

Short Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104939
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	308711
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Marmion
Headteacher	Susan Harris
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 1995
School address	Mount Gilbert Wellington Telford TF1 2JQ
Telephone number	01952 387360
Fax number	01952 387367

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a newly established school formed from the amalgamation of an infant school and a junior school. The two schools amalgamated in September 2006 but continued working on two different sites. In September 2007, all the pupils and staff came together and moved into their new building. Although the main building is complete, work is continuing on the building of extra sports facilities for the school. Most of the pupils attending are of White British or Pakistani heritage. A large proportion of the Pakistani pupils come from the Mirpur district of Pakistan. The Mirpuri Project is an initiative set up at the school to boost the language skills of these pupils. Many of the pupils attending the school come from less advantaged home backgrounds. The proportion of pupils in the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high. When they start school, children usually show attainment that is well below the expected level for their age. The headteacher, who took on the post in a temporary capacity in September 2007, has now been appointed to lead the school on a permanent basis.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory but rapidly improving school with a very welcoming ethos. Staff are good at making all pupils feel special so that they become confident and enthusiastic learners. The headteacher has helped the staff and pupils to settle quickly into the new building. The pupils love their new school and talk excitedly about its many special features, including the floor lights that change colour. The good quality facilities and attractive environment are doing much to inspire and encourage pupils.

Standards are well below average and especially weak in science. However, this is changing for the better in line with the school's dynamic action plans and the hard work of the staff in setting up new structures and systems to boost pupils' learning. Teaching is satisfactory and enabling pupils to make sound progress. Teaching is improving and was often good in the lessons seen. There are many signs that pupils' progress is accelerating as the confidence of the newly established teaching team begins to grow and the initiatives they have set in place take root. Signs of the rapid development are evident in successful initiatives, such as those to boost pupils' reading and writing skills. Also, the Mirpuri Project is making much headway in boosting pupils' language skills. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory except in the Foundation Stage where it is good because of the good provision. The school has established good systems to check pupils' progress. Some teachers make good use of the information gained to plan their lessons. However, this is not consistently the case in all classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have not been making enough progress. Good systems have recently been established to support them so that these pupils now make sound and sometimes good progress in lessons. Nevertheless, there remains work to do to help them catch up on previous underperformance. Boys have not been making as much progress as the girls. There are good signs of improvement in this respect with, for example, the school taking positive steps to enliven the curriculum and provide a wider range of practical opportunities and work that has 'boy appeal'. However, this is not evident consistently throughout the school. The curriculum is satisfactory.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils show good personal development, including good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils behave well and feel safe. In discussion they talk about how they 'enjoy things a lot'. When asked what could be improved, one typically responded, 'I'd like to stay at school longer!' Attendance is satisfactory. The school does all it can to promote good attendance, but the leave taken by some families is having a negative impact on the progress of their children. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge about how to keep themselves fit and healthy and, through the wide range of charity fund raising in which they are involved, they learn the value of contributing to the immediate and wider community.

The headteacher gets the staff working enthusiastically and effectively together. Along with the governors they have a clear view of what works well in the school and where improvements are needed. Clear action plans, full commitment and rapid recent improvements made show that there is good capacity to sustain improvement. The school has strong links with partner organisations and parents, and uses these very well to enhance pupils' learning.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provision is very well organised and the staff work together as a strong team to help all children settle in well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children achieve

well. From their well below expected levels when they start, they progress to below the expected levels in their work by the end of the Foundation Stage. Staff are particularly good at identifying the needs of all individuals. The care, support and guidance given to all individuals ensure that they all rapidly acquire the social and personal development skills they need to become confident learners. The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of practical opportunities. However, staff rightly identify that there is still some way to go in fully establishing the curriculum provision to make sure it capitalises on all of the new resources and facilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Drive up standards in English, mathematics and science by improving the way that teachers use assessment to inform their planning to ensure that work in all lessons matches precisely with learners' needs and helps them to progress more rapidly.
- Ensure that current strategies to enliven the curriculum and make it more 'boy friendly' are developed fully in all classes as a means of improving boys' achievement.
- Firmly embed all newly established systems to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to improve their achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children progress well in the Foundation Stage. Pupils progress and achieve satisfactorily across the rest of the school. Attainment is below average by the end of Year 2 and well below average by the end of Year 6. However, the performance of Year 6 in 2007 was depressed by the lower than usual attainment of pupils when they entered the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also rising. Current observations clearly show pupils' achievement and standards are improving. For example, the work of Year 6 pupils, although below average overall, now includes many more pupils beginning to achieve average and above average levels. There are pockets of similarly good progress seen in other year groups. These green shoots of better progress are a result of the good quality actions and initiatives that have been put in place. Good initiatives have been implemented to raise the standards and achievement of boys and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, the progress of these groups of pupils in lessons is sound and sometimes good. However, there remains much work to do to help them catch up fully on past underperformance. Across the school, pupils learning English as an additional language make sound progress because they benefit from well targeted support from the school's bilingual teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils become confident and enthusiastic learners. They show a lively and positive approach. Pupils enjoy carrying out responsibilities, such as lunchtime duties and older pupils helping younger ones at playtimes. They carry out these jobs conscientiously. There is a very good atmosphere across the school, with pupils of all cultural backgrounds mixing well and enjoying working and playing together. Older pupils develop a mature approach and are keen to express their views and opinions and have a say about how school systems operate. Pupils participate in a range of activities that increase their financial awareness. However, although they make

satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science, their future success is currently hampered by the low standards achieved in these subjects. Pupils mainly eat healthily in school, although not all of the snacks taken are of a healthy nature.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Staff use the strong relationships they have with pupils to encourage all individuals. As a result, pupils usually try hard in lessons. Teaching assistants and teachers work well together to ensure that all individuals are properly supported. Some teachers use the school's assessment information well to plan activities that challenge all groups of pupils. However, this is not consistently the case in all classes. This means that sometimes the work provided does not match pupils' attainment levels precisely enough. For example, in some of the lessons observed too much time was spent with all pupils working on the same task so that some pupils struggled while others found the work too easy. Staff in the Foundation Stage provide a wide range of activities that help the children to gain the confidence to work independently as well as when supported by an adult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Staff work very well together to establish the curriculum planning. However, much of the planning is new and not fully embedded in such a way as to get the best out of the new facilities and resources. For example, there remains much scope for making fuller use of the school's rich outdoor natural environment. Also, the school is currently expanding some of its sports facilities – to include the use of a new swimming pool and sports pitches by the end of the current academic year. Good work has been started to enliven the curriculum and make it more interesting. For example, good work was seen that combined literacy with a film-making project in Year 6. This captivated the interest of all pupils, including the boys. However, this kind of approach is not sufficiently developed across the school and, in some instances, boys do not show as much motivation as the girls with the work provided for them. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and good use is made of visitors to the school and links with all partner organisations to boost pupils' learning. There is a good focus on pupils' personal development within curriculum planning, especially in broadening their social awareness and understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know all of the individuals in their care extremely well and cater sensitively for their needs. There is very close liaison with parents and very good efforts are made by staff to draw parents in to participate in school, to learn how better to support their children's learning. All of these efforts are helping to boost pupils' learning and confidence. The school is rigorous about following all policies to ensure pupils' safety. Staff provide pupils with sound academic support and guidance. There is some exemplary marking in some classes. However, in some year groups, marking does not provide enough clear guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work. All pupils have targets set for them. However, sometimes these are not defined precisely enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Establishing a new school, settling a new staff together and settling all of the pupils into a new building, getting new systems up and running – all of this in three months! This is no small feat, and an accolade to the strong leadership of the new headteacher that it has all been accomplished in a calm and systematic way, always keeping the needs of the pupils central. The school's leadership team works very closely together with the headteacher and has a very clear focus on the right sort of developments that will make the most difference in the long and short term. Discussions with all staff show that they feel this is an exciting place to be. The good level of monitoring, involvement and interaction with the governors also provides strength to the school's potential to develop rapidly. The school knows that there remains much to be done to drive up standards and achievement. Many of the good quality systems and initiatives set up to achieve this end are not sufficiently embedded. In particular, the use of assessment information by teachers is not consistent throughout the school to ensure that all pupils progress as fast as they could.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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

7 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Short Wood Primary School, Telford, TF1 2JA

- It was really good fun coming to see you at your brand new school! Wow, what a super place to be! Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the inspection. I especially enjoyed the good discussion I had with some of you from Year 6. I learned a lot. I think you would all make very good future inspectors! Right now your school is doing a satisfactory job but it is improving rapidly. Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about.
- You work satisfactorily in lessons and make sound progress. Although standards are still much lower than they should be, you and your teachers are making good efforts to improve this.
- Your personal development is good. You clearly enjoy your time in school and get on well together.
- The school's curriculum is satisfactory but there is lots happening, like the expansion of your sports facilities to include the use of a new swimming pool and new sports pitches, that will help to make it even more exciting in the future.
- You told us how well you get on with your teachers and teaching assistants. They provide satisfactory and sometimes good teaching.
- The school works well to make sure you are properly looked after.
- Your headteacher has done a really good job of helping everyone work together to settle into your new school and to make lots of good plans with the staff and governors to keep things improving.

To improve further the school should now:

- help you to do even better in English, mathematics and science by making sure that the work you get in lessons is always at the right level to help you to progress rapidly
- make the curriculum even more interesting with work that appeals to boys and that helps them to progress more quickly
- move forward with the school's new systems to make sure that all pupils who have particular difficulties with their work get precisely the right kind of support to help them progress at a good rate.

Thank you again for all of your help.

Laurie Lewin Lead inspector