

Minsterley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123383
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314582
Inspection date	15 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Sims

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	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Goodwin
Headteacher	Clive Roe
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2005
School address	Minsterley Shrewsbury SY5 0BE
Telephone number	01743 791398
Fax number	01743 791398

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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 opportunities for pupils to develop independence and exercise their initiative • the effectiveness of teachers' marking • the breadth of the curriculum. Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and an analysis of parents' views. 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

Minsterley Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties is above average. The Year 6 pupils and class teacher were absent from school during the inspection as they were on a residential visit.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Minsterley Primary School is a good school. It has continued to improve since its previous inspection, and some aspects of its work are outstanding. The pupils love their school. When asked to give one adjective to describe it they came up with 'fantastic', 'superb', 'great', 'brilliant' and 'caring'. Parents' views, as gauged through their response to the inspection questionnaire, are equally enthusiastic. The school is a very friendly and happy place, which is very much at the heart of the local community. Parents value the open-door policy which allows them to come in at the start and end of the day, and which helps to ensure very good communication and a quick resolution to any problems. Pupils really enjoy the excellent range of activities and learning opportunities available to them. These include a wide variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs, visits to places of interest, visitors to the school and a week-long residential trip for pupils in Year 6. In the penultimate class, pupils enjoy participating in an international drama project made possible through the excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT). They complete interesting projects in history and geography, many pupils learn to play a musical instrument and there is a very wide range of sporting activity. Excellent links with other organisations and partners also contribute to the richness of the education offered.

The pupils' academic achievement is good and some pupils make exceptional progress. Standards are above average, although they have varied from year to year, reflecting the variation of ability in each year group and the distorting effect that small year groups can have on the school's results. For a number of years, the school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly average, but they were exceptionally high in 2007 and are above average in writing and mathematics for the current Year 2. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 have been well above average since the last inspection, although standards for the current Year 6 are average in English and above average in mathematics and science.

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the positive atmosphere in every classroom. The pupils are keen to learn because lessons are varied and interesting. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is very good and the progress of individual pupils is reviewed regularly. Pupils complete a good range of work in every class, but the work-rate in Year 6 is particularly high across the full range of subjects, not just in the subjects which are tested nationally in May. A weaker and inconsistent aspect of the teaching is the marking of pupils' work. Some work is marked in detail, but for much of their written work pupils are not given enough feedback on where they have made mistakes or what they need to do to improve. This is particularly the case in subjects such as history, geography and religious education, so the potential for these subjects to improve pupils' literacy skills is not fully exploited.

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. This reflects the very good pastoral care. However, sometimes adults do too much for the pupils, and this hinders their development as fully independent learners. Sometimes, staff provide answers for the pupils rather than helping them to develop the skill of finding out or working things out for themselves. Not enough time is given for pupils to review and improve their work, and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to exercise independent choice apart from in their Reception year. Pupils enjoy undertaking responsibilities, such as organising the playground equipment, but others do not always exercise their responsibility for looking after the equipment by putting it away once they have used it. These

are finer points of personal development, as the pupils are generally very well behaved, polite, friendly and helpful. They participate enthusiastically within lessons and in the wide range of activities outside lessons. The many sporting activities help pupils to lead healthy lifestyles, although not all pupils choose to eat healthily at break or lunchtime. They have a good understanding of safe practices, although minor accidents show that they are not always as vigilant as they might be. However, with their good social skills, good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and good levels of self-confidence, they are well prepared for their future education.

The school is led and managed well. The staff greatly value the leadership of the headteacher, and this is evident in the excellent sense of teamwork which permeates all aspects of school life. The staff are committed, enthusiastic and hard working and give generously of their time. Their long service provides great stability for the school. There is a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and staff are keen to try out new ideas. Although the school's official targets do not appear to be particularly challenging, the good overall progress of all pupils, and the excellent progress of some individuals, show that staff revise these targets and challenge pupils on an individual basis to good effect. Governors, too, know the school well, provide good support and a good degree of challenge. All aspects of the school are monitored carefully, and the day-to-day management of the school is efficient and effective. All of the positive features of the school, the continual improvement evident over many years, the excellent teamwork and the commitment of all of the staff indicate that there is good capacity for the school to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Reception Year in the September or January of the year in which they are five and are taught alongside the youngest children from Year 1. The range of skills they show when they start school are fairly typical for their age, but are better now than they were a few years ago. Excellent links with the private nursery, which uses part of the school's buildings, have contributed to this improving profile on entry.

Children receive a good start to their education when they join Class 1. They make good progress in their first two or three terms, so that standards are just above average by the time they enter Year 1. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, benefiting from the positive, friendly ethos of the school as a whole and from the emphasis given to developing independence as they plan, carry out and then review their chosen activities. The introduction of a structured programme of activities for language and literacy has also had a positive impact on their communication skills, and most children develop a good level of self-confidence and self-awareness by the end of Reception. An experienced teacher provides good quality teaching, and children receive good support from teaching assistants and other adults helpers. They provide the right balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities and make good use of the enclosed outdoor area adjoining the classroom. Children's progress is monitored carefully through the completion of a Foundation Stage profile. The Foundation Stage provision is led and managed well, and there are excellent links with parents, who greatly appreciate the open dialogue with staff and the thorough induction arrangements which help their children to settle quickly and happily when they start school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the marking of pupils' work so that pupils know where they have made mistakes and receive clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- Raise awareness of how adults can help pupils to become more independent and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop greater initiative as learners and members of the school community.

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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	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?	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	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?	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	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

16 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Minsterley Primary School, Minsterley SY5 OBE

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. I should particularly like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me and tell me what it is like to be a pupil at Minsterley. You said that yours is a good school, and I agree with you. These are the main findings of my visit.

- You make good progress in your work and reach standards which are better than in many schools.
- Because of your good behaviour and the way you relate to each other and your teachers, your school is a friendly and very happy community.
- You receive good quality teaching in every class, and you are made to work particularly hard when you are in Year 6.
- The school is good at preparing you for the future by helping you to develop good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and giving you a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and keep yourselves safe.
- The school provides an excellent range of activities and trips and ensures that you learn much more than just English and mathematics.
- The staff take good care of you, and they are always happy to see your parents to talk about any problems or to let them know how you are getting on.
- The headteacher leads the school well and ensures that the staff work together very well as a team.

In order to make the school even better, I have asked the headteacher and staff to give you clearer guidance when marking your work so that you know where you have made mistakes and what you can do to improve. I have also asked them to provide more opportunities for you to become more independent learners. I hope that you will play your part in helping to make Minsterley even better by continuing to work hard, but also by taking responsibility for your actions and developing a real desire to improve your work so that it is of the highest quality at all times.

I am sorry I was unable to see Year 6 in action when I visited the school, but I am sure you had a wonderful time on your residential trip. I wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Graham Sims Lead inspector

16 July 2008



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