



Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132086
Local Authority Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number 293940
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	109 Southgate
School category	Community		Sutton Hill
Age range of pupils	3–11		Telford TF7 4HG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01952 388 010
Number on roll (school)	399	Fax number	01952 388017
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Janet Cousins
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school that serves an area of Telford where many parents face considerable social challenges. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well above average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. There is also a Nursery class within the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sir Alexander Fleming is a school that is just satisfactory and is beginning to improve. This agrees with the school's judgement of its effectiveness. The new headteacher has provided very clear educational direction and ensured that important management structures are in place. Areas where improvements need to be made have been identified and are beginning to be addressed. The headteacher is winning the trust of staff who are now behind her huge commitment to raising standards and tackling underachievement. Most parents and pupils have faith in the headteacher but she still has to win the hearts and minds of a minority.

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school, especially the good sporting activities that help them to keep fit and healthy. Younger children have great fun in the Nursery and Reception classes but a significant number of older pupils are difficult to motivate and behave inappropriately. Pupils make a particularly good contribution to the school and local community through their environmental activities. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good range of clubs, visits and visitors that successfully extend pupils' experiences.

Standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes because of a stimulating curriculum and teaching that challenges them to do well. By the time they enter Year 1, they have made good progress, although standards are generally below average. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 2 improved and were just below average and pupils made satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2. In 2006 standards were below average by the end of Year 6. Achievement in English improved, but standards in mathematics dipped. This reflects weaknesses in pupils' understanding of mathematical language, their application of mathematics and the leadership and management of the subject. Although achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress is uneven because of wide variations in the quality of teaching. Even though teaching is satisfactory, teachers' expectations of standards, including presentation, are not always high enough and this holds back progress especially of the highest attaining pupils. The management of behaviour is inconsistent and the lack of a whole school policy with a clear hierarchy of rewards and sanctions contributes to this. The headteacher and staff are aware of this and are working towards a whole school policy. Teaching assistants provide caring support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and this helps them make satisfactory progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good and has brought improved rigour to the school's work, but the contribution of subject coordinators to monitoring and self-evaluation is uneven.

Care, guidance and support are inadequate. Although pupils are well cared for on a personal level, academic support is inadequate. Tracking of pupils' progress has only just started. Children do not always understand their targets because they are not clearly expressed in child friendly language and marking does not refer to targets or effectively tell pupils how to improve their work. Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in a few respects is inadequate. Therefore,

Ofsted inspectors may wish to visit the school before its next Section 5 inspection to monitor the progress it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics by improving pupils' understanding of mathematical language and their ability to apply mathematics, and developing effective subject leadership and management.
- Improve teaching by raising teachers' expectations of standards including presentation, ensuring that work is planned to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and giving pupils information about what they have to do to improve their standards.
- Make sure behaviour is good enough by implementing consistent behaviour management strategies.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Many pupils start Nursery with poor speech and language, and limited social skills. A typical parent comment stated that her daughter had improved in 'so many areas, numbers, speech, letters and general behaviour'. This reflects the good progress made by many children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

In 2006 at the end of Year 6, standards in English improved, particularly in reading. However pupils' standards in writing continue to be held back by too many simple spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, poor handwriting and misunderstandings about punctuation. The school met its targets for English but not mathematics. Pupils work hard at their sums but they do not always use mathematical language accurately and are less successful at using and applying mathematics, for example, when analysing data or using mathematics to solve problems.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress in their personal and emotional development. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are willing to listen to other pupils' ideas and points of view. They have appropriate skills in working collaboratively in pairs and small groups. However, a significant number of older pupils show inappropriate behaviour in and out of class and poor attitudes to their work, which disrupts the learning of others. Pupils are not always nice to each other and both parents and pupils expressed concerns about bullying. The headteacher is working very hard to address these issues. All incidents are carefully recorded and the headteacher takes a lead in investigating and resolving fallings out. However the management of behaviour by other staff is inconsistent. Although higher attaining

pupils usually work very hard they often lack confidence in their own ability especially in mathematics, frequently seeking out adult reassurance. This lack of independence holds them back.

Attendance has been improving in recent years and is now broadly average. Pupils really enjoy taking on responsibility; they take the school council very seriously and love doing little jobs such as looking after younger pupils; pupils say, 'We like doing it.' They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils develop satisfactorily the skills necessary for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory although there are examples of both good and inadequate teaching. Teaching is better from the Nursery to Year 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning vary from lesson to lesson depending on how well teachers plan for individual pupils' needs. Questioning is sometimes used very well to extend pupils' understanding but at times opportunities are missed to develop the thinking of higher attaining pupils. Work is often well planned for those with learning needs and disabilities, but occasionally the work set does not provide enough challenge for higher attaining pupils. Good use of resources, including the newly purchased whiteboards, helps to bring learning alive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The new outdoor equipment is made good use of and has successfully enhanced pupils' learning in the Nursery and Foundation classes. Many pupils attend and enjoy a wide range of activities outside the classroom at lunchtime and after school that include sports, musical and leisure pursuits. Regular visits to places of educational interest such as Arthog Outdoor Centre and regular visitors, such as a science theatre group and dance sessions, stimulate pupils' curiosity and help to bring learning alive. Efficient arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties help them to achieve satisfactorily. Setting arrangements in English and mathematics for older classes are not always effective in providing the right level of challenge for higher ability pupils. The school is aware that opportunities to promote literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across other subjects are sometimes missed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Arrangements for care, guidance and support are inadequate. The provision for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare is satisfactory and includes effective child protection procedures and good links with support agencies. Effective arrangements for pupils

who have learning needs and disabilities help them to feel valued and give them greater confidence to learn. Pupils generally feel safe; they trust adults and know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem.

The checking of pupils' academic progress is improving but information is not complete and is not used well enough to plan learning. There is no consistently applied system across subjects for measuring progress in order to identify what pupils need to do to move on. Pupils are not clear enough about short term or long term targets that would help them to be more ambitious and self-motivated. They have to rely too much on teachers and are unable to take control of their own learning. The school is putting in place a more thorough system for assessment, target setting and tracking but this has not had time to fully impact on pupil's achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory monitoring and self-evaluation has ensured that the head-teacher is very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has carefully thought out plans designed to address the important issues that face the school. There is a real determination to improve standards. Many essential policies and management procedures have been put in place, including those for checking the school's work, and these are starting to enhance provision. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory but occasionally lacks rigour because teaching strategies are not always judged by their direct impact on learning. Improved leadership and management in literacy have enhanced achievement in English. Some of the subject leaders do not have a firm grip on the quality of teaching or the standards of achievement. The school has just started analysis of data, including assessment results, and this is helping to improve standards. Governors meet their statutory duties and are very supportive of the school but are not yet experienced enough to provide rigorous challenge. The recent improvements to achievement in English, standards at the end of Year 2, and management structures all demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	4
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	4

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
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 your help during the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. We were impressed by the way you know how to keep healthy and safe and were glad to hear that you enjoyed the sporting activities, clubs and interesting visits. What a lot of good work you do to help the local environment and make Sutton Hill a pleasant and green place – WELL DONE! It was wonderful to see the nursery and reception children having such a great time especially in the new outdoor area. You told us that your teachers look after you properly and try to help when you have problems.

We found your school to be satisfactory and it is starting to get better. We were pleased to hear that most of you enjoy school and the interesting things to do but we were concerned to hear that some of you had your enjoyment spoilt by fears about bullying. We looked at this thoroughly and we know your headteacher is trying very hard to improve behaviour. You are making satisfactory progress in your lessons because of satisfactory teaching but the standard of your work is still a little behind that of most children. We have asked teachers to make sure that you do as well in mathematics as in other subjects. We have also asked teachers to make sure that more able pupils get harder work and to make sure that they all deal with naughty behaviour in the same way. We have asked them to make sure your work is much neater.

You told us that you did not always know how to improve your work so we have asked your teachers to write your targets in words that you can understand and to use marking to tell you clearly how to make your work better. Your headteacher and other staff are working very hard to improve your school and we know that you will want to help by always trying your best.

Best wishes for the future.