

Wychbold First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116762
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312392
Inspection date	9 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judy Pearce
Headteacher	Peter Bravo
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
School address	School Road Wychbold Droitwich WR9 7PU
Telephone number	01527 861421
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wychbold is a small school that serves parts of Droitwich and Bromsgrove. The school has a nursery that currently has eight children attending each morning. Although the overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the school is usually below average, the proportions vary considerably between different year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wychbold is a good school, where pupils of all abilities achieve well. Children usually join the school with standards that are average. By the time they leave, standards are well above average, and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Parents say their children love coming to school, and this enjoyment is evident in the way they throw themselves into their work and the smiles on their faces. Many parents describe the school as 'wonderful', saying that it 'operates like one big happy family'.

The children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage, where they make outstanding progress in all aspects of their development, but especially so in their reading, writing and number work. Progress in mathematics and reading continues to be strong through the rest of the school, while progress in writing is a bit slower. In mathematics and reading, teachers know exactly where to pitch tasks that all pupils find challenging but achievable because they know exactly what each pupil is capable of. In writing, the assessments are not quite as accurate so teachers sometimes set work that is a bit too easy for the most able in particular, and are not always able to tell pupils exactly what they need to do to improve. In all other respects though, the work that is given to pupils builds well on what they have learnt in previous lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by a relatively large team of experienced and effective teaching assistants. The school is quick to respond to their additional needs by making changes to the curriculum and resources, so they make equally as good progress as other pupils.

Like any good family, the school places the care of children at its heart. All pupils are known very well by the staff, who are quick to notice, and act upon, any problems that may arise. Pupils are confident because they receive praise when appropriate, but they also behave exceptionally well because they are clearly and consistently taught right from wrong. They are remarkably knowledgeable about how to stay healthy and safe, because they get lots of opportunities to learn about these aspects and staff consult with them about how the school can be improved in these areas. Above all else though, pupils show kindness to each other, simply because they know it is the right way to act.

It is not just the pupils who are happy at the school. The morale of staff is high and they all praise the headteacher for his support as they strive for ever-improving standards. Their success is seen in the good progress made since the school was last inspected. The headteacher and governors gain a clear and accurate view of the school's performance through detailed checks, and know exactly what needs to be improved.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children settle into the Nursery exceptionally quickly and are soon forging ahead in their development. Children start with a range of skills that are broadly typical for their age, although this varies from year to year. Teaching and learning are outstanding. This results in children securely working within, and some exceeding, the learning goals expected by the time they enter Year 1. Staff understand the needs of young children and plan well tailored and lively activities for them which stimulate their curiosity and desire to learn. Many activities are planned by the children themselves in the Reception class. Children's development is assessed frequently, systematically and thoroughly in both the Nursery and Reception. This enables staff to provide

the challenge and support that children need to make the best possible progress. Children quickly find their feet, work and play happily together, and readily participate in activities. In response to the constant encouragement children receive, they rapidly develop very good number, communication and language skills. The relatively large team of staff is very well led and managed. They all plan together and know exactly what their role is in each lesson.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessments made of pupils' writing are accurate.
- Use the resulting information to set work that is suitably demanding and to provide guidance on how each pupil's writing can be improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage. Last year, over a third of children had learning difficulties, but in spite of this their standards were above average by the end of the Foundation Stage. This year, the children have already made rapid progress in just a few weeks. Pupils of all abilities achieve well as they move through Years 1 to 4. Progress is very good in mathematics, reading and science, but a bit slower in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils love school. This is shown in the high levels of attendance and their obvious enthusiasm and desire to succeed in their work. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and they help to foster a real sense of community. This also extends beyond the school. Pupils initiate fundraising activities themselves and turn up in out-of-school hours, with their parents, for projects such as litter picking in the local community. All play happily together and, like in any good community, the older pupils keep a close eye on younger ones to ensure they stay safe. They enjoy learning, developing new skills and taking part in the many activities and opportunities that the school provides. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they are exceptionally polite. School council members are proud of their school and feel involved in making decisions which benefit all children, such as providing a water fountain. Pupils have a remarkable knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy, and why it is important. There are no fizzy drinks or sweets to be found in this school. Pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan activities that pupils find interesting and fun. Pupils loved 'guess the shape' for example, where they had to work out which shape was being described by their friend in mathematics. Sometimes the pupils can become a little too excited, but teachers control this well, simply clapping their hands to quieten the class again instantly. The tasks themselves are particularly demanding in mathematics, and reading books are well matched to pupils' abilities. The assessments of pupils' writing are not quite as accurate as those in reading and mathematics. This means that teachers find it more difficult to set tasks that are challenging for all pupils, so the more able can sometimes find them a bit easy. In the Foundation Stage, on the other

hand, the frequent and accurate assessments provide an excellent basis for the planning of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a rich variety of stimulating activities that lead to pupils developing a thirst for learning. The well stocked library and support from volunteers to listen to readers, through the Better Reading Programme, help to engender a love of books and promote high standards of reading. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities, which broaden pupils' experience and contribute to their academic and personal development. There is extensive work on other cultures, which leads to pupils having an outstanding knowledge of how other people live both in this country and abroad. Lessons frequently start with exercises, reinforcing the school's message about staying healthy. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies significantly from year to year, as does the nature of their needs. Parents rightly praise the school for its swift action in bringing in extra help and changing the curriculum to meet any special needs, so these pupils are not disadvantaged in any way.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of all its pupils, who in turn are appreciative of their school and the care it gives them; one child commented that 'school is like a family, where everyone looks after everyone else'. There are effective arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety. Procedures for child protection are thorough, but there is only one member of staff trained in these matters, which is not enough. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that if they were in difficulty, the staff would give them the help they need. The school has recently improved its systems for monitoring pupils' progress, and these are now good. They allow teachers to provide clear and accurate advice to pupils on how to improve in mathematics and reading, but not yet in their writing. Parents and carers are welcomed into school and are very well informed about school life. They have confidence in the school and recognise its contribution to the care and well-being of their pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's managers, including governors, maintain a clear and accurate view of its performance. The checks made on teaching are detailed and point out exactly what has worked well in lessons, while indicating what could be even better. Governors play a particularly strong role in monitoring the school's performance, producing written reports on each subject and area of the school's work. All this leaves the school in an ideal position to identify the most important areas for improvement, such as progress in writing. The actions taken have proved particularly effective in raising standards, both academic and personal. Demanding targets are produced for performance in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, but the targets for Years 3 and 4 send out the wrong message to staff as they are too low. Governors do a very good job of ensuring that all legal requirements are met, but the school has a lot of money saved up that has not been allocated to any projects.

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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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Wychbold First and Nursery School, Droitwich Spa, Wychbold, WR9 7PU

Thank you very much for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. Your mums and dads can be very proud of your excellent behaviour and good manners. You made our visit a really enjoyable one.

You told us that you love coming to school, and we know why. You get a good education. You like all the fun work you do in lessons and all the extra things like trips and meeting visitors. Your school is like a big family, where everyone is kind to each other and the older children keep an eye on the younger ones to make sure they stay safe at playtime.

You said 'the teachers know how to teach', and this sums up why you learn so much. They know you very well. They know when you are unhappy, and how to make things right again. They are very good at giving you work to do that makes you think hard in mathematics. They also make sure your reading gets better and better by choosing books that help you learn new words and make you want to read even more. By the time you leave school you are very good at reading and mathematics. Your writing is not quite so good, so we have asked the teachers to check on how well you are doing and tell you what you need to do to make your writing better. This will also help them give you work that is just hard enough for you.

Your school is getting better and better every year. The grown-ups who run it know exactly which bits are not as good as others, and how to put them right. Above all though, they make all the mums, dads and teachers feel just as much a part of your school family as you are, so everybody ends up happy and wanting to do their best for you.

With all best wishes for your futures.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll Lead inspector



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Lead inspector