

The Wilfred Owen School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123422
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314594
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Cole

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Ferguson
Headteacher	Christopher Huss
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	The Monkmoor Campus Woodcote Way Monkmoor Shrewsbury SY2 5SH
Telephone number	01743 282360
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

About a third of pupils qualify for free school meals, an exceptionally high proportion by national standards. Pupils start at the school with low attainment. This partly reflects the fact that the school accepts an unusually high proportion, about two in five, of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is also much higher than usually found. The range of pupils' difficulties is wide and includes learning, physical, emotional and behavioural matters. Many of these pupils come from outside the immediate area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils achieve exceptionally well both at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. They make excellent progress in both their academic learning and their personal development. This is the result of inspirational leadership and the dedication of a staff totally committed to helping all pupils overcome any difficulties they have and achieve their full potential. The secret of the school's success is that school leaders present both staff and pupils with tough challenges to do the very best possible and at the same time provide them with the fullest possible support and encouragement. This approach is especially powerful in promoting the exceptional progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. One form of encouragement that pupils receive is the fun they have at school – in lessons, in their warm relationships with adults and each other, and in the excellent range of extra activities provided beyond the classroom. Right from the Nursery class through to Year 6, pupils enjoy school, take pride in their achievement and are very keen to please. Pupils feel very happy and safe at school. All of this reflects the exemplary standard of the care, support and guidance given to pupils. Not surprisingly, behaviour is excellent. Both senior staff and class teachers share extremely thorough knowledge of each pupil and their needs. The school 'goes the extra mile' where necessary to help pupils, sometimes, for example, giving or arranging support for families in difficult circumstances. With their extremely positive attitudes to school, pupils take full advantage of the excellent teaching and curriculum provided for them. Lessons are both very stimulating and very purposeful. Pupils respond with determination to the challenges presented. Lessons provide very successfully for the wide range of pupils' needs which are identified through precise and regular assessments. Close teamwork between teachers and the high number of teaching assistants employed results in very effective additional help for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. On the other hand, there is sometimes a lack of opportunity for older pupils to work on their own or the most able to tackle extra challenges. Information and communication technology (ICT) is very well used to make learning more exciting and effective. Thoughtfully designed topics linking subjects and the many interesting educational visits add to the liveliness of the learning and pupils' enjoyment. At the heart of the outstanding leadership and management of the school is the headteacher's clear vision and personal commitment. With excellent support from his most senior colleagues, he gives a very strong lead to the ethos of commitment, care and inclusion, which is fully shared by a very close-knit and well established team of staff. The school keeps an extremely thorough check on all aspects of its own performance and strives tirelessly for improvement. Excellent links are made with a wide range of organisations to support the school's work. Relationships with parents are very good; they think highly of the school, some writing of their appreciation using terms like 'wonderful', 'tremendous', 'excellent', 'lovely' and 'superb'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

All of the school's very positive qualities are as evident in the Nursery and Reception classes as in others. A welcoming, encouraging and caring atmosphere quickly helps the children to feel confident and content. The very well managed provision includes excellent teaching and a very good curriculum firmly focused on pupils' carefully identified needs. The children are constantly, but gently, challenged to learn as much as they can and their willingness to do so accounts for their exceptional progress. By the end of Reception, standards are below the national average but much higher than when the children joined the school. Progress in the

children's personal, social and emotional development, and in their speaking and listening skills, is especially good. Plenty of close adult support for individuals and small groups encourages the children to be more expressive and to interact constructively with adults and each other. There is a very good blend of child-chosen and play activities with structured and intensive adult-led learning. Wide-ranging activities are carefully designed to be both very purposeful and fun. The new internal and external accommodation and the equipment provided are attractive, stimulating and well used.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for older pupils to work on their own so they develop greater independence.
- Ensure the most able pupils are always set work that really stretches their thinking.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Following the excellent start made in the Nursery and Reception classes, pupils continue to make very good progress in Years 1 to 6. In recent years, pupils' results in national tests have generally been a little below average at the end of Year 2 but broadly in line with the national average at the end of Year 6. In view of the low attainment with which pupils started at the school, and the exceptionally high proportion of them who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, this represents outstanding achievement. The progress made by many of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is especially remarkable, their ultimate attainment exceeding the challenging targets set for them, sometimes by a wide margin. An area of outstanding progress not measured by national tests is the way pupils extend their speaking and listening skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Continuing the excellent pattern in the Nursery and Reception Years, pupils continue to grow in confidence and self-esteem as they move through the school. By Year 6, they are responsible and thoughtful young people with impressive speaking and listening skills that make them persuasive advocates for their school. They show great respect for their teachers. A significant number of pupils have social and emotional difficulties, but they are confident and achieve as well as their peers. Excellent behaviour and relationships show pupils know right from wrong and can exercise self-discipline. They are respectful of others, including those different from themselves. There is no significant bullying and any upsets are dealt with effectively. As a result, they enjoy attending. Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe and healthy and they act accordingly. They are physically very active at playtime, using fully the new outside play areas and equipment which they helped to plan. Some help to grow vegetables that have become a feature of school lunches. Pupils take a lot of responsibility in school, for example through the school council, Eco council and the Make IT Happen group. All these have raised funds for good causes, including a partner school in The Gambia and the local Air Ambulance. Such activities, pupils' marked self-confidence and their achievement of skills, notably in ICT, are contributing well to their preparation for the future demands of adult and working life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

A shining strength of the teaching is the highly effective management of pupils. The excellent atmosphere of harmonious relationships and enjoyment makes lessons very productive. Pupils willingly pay full attention to teachers and tasks, try really hard and behave extremely well. Teachers plan lively activities and they use interactive whiteboards very well to give visual impact to ideas and explanations and to hold pupils' interest. Thorough assessments of pupils are very well used to plan work well suited to their abilities and needs. Those finding difficulty are quickly identified and given excellent extra help, often through small-group or individual support from teaching assistants. Occasionally, lessons give older pupils too little opportunity to work on their own or provide insufficiently challenging work for a few more able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum combines systematic programmes for developing academic knowledge, skills and understanding and imaginative strategies for developing personal qualities, stimulating interest and providing enjoyment. Children learn more than one skill within each lesson, for example, when they improve both writing skills and personal and emotional understanding through creating poems about bullying. The regular use of speaking and listening activities in all subjects has helped pupils to make swift progress in these skills. Pupils welcome many visitors, for example to help them learn three-dimensional skills through ceramics, or about life in an Indian village. Off-site visits, some of them residential, and links with other organizations, including the school in The Gambia, further enrich the curriculum. Clubs before and after school offer a broad range of academic, sporting and artistic activities which extend pupils' horizons. Many participate in these, and enjoy them thoroughly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school checks extremely carefully to see how well all pupils are doing, both academically and personally. Parents applaud the school's thorough knowledge of each pupil as an individual. Pupils causing concern are soon identified and given all the help they need. The pastoral care of the substantial number of pupils with multiple and complex personal and social problems is exemplary. The school makes excellent use of its own and many external resources to provide help that allows these pupils to gain in confidence, self-esteem and academic achievement. All statutory procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorously applied. Academic guidance for pupils is also very strong. Teachers give pupils clear and relevant targets and pupils know what they have to do to improve. Written feedback on pupils' work is always helpful and frequently offers excellent advice about how to do better still, particularly in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The very many excellent qualities of the school reflect the totally determined and visionary leadership of the headteacher. He inspires a dedicated and very hard-working staff team in a

shared drive to provide the very best quality of education and thereby extend opportunity to all pupils, whatever their disadvantage or difficulty. Challenges to colleagues to do still better are backed up with very good guidance, encouragement and opportunity for staff to continually develop their professional skills. The school has a very good record of constant improvement based on its very precise and accurate evaluation of itself through rigorous checks, particularly on pupils' progress and on the teaching. The capacity for further improvement is excellent. The school is determined and enterprising in securing full support for its work through close partnerships with other educational and welfare organizations. Governors are very supportive and keep a very good watch over the school. The school recognises that current staffing levels mean that leadership and management is overly dependent on too few senior staff.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
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?	1
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?	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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Wilfred Owen School, Shrewsbury SY7 5SH

The inspectors who visited your school recently really enjoyed the days they spent with you. We have said that yours is an outstanding school. The adults in charge of the school are doing an extremely good job and providing you with an excellent education. We would like to thank all of you for your friendly welcome. It was very good to see what you do at school and to talk to some of you.

It was very pleasing to see how very well you behave. We could also see that you enjoy school a lot. This was just what some of you and your parents told us. We noticed that you get on very well with each other and with the adults. We were particularly impressed by your brilliant attitude to school and to your work. You listen very carefully to your teachers and try really hard. All of this is helping you make excellent progress.

Some of you told us about all the help and encouragement the teachers and the others adults give you. We saw for ourselves that they look after you really well. The teachers and their assistants give you excellent lessons and provide very good work that helps you learn a lot. They also organize plenty of interesting visits, events and clubs which you enjoy.

We have suggested two changes we think the school should make:

- We want the school to give older pupils more opportunities to work on their own.
- We think some of you could sometimes do harder work, so we have asked the school to provide it.

We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities to show just how much you can do.

Yours sincerely

Martin H Cole Lead inspector