

St Leonard's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131903
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	295307
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Kneen
Headteacher	Kay Ferriday
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
School address	Innage Lane Bridgnorth WV16 4HL
Telephone number	01746 762781
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to most schools, but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is higher than that found nationally. The school has received a Safe School Award and the Healthy School's Gold Award.

When the school was inspected in 2006, it was judged to require significant improvement in Key Stage 1 in relation to the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make, and was given a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This improving school provides a satisfactory education. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as they thrive in the school's positive and happy atmosphere. One parent, representing the views of many said, 'This is a lovely school. Staff are approachable, warm and friendly!'. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Central to the school's improvement is the good leadership of the headteacher. She provides clear direction and with good support from the local authority (LA) has successfully improved provision since the previous inspection. Realistic self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in the school's work. A satisfactory tracking and target-setting system has been introduced which is supporting teachers as they plan appropriate work for pupils and set them targets to improve. However, a clear overview of pupils' progress from when they start at school to when they leave is not in place. This means the headteacher is unable to quickly and efficiently check if progress is good enough. Leadership and management are satisfactory and, in view of the clear direction set by the headteacher and the determined support of staff and governors, the school is showing a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Children get a sound start in the Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory progress which continues throughout the school and by the end of Year 6, pupils attain broadly average standards. Achievement is satisfactory. Writing standards, however, are weaker than those of reading, particularly for boys. Good actions have been implemented to improve these but there is still work to do to ensure that more pupils, particularly boys, attain the higher level in this aspect of English. Writing opportunities are not made the most of in all subject areas, and in some classes there is an over-reliance on uninspiring worksheets. Even so, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with notable strengths. Relationships are good and teachers successfully make learning interesting. Planning is starting to meet the range of needs within the class, although less so in writing. All teachers are good at telling pupils what they are expected to learn. Sensitive support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are included well in lessons. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel safe knowing adults will help them if they have a concern.

The curriculum is satisfactory with good enrichment activities. The indoor curriculum for Foundation Stage children is good, but children do not have sufficient opportunities to learn outdoors. Pupils have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and know how to keep themselves safe. They eagerly take responsibility, with one pupil saying, 'Jobs such as playground buddies and school councilors are good. It means we can help others and make the school a better place!'.

What the school should do to improve further

- increase the proportion of pupils, particularly boys, attaining the higher level in writing, by ensuring pupils have regular opportunities to write in other subjects
- extend the existing tracking and target setting system so the leadership can check efficiently if progress is good enough throughout the school
- develop the outdoor curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. On entry to the Foundation Stage, attainment is broadly average. Children make satisfactory progress and by the time they start Year 1, most have skills that match those expected. However, boys do not attain as well as girls; notably in writing. In the past, assessments have been too generous and the headteacher has been concerned about the accuracy of information given to Year 1 teachers. The LA has provided support and now more reliable information is handed on. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and progress is now satisfactory. However, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in writing and boys do not perform as well as girls in this subject. By Year 6, standards are broadly average. In 2006, pupil performance was the highest since 2002. Science was a strength and was significantly above average. More able pupils are challenged well in this subject. However, too few pupils attain the higher level in writing in comparison with reading. As in the other two key stages, boys perform less well than girls in this subject. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, which improves when they are supported by the capable teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in good behaviour and positive attitudes. Even so, attendance is only satisfactory as although discouraged, a minority of parents take their children on holiday during term-time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are caring and considerate, as shown when pupils say they want to collect money to support the school swimming pool: 'We have had so much fun at the pool, we want others to have fun as well!'. Pupils gain a good knowledge of their own culture but do not know enough about multicultural Britain today.

Responsibilities such as school councillors and playground buddies are taken eagerly. 'I like being a buddy because you feel that you are really helping the little ones,' said one pupil thoughtfully. Pupils know the importance of healthy eating, exercise and how to protect themselves from potential risks such as drugs, alcohol and smoking. They contribute well to the wider community by collecting for charity and providing musical performances in the local area. Good interpersonal skills and satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills mean that pupils are soundly prepared for their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning has improved and although only satisfactory, there are good features throughout the school. Staff relate well to pupils and, as one pupil says, 'Teachers try hard to make learning interesting'. Lessons have clear objectives, which are shared well so pupils know what is expected of them. Satisfactory account is taken of differing abilities and work is generally pitched at an appropriate level for each pupil. However, this is less evident in writing. In some classes, the pace of learning is good, but in others, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to do. Teaching assistants give sensitive support to pupils

with learning difficulties or disabilities. The quality of marking is variable, with some good practice evident in English and mathematics. However, marking in other subjects is not as good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad but is not always successful in securing sufficient progress in writing, notably of the more able pupils and of boys. An over-reliance on worksheets in some year groups prevents pupils from developing their writing skills in other subjects. In the Foundation Stage, the indoor curriculum is good, but the outdoor curriculum is insufficiently developed and used mainly for physical activities. Opportunities to use outdoor facilities for the development of communication, language and literacy and creativity are missed. However, good use is made of the 'Forest School' to extend children's understanding of the outdoor environment.

The good programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' good personal development and their understanding of making healthy life- choices. Swimming is well promoted and by Year 6, all pupils are able to swim. Good enrichment of the curriculum is provided through an extensive range of visits and visitors. Pupils greatly enjoy the wide range of additional activities, especially French, sport and music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Well-established routines and high expectations of behaviour result in a calm and pleasant environment where pupils feel safe and secure. Good relationships ensure pupils know they can ask for help when they need it. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are strong and the school works well in partnership with parents and other agencies to support pupils, especially those who need extra help. This good care, guidance and support contribute strongly to pupils' good personal development. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported sensitively through good quality programmes of work. Adequate support is provided for those identified as gifted and talented. This is primarily for Year 6 pupils in mathematics. The school recognises it needs to extend this to other year groups and other subjects.

Academic guidance is improving. The tracking and target-setting system is providing teachers with useful assessment information which is used satisfactorily to plan work and set targets for pupils. However, a clear overview of the progress pupils make throughout their time at school is not available and this limits the way in which the leadership can check efficiently if pupils' progress is good enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, supported by staff and governors, has been successful in improving the school since its last inspection. The LA has provided good support during this time. Whilst maintaining good features such as the pupils' personal development, there have been positive improvements in pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 and the quality of teaching and learning. New, enthusiastic subject leaders have been appointed. Although they have good ideas, it is early days and they are only starting to develop an overview of provision throughout the school. Governors are supportive and are developing their role of holding the school to account for its work.

A regular cycle for monitoring and evaluation has been introduced and this is satisfactorily influencing the standards attained. The headteacher knows of the need to be more rigorous. Activities such as the scrutiny of pupils' work are too confined to English and mathematics. They are not used enough to check learning across the whole curriculum, including the opportunities which pupils have to improve their writing skills in all subjects.

Good links with external agencies and wider school networks have been established. These are used beneficially to extend pupils' learning opportunities.

Annex A

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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	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.

Annex A

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?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we visited your school to find out how well you are doing. We enjoyed talking to you, and thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us. Overall, we thought your school was satisfactory, with some things that were good.

We were very pleased to see how well you behave and how you enjoy your work. You are kind to each other and we think the school councillors and the playground buddies do a really good job. It is good to know that you feel safe in school and that adults will always help if you have a problem. We are glad that your parents think the staff will listen to what they think about the school. You know the importance of eating healthily, taking regular exercise and how to keep yourselves safe. You should be proud of your Safe School and your Healthy Schools' Gold Awards.

We think your headteacher has done a good job this year in making the school better. She is helping teachers to plan work that makes you all think hard and is asking them to give you targets to help you improve your work. We think this is a good idea. However, there needs to be a simple way of checking that all of you are making good progress as you move from class to class. So we have asked her to look into this.

By the time you leave school in Year 6, most of you are quite good at English, mathematics and science. Although many of you do well in reading, we think that more of you, particularly the boys, should be able to reach Level 5 in writing. So we asked your teachers to make sure you get lots of opportunities to practise your writing skills. We think that teaching is at least satisfactory and there are some good things happening which allow you to make satisfactory progress. We noticed you got on well with your teachers and were pleased that you thought teachers made lessons interesting. We thought that teaching assistants were used well to make sure that all of you took part in lessons.

You do lots of interesting things such as French and different sporting activities to make the curriculum more interesting. We thought that children in the Foundation Stage have lots of good activities in the classroom but we think they need to have more opportunities to learn outdoors.

Thank you again for your help, and please keep working hard and help your teachers to improve your school.