightly convinced that they are helping to make their school a better place to be. Pupils' keenness to contribute to their school community also shows in their eagerness to raise money for charity. Pupils recognise that there are others less fortunate than themselves and have a growing awareness of what they can offer to society. Activities such as managing the snack shop enhance their very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and help them to gain an increasing understanding of the world of work. These, and the pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills, prepare them well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff work together very well. They monitor the achievements of pupils carefully and use the information well to plan the next steps in learning. This is effective in meeting

pupils' needs and enables them to make good progress in their learning. Well-focused activities in the Foundation Stage interest the children and motivate them to learn. This enables them to make a positive start to school and sets them up well for their next stage of learning. Across the school, teachers plan well for the differing ability and age groups within their classes. Teachers clearly explain to pupils what they are going to learn and why. This gives purpose to the activities and direction to pupils' learning. As a result, pupils settle quickly to their tasks and work hard. Positive written comments on pupils' work encourage them to try hard but these comments do not always indicate to pupils how they can improve their work next time. Learning support assistants play an important part in helping pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Their calm and sensitive approach ensures these pupils have the confidence to 'have a go' and succeed in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils experience a broad range of exciting learning activities that, for the most part, build well on what they have done before. A wide and extensive range of activities outside normal lessons, including sporting clubs, visits to places of interest and history days, support pupils' learning and contribute very well to their enjoyment of school. The school has made good use of pupils' views and ideas to adapt how some curriculum areas are organised and taught. This has been especially successful in science and has resulted in pupils' greater enjoyment of the subject and better quality work. The school has yet to extend this positive feature to English, where some boys say that not all writing topics are interesting. Their lack of interest in writing sometimes leads to them not doing as well as they can.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

for. The high level of care shows in the way staff are quick to respond to any concerns the pupils may have. Children rightly commented, 'We know the teachers will look after us and help us to do our best.' Staff promote healthy lifestyles very successfully and remind pupils about the need to take care of themselves and others. This contributes very well to their personal development and well-being. All pupils have learning targets, which are challenging and encourage them, for the most part, to do better. Some pupils, however, are not always clear about their targets and so are not sure about how well they are doing and how they can do even better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has kept the pace of change moving during a period of high staff turnover and extensive improvements to the accommodation. With senior managers, staff and governors, she has established good systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. These identify the right

priorities for improvement, and the action to bring about change for the better is often quick and successful, although senior managers acknowledge that they are yet to be fully successful in improving boys' achievements, especially in writing. The school works extremely well with parents and other agencies to meet the personal needs of its pupils. This ensures that pupils receive well-focused support, which helps them to make good progress and ensures that parents play an active part in their children's learning.

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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?	1
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	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.

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	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

Thank you for making the team of inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking with you and seeing all the exciting things you were doing.

Your school, the people in charge and your teachers do a good job and this is helping you to make good progress. The standards you attain by the time you leave school are above those expected for Year 4.

Here are some of the most important things we found to be good about your school:

- You do well in your work because you try hard and enjoy learning.
- Your lessons are exciting, you have lots of fun and you especially enjoy all the extra activities you have outside your lessons.
- You behave extremely well. You are polite and friendly and get on very well with each other.
- You make very sensible choices about what you eat and take plenty of exercise because you want to grow up fit and healthy.
- You make good decisions about how to make your school a better place to be.
- You are kind and like to look out for your friends. You make sure you play safely and sensibly. You are kept safe and free from harm.
- You like school and this shows in your good attendance and your interest in lessons.

To improve the school still further we have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on two things:

- To make sure that writing activities are really exciting so that boys especially find them more interesting.
- To make sure that all of you understand your learning targets and that teachers' marking tells you how you can make your work even better.

You can all help by keeping up the hard work.

With best wishes for the future,