

Redditch, Webheath First School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116728 |
| Local Authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 312382 |
| Inspection date | 30 April 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Hazel Callaghan |

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

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| Type of school | First |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–10 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 289 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Elizabeth Naster |
| Headteacher | Chris Millward |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 May 2004 |
| School address | Downsell Road Redditch B97 5RJ |
| Telephone number | 01527 544820 |
| Fax number | 01527 547121 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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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. •How the school is better meeting the needs of boys in writing at Key Stage 1 and all pupils in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 so they make good progress. •Whether the school's self-evaluation of aspects of its provision judged as outstanding is accurate. •The effectiveness of the leadership team following changes in the staffing structure. Evidence was gathered from the school's assessments of pupils' standards and achievement, and results of the 2007 tests were analysed. Discussions took place with senior leaders, the staff and pupils. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were analysed. The inspector considered the quality of school self-evaluation and the impact of recent initiatives. 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

Webheath First School is larger than the average, with the majority of its pupils coming from families of White British backgrounds. A smaller than average proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's range of knowledge and experiences when they start in the Reception classes is similar to that expected for their age. The school has successfully achieved the Artsmark Gold Award, the Activemark Gold Award the Healthy School's Award and the Eco School Permanent Green Flag Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Webheath is a good school. It was judged good at the last inspection and under the excellent leadership of the headteacher has continued to improve so there are now many outstanding features. Under her strong direction there is a clear aim to further raise standards, not only in pupils' academic work but also in their personal development and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education and the world of work.

Standards are well above average and pupils make good progress through the school. This is the result of consistently good teaching that ensures pupils' learning is well supported and extended. Pupils regularly meet the challenging targets set for them. This good achievement starts in the Reception classes where children's confidence and love of learning is extremely well nurtured. Pupils show these good attitudes throughout the school and their enjoyment of learning is excellent. Pupils think highly of their teachers. They feel they are given a good understanding of how to improve and their personal aspirations are fostered by realistic targets for the next stage of learning, teachers' positive marking and encouraging comments. Although progress is good and standards are at least above average overall, the school has correctly identified that standards in writing in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 were not as strong as in other areas, especially for boys. A wide range of effective strategies has been introduced, such as learning about 'Letters and Sounds', and more fun activities are planned which are effectively engaging boys' interest, and standards and progress have improved. In Years 3 and 4, progress in all aspects of English is good. It is in mathematics where progress is slowest, so this too has been a focus for improvement in these classes. Effective changes to the grouping of pupils in mathematics lessons and more practical activities are already having a positive impact. Pupils' progress is gradually accelerating in mathematics but it still lags behind English and science.

The outstanding care, support and guidance provided by all the staff ensure children feel safe and secure. Staff respond to pupils' personal needs particularly well. Many parents' letters describe the various ways staff have responded to particular difficulties and given that extra special care that has helped children and their families through a difficult time. One parent wrote, 'This school has a strong nurturing environment.' Pupils follow the strong role models provided by staff and show care, support and understanding for other children. They are tolerant of each other and show sensitivity when dealing with those who have difficulties or troubles. They are confident in explaining their own ideas and show respect for each other's thoughts and feelings. Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities around the school and are proud of their role in making the school a happy and efficient place. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe. For example, they talk very sensibly about the possible difficulties caused by the current building work and the importance of being safe when using the Internet. Pupils also have a very good understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles. Older pupils described how they often prepare their own packed lunches explaining very clearly how they make positive eating choices. Almost every pupil loves coming to school to meet their friends and to enjoy the wider range of creative activities provided.

The curriculum is broad and enriched by many additional activities, visits and visitors. Sporting activities and learning about the arts are particular strengths that have been recognised by various awards such as the Artsmark Gold Award and the Activemark. Natural links are made between subjects to extend pupils' experiences and understanding, especially in English and in the use of information and communication technology. The use of the Forest School

experience is also proving valuable in promoting boys' better learning and all pupils' enjoyment of their activities. Pupils who have special gifts and talents are given many opportunities to extend their interests and skills. Aspects of curricular planning have been in place for many years and the school has recognised the need to make activities more relevant to pupils' lives. A start has been made to making activities more interesting and relevant but more can be done.

Many positive changes have been made over the last 18 months because of the strong lead provided by the headteacher and the commitment of all staff. This is recognised by many parents and reflected in this typical comment, 'The school is going from strength to strength.' Improvements are based on accurate and thorough evaluations of the school's strengths and areas for development. Systems for checking pupils' progress are comprehensive and the data are used very well to strengthen the teaching and to provide additional support for pupils who are likely to underachieve. All staff play a full part in school evaluation and they feel confident that their ideas are respected. Where possible these ideas are supported and used to develop and trial new ways of working. A new staffing structure is to be introduced in September to extend the management role of some staff and to further meet the accurately identified next stages of development for the school, such as the development of the curriculum. Governors are well informed and involved in all aspects of school life. They are proactive and quick to use their expertise and experience to benefit the school. The partnership with parents is good and there are strong links with other schools and outside agencies that support pupils, families and staff. Staff and governors work well together and evidence of many recent improvements and future plans are testimony to the school's good capacity for further advancement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception classes with a range of knowledge and experiences expected for their age. However, children's language skills are not as strong as other skills, whereas their personal development is a stronger aspect. As a result of the sensitive care and good teaching, children achieve well to reach above average standards. In the past, language skills continued to fall behind other areas of development but the introduction of new ways of working have made big improvements. This is having a positive impact on progress in both reading and writing. The curriculum for these young children is excellent as it provides a clear structure for learning that is based on children's own interests. Their ideas and curiosity lead the activities so they are highly motivated and love learning. The structure of the day ensures they have time to plan their own activities and to organise themselves. There is a strong focus on children's own recording so they gain in confidence in their own abilities. Staff work together as a cohesive team under the excellent leadership of the Foundation Stage coordinator. Very good links are forged with parents and the feeder pre-school groups.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' progress in mathematics so it equals that made in English and science in Years 3 and 4.
- Improve the curriculum so it becomes more relevant to pupils' experiences and the changes to the school community.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

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|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| 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 | 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? | 1 |

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

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| 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 | 1 |
| 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 |

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

Thank you for making me so welcome and answering my questions when I visited you. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school where some things are excellent. Here is a summary of what I found.

- You make good progress and you reach standards in English and science that are higher than in many schools.
- Your behaviour is good. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone, and you understand very well how to keep yourselves safe, and are prepared well for your Middle then High Schools.
- You clearly enjoy your lessons and most of you love coming to school. You work hard and try to do your best.
- You are taught well and your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting.
- The headteacher leads the school excellently and the staff work as an effective team.
- All the staff look after you extremely well so you are safe and happy.
- You have lots of interesting things to do including many visits and additional activities.

Even though Webheath is a good school, there are some ways in which it can do better. I have asked the headteacher and governors to do two things.

- Help you to make better progress in mathematics.
- Look at ways of making the curriculum even more exciting and interesting.

Thank you again for making me feel so welcome and do not forget you can help to make the school an even better place by continuing to work hard.

1 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Webheath First School, Redditch, B97 5RJ

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Best wishes

Hazel Callahan
Lead inspector