

Windmill Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 127090 |
| Local Authority | Telford and Wrekin |
| Inspection number | 315590 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Mary Hamby HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 437 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Graham Phillips |
| Headteacher | Alison Lamputt |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Beaconsfield Brookside Telford TF3 1LG |
| Telephone number | 01952 386360 |
| Fax number | 01952 386370 |

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| Age group | 3–11 |
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Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors carried out this inspection.

Description of the school

Windmill Primary School and Children's Centre is a large school that opened in September 2006 and was created from the amalgamation of two former schools. Many of the staff from the two schools, including the headteacher, transferred to Windmill. The school is set in the heart of a large housing estate, originally built by Telford Development Corporation, and many of its pupils live on the estate. Most are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils entitled to receive a free school meal is more than double the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Windmill Primary School and Children's Centre is a good school that is developing well. All staff share the headteacher's strong vision and together are creating a recipe for success.

Questionnaires show that parents are pleased by what the school provides and that they have been pleased with the amalgamation. Good links exist with other partners, such as the local secondary school, which helps to promote community cohesion and support the pupils well.

When the children start Nursery, standards are lower than expected, but the good teaching enables them to settle well and make good progress. This good start is built on successfully each year, so that by the time they leave, standards in almost all subjects meet the national average. Good achievement is the order of the day for all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. However, writing is the exception to this good picture. Progress is not as rapid as in other subjects and consequently standards fall slightly below average. The pupils struggle with spelling, grammar and punctuation; the content of their stories is too brief and some of the pupils are not as keen on English as other subjects.

Teaching and the curriculum are good. Staff plan interesting activities and use resources well to maintain the pupils' attention and make lessons fun. Behaviour management is very effective and so lessons run smoothly. In some instances staff make a discernible contribution to pupils' progress by their excellent marking, but this is not the case in all classes or in all subjects.

A key strength of the school is the outstanding level of care, support and guidance that each pupil receives. This is particularly beneficial to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils. Staff are kind and understanding and their highly effective care and guidance strongly support the pupils' good personal development, which is demonstrated in their good behaviour and their growing understanding of citizenship. They have a clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy opportunities to contribute to school life. They enjoy coming to school, and although attendance is improving, it is still below average.

The strong leadership and management from the headteacher and deputy headteacher are instrumental in the success of this school. Their passion for the school is clear to see and they have built an effective school in a short space of time. Clear and appropriate priorities are identified and each member of staff understands their contribution to school improvement. Governors play an active part in school development and the clear progress the school has already made indicates its good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The welcoming and purposeful atmosphere gives children a secure and happy start to school, and this helps them to achieve well. They settle quickly into routines and make particularly good progress in their personal development. Strong home-school links ensure that parents are encouraged to spend time with their child and this too helps the children to feel secure.

The strong teamwork and exciting curriculum are outstanding features of the provision. Children enjoy a wide range of activities, both indoors and outside, that promote creativity and develop other important skills. The many opportunities provided for the development of early reading and writing help the children's understanding of letters and sounds. All activities are very well matched to the needs of individual children and are presented in an interesting way to stimulate ideas and promote independence. The staff make very perceptive observations of the children's

learning and track their development thoroughly. However, not all of the information is used as purposefully as possible to set targets for the next stage of their development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in writing in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that the school's excellent marking policy is implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Continue to implement strategies to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well because they pay attention and the teaching is good. Lessons are interesting and this helps pupils to concentrate and reach their targets. They make good progress because work is matched well to their particular needs and help is on hand when they need it. Although children's skills and knowledge are well below expected levels when they start school, they soon start to catch up, but the majority still enter Year 1 with lower-than-expected skills. Standards in Year 2 are slightly lower than average, particularly in writing. Although the pupils enjoy opportunities to write for a range of different purposes, their spelling, handwriting and the content of their writing do not reach the expected levels. Writing is also a weaker aspect of progress in Key Stage 2, particularly so when pupils have to write using their imagination. In other subjects, standards meet expected levels and pupils show good understanding of key ideas and apply this knowledge well in new situations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Almost all of the pupils love coming to school and attendance rates are improving. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils are friendly, helpful and happy. They know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and keenly participate in regular exercise. Pupils are developing a strong sense of good citizenship and are contributing to community life, for example, through the school council and the 'Trust-Us' team, who help others in the playground. Their well-developed personal qualities contribute well to the way they are prepared for the next stage in their education and later life.

An outstanding feature of their personal development is the courtesy shown to visitors and their willingness to go out of their way to do jobs and help each other. The pupils show good concentration in lessons, and participate keenly in most activities. 'We like maths, science is brilliant but we don't like literacy so much', commented two boys in Year 6. This is typical of the responses of older boys, who show less enthusiasm for writing stories than for other sorts of writing, such as recording investigations or setting out instructions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All staff have high expectations of the pupils and encourage them to try their best. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning by their knowledge of individual children and their understanding of what they need to do in each lesson. The subjects taught by specialist staff significantly enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment. Creative teaching styles respond

well to the subject matter being taught and there is a good mix of teacher instruction and opportunities for the pupils to learn independently. In some lessons, speaking skills are developed well, but in others, opportunities are missed for the pupils to develop arguments or express opinions.

Assessment is accurate and is used well to set challenging targets. Some pupils are starting to assess their own work, but this is still at an early stage of development. Marking is outstanding in a few classes, but in the majority, work is not marked well enough. It does not identify clearly the next steps for the pupils to learn, and in some instances the teachers' handwriting is not clear enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad curriculum offers a wide range of learning experiences, which enables all pupils to make good progress. Extra-curricular activities add a rich dimension to school life and develop pupils' individual talents. The curriculum for personal and social development supports pupils very well and gives vulnerable pupils the confidence to make a strong contribution in lessons. Appropriate emphasis is given to developing key skills such as numeracy and information and communication technology, and this prepares pupils well for life beyond school. The English curriculum, with its focus on sounds and letters, enables pupils to become fluent readers and learn things for themselves. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to write for a range of different purposes, but not enough is done to inspire older boys to write creatively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding commitment to the care of each pupil creates a safe and vibrant ethos for learning where pupils know they are valued. Excellent support from the staff team and from other professionals, such as educational psychologists, ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Risk assessments and first aid arrangements are meticulous. Other safeguarding arrangements are robust and regularly reviewed, and staff training on such matters is up to date. Arrangements for pupils moving into the school are highly effective and good links with the secondary school help the pupils to make a smooth transition to Year 7. Arrangements for tracking the progress of pupils are good and used well to set targets. The school is becoming increasingly effective in reducing absenteeism and takes an appropriately hard line in not authorising absence for holidays in term time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strong and motivational leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher is well focused on raising standards. Senior staff have an effective role in school improvement and their creative management style motivates all staff to play their part. They have suitable plans for school improvement, including robust target-setting systems. The progress of these plans is checked meticulously and regularly, but the impact of initiatives, such as the marking policy, is not always evaluated well enough.

The leadership team has been extremely successful in bringing together the staff from the former schools to form one caring and resourceful team. Teamwork is good and the strengths

and talents of individuals are valued and utilised very effectively. These good relationships have a positive spin-off on the pupils, who show respect for each other and for their environment. Governors work together well and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|----|
| 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 | NA |
| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| 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

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| 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

28 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Windmill Primary School, Brookside, Telford TF3 1LG

Thank you for the lovely welcome to the school that my colleagues and I received when we visited your school. You all made us feel at home, by your excellent manners and friendly conversation. We were pleased to see that you behave well and that you respect each other and all the adults. It is not difficult to see why you enjoy school and feel safe and happy there. All the staff care for you very well indeed and provide you with lots of interesting things to do.

We noticed that you try hard with most of your work and this is helping you to reach the standards you should. However, when we spoke to some of you, it became clear that you do not like writing as much as other subjects. We followed this up by looking in your books and saw that you are not doing as well with this as other subjects, like science and mathematics. Please try harder with your writing – perhaps you could aim to write some exciting stories for the next inspectors to read!

We saw lots of good lessons and noticed how well your teachers set the right work for you to do. However, some of their marking is not as helpful as it should be. We have asked all the teachers to try hard to give you useful comments and to make sure that their handwriting is clear, so that you can read what they have to say and respond to it. I know that Mrs Lamputt will follow this up because she is a very good headteacher and wants the best for all of you. All the people who help her to run the school are doing a good job and making Windmill a good school to be proud of. One thing that they are trying very hard with is to make sure all of you come to school regularly. I know that some of you have had chicken pox recently, and we wouldn't want you to come to school when you are ill. However, the school attendance rate is slightly lower than it should be and so we would like you, your parents and the school to improve this. After all, if you don't come to school you will miss out on all the learning and fun that you fit into each day.

Always remember to do your best.

Mrs Hamby