

# Alveley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123353
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314571
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Walsh

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	88
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ruth Sims
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marilyn Locke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Daddlebrook Road Alveley Bridgnorth WV15 6JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01746 780284
<b>Fax number</b>	01746 781164

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is usually just above average but can vary greatly between year groups and almost half of last year's Year 6 had learning difficulties. All the teaching staff, including the headteacher, have joined the school within the last two years. The school has achieved the Healthy School Gold Star status and the Activemark.

## 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 school that has real strengths in the way it promotes pupils' personal development and looks after pupils. The headteacher and teaching staff have quickly formed a committed and enthusiastic team whose members work well together and who are determined to move the school forward. The school is popular with parents, who typically talk about 'a warm, friendly caring school'. Pastoral care is very good and parents say that 'staff are very approachable and understanding'. The good attention paid to personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are well informed about how to stay healthy and safe. Pupils enjoy keeping fit and eagerly join in the varied sporting activities. Pupils and parents appreciate the excellent range of school clubs and these activities help to make learning interesting, relevant and fun. Successful partnerships with the local community further extend opportunities for pupils and make a valuable contribution to their personal development and well-being. The links with local churches are particularly strong. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their improving levels of attendance. They learn to get on very well together, develop into confident and sensible individuals, and their behaviour is good.

Although teaching is satisfactory, the work set is not always carefully matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils' achievement is only satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception class because of satisfactory teaching and a sound curriculum. In 2007, pupils reached broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 but their standards in reading and writing were lower than those in mathematics. The school has recognised that, in the past, progress had been held back by frequent changes of staff and difficulties with delivering a coherent curriculum to classes that contained pupils from different key stages. Staffing is now more stable and there are better arrangements for teaching mixed-age classes. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were below average. Below average standards in English were adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Nevertheless the majority of these pupils made satisfactory progress because they were supported well. Pupils made inadequate progress in science, resulting in low standards at the end of Year 6. The school has made some improvements to the science curriculum in Years 3 to 6, but the arrangements for teaching science are still not good enough throughout the school.

Even though the school knows its overarching strengths and weaknesses, some of its self-evaluation is too positive. This is because judgements have not been based on rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, or the robust analysis of data relating to younger pupils. While subject leaders are very committed and hardworking, some have not yet developed the skills necessary to help the head and governors precisely evaluate the school's performance and bring about change. The school's satisfactory capacity to improve is illustrated by the way leaders were able to quickly identify that pupils were starting to fall behind in mathematics. Rigorous efforts ensured that any potential underachievement in mathematics was quickly nipped in the bud.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The very good relationships between adults and children are very much appreciated by parents, who often comment about how well their children are supported and how quickly they settle in. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress because of satisfactory teaching

and curriculum. Children's personal development is good and, as a result, they have very positive attitudes to their work and plenty of confidence. They are very articulate and work well together. Although the curriculum is satisfactory, it is rather formal. Adults lead many activities and there are too few opportunities for children to learn through play. The outdoor provision is developing well. There are interesting activities outside and the 'Forest Schools' initiative is adding another appealing dimension. However, activities in the classroom are not always inviting enough to attract children into different areas of learning. While assessment is carried out in some detail, the school cannot be sure it is entirely accurate as it has not been externally checked.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve achievement and provision in science throughout the school.
- Ensure that the work set is carefully matched to pupils' abilities.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation, including the involvement of subject leaders, so that it better informs self-evaluation.

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**

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in Reception, reaching broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. It is difficult to establish a clear overview of attainment on entry to Reception and to Year 1 because the school's assessments have not been externally verified. Progress through Years 1 and 2, although satisfactory, is fairly pedestrian and pupils have reached broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 in recent years. The school has realised that progress in both writing and mathematics can slow in Years 3 and 4 but is working hard to resolve this issue by further developing teachers' skills. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English and mathematics, though below average in science.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils work hard and want to do well. Most pupils enjoy their education a great deal. Attendance rates have been average for some years but they improved during the autumn term. Pupils' social and moral development is good and this is reflected in their good behaviour and the way they all get on well together. Pupils report that any fallings out are only minor and are quickly resolved by teachers. They say they feel very safe in school. Understanding of non-European cultures is starting to develop but the school is aware that there is still more work to be done to challenge stereotypes and improve pupils' understanding of people from different backgrounds. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community through the playground 'Buddy' system and their work with the school council. Although pupils know how to keep fit and healthy and take part enthusiastically in sport, they do not always make healthy choices of food when faced with temptation. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. They are gaining confidence and develop good work habits but they are only reaching broadly average academic standards.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and supportive. This helps pupils to develop confidence and positive attitudes to learning. There is some good teaching where lively, interesting lessons engage pupils and encourage good learning. However, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the teaching of English and mathematics is secure but their expectations are sometimes not high enough, especially in science. The work is not always matched carefully enough to pupils' needs, resulting in a lack of challenge, particularly for the average and more able pupils. Younger pupils can spend too much time engaged in drawing or colouring in. Teaching assistants are skilled at supporting lower-ability pupils and those with learning difficulties and help ensure these pupils make satisfactory progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has altered its arrangements for placing pupils in mixed-age classes. This has made it easier to plan a curriculum that builds in both continuity and progression. As a result there is satisfactory provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Although the curriculum for science has improved in Years 3 to 6, it has some way to go and the provision for science is not up to scratch across the school. Opportunities for writing are getting better and teachers are starting to recognise the value of making links between subjects and are aware that this is an area they could further develop. Although there are many good sporting opportunities, the range of extra-curricular activities extends far beyond this with such varied activities as the newspaper club, media club, chess, choir and dance, which are often run by enthusiastic teaching assistants. A good range of visits makes learning more relevant and enjoyable.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. The school is a caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are usually very good. Consequently, pupils feel valued and safe. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are securely in place. The school works well with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well. Systems to check on pupils' progress have only just been put in place but they have already been used successfully to spot potential underachievement in mathematics. Marking usually tells pupils how to improve their English work but there is limited guidance about how to progress in mathematics and science. Pupils know their individual learning targets well but they are not always referred to in teachers' marking.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Financial constraints arising from a falling roll means that the headteacher has a heavy workload but, despite this, she has maintained high staff morale and developed a hard-working teaching team. The whole-staff team and governors make an important contribution to securing pupils' good personal development and high standards of care. There are good links with parents, outside agencies and the wider community which provide good support to pupils' well-being. Aspects of self-evaluation are too positive because there is insufficient direct monitoring of teaching and learning. There is also a lack of focus on accurate information when considering attainment on entry to Reception and Year 1. Some subject leaders are inexperienced and have not yet developed the skills necessary to fully contribute to self-evaluation.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Inspection of Alveley Primary School, Bridgenorth, Shropshire WV15 6JT

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and listened very carefully to what you had to say. I am writing to tell you what we found out. You go to a satisfactory school with lots of good things to celebrate, such as the way you are looked after and the way you develop into such delightful, well-behaved children. You told us that you enjoy school, and especially the extra activities. We thought that you were very lucky to have such a wonderful range of clubs. We liked reading about all the exciting activities in your school newspaper. Well done to everyone involved in its production.

It was lovely to listen to the choir singing after school. We knew you were having a good time because we saw your happy smiling faces, which gave us a real boost! It was good to hear that you know how to keep fit and healthy and we think the playground buddies and the school council do a good job helping the school get even better.

You work hard in your lessons. You are making similar progress to pupils in other schools and usually reach similar standards, but we think that pupils in Years 1 and 2 could reach higher standards in their reading and writing and that all of you could make much better progress in science. Teaching is satisfactory but we have asked your teachers to make sure that you are given work that is not too easy or too hard for you.

The people who run your school make sure it is a very happy place where you are well cared for. We know that your teachers are working hard to improve the school but we have asked them to develop their management skills so they can help the headteacher to check the quality of school's work.

All the best for the future.

Susan Walsh Lead inspector



31 January 2008

Dear Children

**Inspection of Alveley Primary School, Bridgenorth, Shropshire WV15 6JT**

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Susan Walsh  
Lead inspector