

Worcester, Cherry Orchard Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116749
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312388
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	618
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Hall
Headteacher	Jeremy Harwood
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Timberdine Close Worcester WR5 2DD
Telephone number	01905 352787
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In this much larger than average primary school the majority of pupils are of White British origin. Even though the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is below average, an increasing number of them are learning English for the first time. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need is average. Children's skills on entry to the school in the Reception class are broadly in line with age-related expectations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It provides a good quality of education because it is led and managed well and all staff are committed to school improvement. The majority of parents are delighted with the school's work and are full of praise for the caring staff, the way pupils are treated as individuals, and the progress that they make. 'The teachers here are always willing to go that extra mile,' and 'We are very happy and proud to say our children attend this school,' are typical comments made by parents.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, because of good teaching. However, children do not have sufficient opportunities to make independent choices about their learning and the outdoor environment is not used well enough to extend the curriculum. By Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above average, showing good progress, and achievement is good. The school's leaders know that standards in writing have been lower than those of other aspects of English, and have put into place a variety of strategies to rectify this. These have been effective in improving boys' attainment and in raising standards overall, but as yet not enough pupils attain the higher levels in this subject. This is because teachers do not consistently plan work that challenges the more able writers. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English for the first time is good. Careful and effective support from teachers and teaching assistants enable these pupils to make good progress.

Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the pupils' outstanding personal development. Behaviour is very good and pupils say they love coming to school. They greatly appreciate the outstanding curriculum, which focuses strongly on creativity and the performing arts. Pupils are polite and courteous, showing a great respect for others. They feel safe in school, reporting that bullying hardly ever happens. Importantly, they know how to get help if they need it. The need for leading a healthy lifestyle is taken seriously, and pupils are very active in monitoring the eating habits of their friends. They say their views are valued and members of the school council and eco-committee are very proud of their responsibilities. Pupils make good progress because of good teaching. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and teachers are clearly focused on involving pupils in their learning. A good emphasis on collaboration ensures that pupils work effectively together to share ideas and learn from each other. Assessment now takes place regularly. In the past it has not always been accurate and the tracking and target setting system has not been robust enough to ensure the progress of all pupils is maximised. Care, guidance and support, both academic and pastoral, are now good overall, but the improved assessment systems are not yet embedded in the school's work and staff are not fully accountable for the progress of their pupils.

Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection and governance is a notable strength. Good systems are in place to monitor and evaluate school effectiveness, resulting in accurate identification of strengths and weaknesses in provision. The good improvements in leadership and management, teaching and the curriculum show the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to the school in the Reception class are broadly in line with age-related expectations, although a significant proportion of them have skills below those expected, especially in speech and language. They make good progress in all areas of learning, but especially in their social skills and knowing the names of letters and sounds. They have very good relationships with adults, enjoy their learning, and are confident to work with other children or independently. Arrangements for when children first start at school are robust, and parents welcome the opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. A safe and caring environment is effectively established, and all adults have a good understanding of children and their individual needs. However, although the quality of teaching is good, learning opportunities are missed as there are too few opportunities for children to choose their own activities, or to learn in the outdoor environment. The leadership knows outdoor provision is a relative weakness, and good plans are in place to improve it in the immediate future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more able pupils receive appropriately challenging work to enable them to attain the higher levels in writing.
- Embed the improving use of assessment information so all staff are rigorously held to account for their pupils' progress.
- Extend the opportunities for Foundation Stage children to make independent choices and develop the outdoor learning environment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good progress in the Reception Year means that children are attaining average standards by the time they enter Year 1. This good progress continues and by the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are above average overall. Achievement is good. Standards are above average in mathematics, science and reading. Writing standards are broadly average and the school has worked hard to improve attainment in this subject. This work has been successful and the marked difference between boys' and girls' attainment seen in the past is no longer as evident. More pupils are attaining the levels expected for their age, but fewer pupils attain the higher levels when compared with other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do those who are learning English for the first time. Above average academic skills, including those gained in information and communication technology (ICT), mean that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education and later life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very confident and thoughtful young people who show pride in their school and have respect for one another. Relationships are very good. They greatly enjoy school, which is confirmed by their above average attendance. Typically, pupils say, 'School is enjoyable because it is safe and teachers care for us well.' They know how to keep safe both in and out of school. Behaviour is very good, and bullying is rare. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. They are sensitive to things of beauty, and clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They appreciate art and other cultures. Pupils are very well informed about

global issues, and speak articulately of the implications of the drought in Ethiopia, and the morality of 'Fair Trade'. Participation in extra-curricular sport is very good as pupils are very clear about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, including eating sensibly. The national Healthy School Award shows the school's commitment to this aspect of pupils' education. Pupils engage very well in decision-making through the work of the school council, the eco committee, and in raising money for charities, such as Water Aid and Children in Need.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'Lessons are fun and we do lots of interesting things', is a comment typically made by pupils. Planning is good as teachers try hard to make learning relevant and exciting for pupils, as shown by the Year 2 pirates' day, for example. Major strengths include the sharing of the learning of the lesson, pupils knowing the steps to success and teachers enabling pupils to work together to share ideas. The new way of marking, 'tickled pink and green for growth', is greatly appreciated. As one pupil said, 'This clearly tells me what I have learnt well and how I can improve!'. Questioning skills are good in most classes although this is not consistent throughout the school. The use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning is improving, but activities do not always extend the skills of the more able pupils. This is particularly the case in writing. Teaching assistants are used effectively in all lessons to involve fully pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English for the first time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The stimulating, exciting learning environment reflects the broad and interesting curriculum that pupils receive. Provision for ICT and for promoting creativity is outstanding. The emphasis on the performing arts, for example through music, art and design and drama, helps to develop confident and articulate young people who have developed a range of life skills based upon performance. Their social skills are promoted very effectively through excellent provision within the curriculum, including the residential experiences for pupils in Years 5 and 6. One pupil said that what he enjoys most at school is 'problem solving with my friends'. The writing initiatives are beginning to influence standards and are particularly effective in inspiring boys, who are now enthusiastic about wanting to write. Sport is not forgotten, and pupils have access to a wide range of in-school and after-school sporting activities. An extensive range of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum further, as do theme days, which provide an exciting context for learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This caring school conforms to national requirements for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Pastoral care is outstanding because it is highly valued and the school takes every opportunity to promote this aspect of care. Effective systems are in place to support good attendance. Outside agencies are used effectively to provide good support to those pupils and families who need additional help. Skilled teaching assistants play an important part in supporting pupils' welfare and academic progress.

In the past, assessments have not always been accurate and therefore pupils' progress has not been as good as it should be. However, the good tracking and target-setting system now in place is starting to provide teachers with accurate information about pupils' attainment to help them plan work that more effectively meets pupils' needs. Marking also has improved recently and pupils have individual curricular targets in English and mathematics. As yet, pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting their own targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership at all levels has a clear focus on raising standards and achievement. There is a common sense of purpose where inclusion and equality are at the heart of all initiatives. Significant improvements to the way responsibilities are delegated and monitored have a positive influence on how the curriculum is planned and taught, and how work is assessed. Monitoring and evaluation of provision are thorough and have successfully improved the quality of teaching, especially in writing. Good systems have been introduced to track pupils' progress, and the recently introduced pupil progress meetings are providing a good forum for discussion. However, as yet, the information from these meetings is not used well enough to ensure that staff become more accountable for ensuring that pupils make the best progress possible. The outstanding governing body is supportive of the school and is providing the challenge needed to ensure all initiatives for improvement are successful. The vast majority of parents are appreciative of the school's work, although a small minority do not think the school considers their suggestions or ideas for improvement enough.

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?	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

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

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	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
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	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	1
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**

Dear Children

Inspection of Worcester, Cherry Orchard Primary School, Worcester, WR5 2DD

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We felt very welcome and enjoyed meeting you all. We thought you were very polite and friendly and very well behaved. Your parents should be proud of you. We agree when you say your school is good and you do lots of exciting things. Some of your art work is really good. This helps to make the classrooms and corridors bright and stimulating. We all wish we could have come to see the 'Rock Show'. We heard from your teachers how well you all performed. Well done.

You are all making good progress in your work and you are especially good at information and communication technology (ICT). We were pleased that you enjoy coming to school and enjoy all the visits, clubs and extra activities. It is good you feel safe in school and that adults will always help you. You know about the importance of healthy eating and having plenty of exercise. We were impressed by how well you take on responsibilities, help in school and the community, and know about things that are happening in the world.

We think you all work hard and this is because your teachers do a good job in planning lessons that are interesting. We like the way you share ideas and learn from each other. By the time you leave in Year 6 you are attaining standards that are above those found in most schools. Even so we think some of you could do better in your writing. So, we have asked your teachers to make sure that those of you who are good at writing have work that helps you to get even better. Although those of you in the Reception class make good progress, we think you should have more opportunities to choose what you would like to learn. We also think that the outside area needs improving. Your headteacher agrees and told us how the builders will be coming into school during the summer holidays to make a brand new outside area for Reception children to use. This sounds really exciting.

Your headteacher and all of the staff are doing a good job and we think they all try very hard to do the best for you. Now we have asked your headteacher to check regularly that all staff are making sure every one of you is learning as well as you can.

Thank you again for your help and keep on working hard for your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Furness Lead inspector