

Ledbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116702
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	312374
Inspection date	11 October 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	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	498
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deb Hiley
Headteacher	J Duckworth
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Longacres Ledbury HR8 2BE
Telephone number	01531 632940
Fax number	01531 632940

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress of children in the Foundation Stage and how this was sustained through Years 1 to 6; pupils' personal development; the care, guidance and support provided; and the influence of leadership on pupils' achievement. Evidence was gathered by observing lessons and by scrutinising pupils' work, assessment data and school documents. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors, teachers and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is much larger than average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, but fewer pupils than is usual have a statement of special educational need. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. A very small number are from minority ethnic groups, but none is at the early stages of learning to speak English. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

The school has achieved Healthy School status and a bronze award for Eco Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Although by Year 6, pupils attain standards that are broadly expected for their age, the school is not yet successful in ensuring that pupils always make the best possible progress. Their achievement is satisfactory. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage. As a result of good teaching, the majority of them are working securely within the goals expected for their age, with a significant minority exceeding these goals by the time they enter Year 1.

However, this good start is not built upon well enough, and over the last three years, standards have been below average by the end of Year 2. Progress throughout the school is uneven and assessments show that pupils make notably better progress in Years 5 and 6 than lower down the school. This is because assessment information is not always accurate and consequently teachers have not had precise enough information about what pupils know already. This results in work that is not matched closely enough to pupils' differing abilities. Even though teaching is satisfactory, activities are not always sufficiently challenging for pupils. This is improving, as is seen by the improved standards by the end of Year 2 in 2007, when standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are becoming better informed about how to improve and there are examples of good feedback in some pupils' books. However, this is not consistent practice. Teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included well in lessons.

To a large extent, it is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher that has led to recent improvements. Governors, staff, parents and pupils are very appreciative of her work. As one parent typically said, 'We have a fantastic headteacher who has worked very hard and made many positive changes over the last year.' Since her appointment she has tackled weaknesses rigorously and has put in place a secure strategy to take the school forward. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest. However, as yet, monitoring and evaluating activities are done mainly by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Training has strengthened the roles of subject leaders, but there is still some way to go before they take on the full range of leadership activities.

A strength of provision is pastoral care, and the procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. Pupils say they feel very safe and that there is very little bullying in school. A minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour but, according to pupils, this is much improved as a result of the very effective 'values education' programme. Behaviour is now good. Most pupils understand clearly, why it is necessary to have rules, why these are different in different situations, and how to take responsibility in making and changing rules. Pupils confidently mention the key words of 'respect', 'peace', 'hope' and 'friendship' which remind them of the importance of care and consideration towards others. Helping others is considered to be a high priority and pupils welcome opportunities to be school council members or reading buddies. They willingly help others less fortunate than themselves, for example, by donating pencil cases and Christmas shoeboxes to Romanian children. With their very mature understanding of the importance of teamwork and their improving literacy and numeracy skills, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Although a minority of parents had some concerns about behaviour, they unanimously agree that children enjoy school. 'My children love school, look forward to going and are having a fantastic experience,' is a typical comment. This view is supported by pupils, one of whom said, 'This school is safe and happy where we have really good fun!' This enjoyment is reflected in pupils' improved attendance, which is now

above average. The broad and interesting curriculum and a wide range of visits and visitors also contribute well to enjoyment. Pupils have good opportunities to explore the curriculum through the environment, and the links that are developing across subjects are helping learning to become more meaningful. Pupils speak excitedly about their work, particularly the first-ever school carnival held in the summer term: 'This was really exciting!' The extensive range of sporting activities effectively supports pupils' good understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle. They know the importance of exercise and of eating sensibly and have a good understanding of the dangers of smoking, taking drugs and drinking too much alcohol.

Throughout the school there is a strong determination to improve. There is a keen sense of teamwork, and staff and governors are committed to making this school outstanding. Although improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, the improvements made in the past year, including improved standards and attendance, show that this school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress because they are taught well and very effectively cared for. Staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment and, as a result, there are very good relationships. Children enjoy school and develop their social skills well. The curriculum is interesting and a good range of play and other structured activities takes account of children's different rates of progress. Parents have a high opinion of this key stage, as summed up by one parent who said, 'This school buzzes with learning, fun and sparkle!'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessments are accurate and that the resulting information is used rigorously to plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure pupils know how they can improve their work.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so all are effectively involved in raising standards and achievement.

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

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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	Yes
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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**

This letter is to tell you about the recent inspection of your school and to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk to me. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education, but I saw many good things during my visit.

- The good things include:
- You get a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes, where I can see you are happy and enjoy your activities.
- I agree with you that your 'values education' work helps you to think about others and helps to improve behaviour. I think your behaviour is good.
- You all should be very proud of the way you like to help each other in school and other children in the world who are less fortunate than you are.
- You enjoy school life very much and I wish I could have been at the school carnival – it sounded really good fun! I hope you have another next year.
- You do lots of interesting things, including taking care of the environment and growing vegetables in the school garden.
- It is good to know that you know how to keep healthy and safe. Some of you gave me very good advice about the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol.
- Everyone who works at the school takes good care of you and makes sure you feel safe.
- Your headteacher has lots of very good ideas to improve the school, and staff and governors are very keen to make things better for you. I have also suggested some things that will help:
- Although by Year 6 you are attaining standards in your work that are similar to those of pupils in most schools, I have asked your headteacher to check that assessments made are exactly right, so that the next activities planned for you make certain you make good progress.
- I think you could do better if you knew more about how you could improve your work.
- Also, teachers who are responsible for different subjects should check carefully how well you are doing and then make plans and take action to make sure that things get better.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

12 October 2007

Dear Children



Inspection of Ledbury Primary School, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2BE

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Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Yours faithfully,
Lois Furness
Lead inspector