

Suckley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116741
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326436
Inspection date	13 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	52
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara Gardner
Headteacher	Sara James
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Suckley Worcester WR6 5DE
Telephone number	01886 884283
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This very small school admits children from 10 local villages. All are of White British origin and speak English as their first language. Compared with most schools, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A large proportion of pupils enter or leave the school at other than the normal times, and a third of those in Key Stage 2 have attended this school for less than two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. They make good progress from their starting points, and standards by Year 6 are well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. In mathematics, some pupils struggle when asked to do quick calculations and this also affects their ability to solve complex number problems.

The school's reputation for the good personal and social development of its pupils is justified. Pupils reflect deeply on issues such as losing a loved one, and have a good understanding of how their actions affect others. They enjoy taking responsibility for their community, and the school council and ECO-schools committee take their duties seriously. For example, the school council showed impressive maturity when helping to appoint the new headteacher, and the ECO-schools committee helped to form the travel plan to discourage parents from always driving children to school. Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and say how much they appreciate being part of this small, close-knit community. While their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall, they have too few opportunities to experience different faiths and cultures first hand to gain a thorough knowledge of the lives of other people in the United Kingdom or further afield.

Pupils are full of praise for their good teachers, particularly for the way 'they know you all so well and make you feel safe'. Typical lessons are a good balance between the teacher teaching new skills, pupils working at tasks in pairs or groups and then time for reflection at the end to assess their progress. Teaching assistants play an important part in lessons as they work effectively with small groups and support individual pupils who need extra help. Teachers' marking is generally detailed and helpful, although this varies from class to class. A good, imaginative curriculum has a strong focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills while providing many opportunities for pupils to excel in art and design, design and technology, and music. This is strengthened by individual teachers' expertise in these subjects. The school links subjects together successfully and this provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in all subjects, although there are fewer opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in the same way.

Parents are unanimous in their praise of the school. One parent's comments, typical of many, concluded with, 'It is a superb example of a village school educating children, teaching them values and preparing them well for the future.' They appreciate the good quality of the care, support and guidance that makes their children feel safe and valued. The headteacher leads well, with a clear focus on ensuring that all groups of pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. She juggles the responsibilities of teacher and leader effectively and enjoys the respect of pupils, parents and staff. Tracking of pupils' progress is thorough, and provides a clear picture of what the school does well and how it needs to improve. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection, and it is well set to build on its successes.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the school with skills typical of their ages, although their writing and language skills are relatively weak. By the end of the Reception Year, they have made good progress and standards are above average in all areas except writing, where they are average. Very good induction procedures, close links

with parents and good attention to children's welfare mean that they settle quickly into school routines, feel safe and look forward to school. Good teaching, with a strong emphasis on developing children's language, number and social skills ensures that all groups of children achieve well. Expectations are generally high, although some opportunities are missed to encourage children to write more, which is why these skills develop more slowly than others. The classroom is stimulating and organised well to support the different areas of learning and enable children to choose activities. The school makes excellent use of the Forest School area to enable children to explore and develop their independence. Children mix well with older ones in the classroom and benefit from their maturity. Staff observe children's learning and development carefully, and use the information well to plan future tasks. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good and the very good relationships with all the adults help them to become happy and confident learners. They behave very well and enjoy working on tasks with others. Leadership and management are good. The self-evaluation systems are good, and provide an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their quick recall of number.
- Ensure that pupils have more opportunities to experience the diversity of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom and across the world.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average overall, and pupils achieve well. They make good progress in all year groups. The national test results for the oldest pupils vary considerably from year to year because of the very small numbers, but the trend is for them to attain well above average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. The school rightly has the improvement of pupils' quick recall of number facts as its main priority. Pupils' reading is a strength throughout the school. They are confident readers, and the oldest ones display impressive fluency and expression when reading poems out loud in class. In science, they benefit from many opportunities to do experiments and consider for themselves how to solve a problem. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they have clear targets and effective support from teachers and teaching assistants to achieve them. Parents speak highly of this provision, the progress their children make and the way it helps them grow in confidence.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils concentrate hard in lessons and are proud of their achievements. They feel safe at school because bullying is rare and adults are always there to help them. They develop a strong sense of wonder as they take part in activities such as planting vegetables and releasing creatures into the Forest School area. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and nearly all behave well. However, a very small number of pupils find it difficult to behave appropriately at times, resulting in occasional exclusions. Pupils feel well prepared for the future because of their competence in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and their well-developed sense of teamwork. They appreciate the way all pupils know each other so well and, as one said, 'the brilliant way the older pupils look after the younger ones'. They have a thorough understanding of the need to live healthy lives, and speak with authority on the best

foods to eat to stay fit. They enjoy many opportunities to take part in local events and church services, and they raise funds enthusiastically for national and global charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers assess pupils' work methodically and use the information well to plan lessons that meet the challenge of the different ages and abilities in the class. This ensures that tasks are challenging yet achievable, and all groups have equal opportunities to learn. Teachers are good at using the interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils and illustrate, for example, how three quarters is the same as six eighths. Teachers generally ensure that activities move on at a brisk pace, although sometimes they keep pupils sitting on the carpet for too long and they start to lose concentration. Question and answer sessions work well because teachers give pupils the confidence to make their contributions. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is generally good, although the school is right to see the need to provide more quick-fire practices in lessons to sharpen pupils' mental mathematics skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The well-planned curriculum is made interesting to pupils by the linking of subjects together into broad areas of learning. In addition, the 'themed weeks' give pupils good opportunities to explore topics in depth with the support of a specialist teacher. Personal, social and health education provision is good and makes an important contribution to pupils' understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives. The strong focus on the arts gives pupils many worthwhile opportunities to sing, act and learn to play musical instruments. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors, and a reasonable variety of clubs after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils value highly the quality of care, guidance and support offered by the school, and many parents say they selected this school because of this. A strength lies in the very good support for vulnerable pupils, including looked after children. These pupils benefit from well-organised, sensitive support and close links with their parents, carers and other professionals. Academic guidance is good, overall, but the use of assessment to guide pupils on to the next steps in numeracy is still at an early stage. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and all staff have pupils' welfare very much at heart. The staff have very good relationships with other schools and professionals that do much to enhance pupils' progress and prepare them for the future.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school benefits from strong leadership from the headteacher, who plays a key role in the evaluation of the provision's effectiveness and the setting of priorities for the future. Expectations of all members of the school community are high. The analysis of national test results is thorough, and used well to rectify weaknesses in standards. For example, when

standards in writing were found to be slipping, the school improved the way spelling and handwriting are taught and this has raised standards significantly. The knowledgeable governing body supports the school well, and plays an important role in monitoring its effectiveness. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. There are some good opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths and cultures through the curriculum, a range of visitors from different backgrounds and links with individual pupils in other countries. However, the school recognises the need to provide pupils with more first-hand experiences and links with contrasting schools to ensure they develop a good knowledge of life in the wider world.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Suckley Primary School, Worcester, WR6 5DE

Thank you for your valuable help in our recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you work and play so happily. You are clearly very proud of your good school and you are right to be. Some highlights for us were your lively reading of poetry and your excellent violin playing. Suckley Primary School really has got talent!

What we found out about your school

- You concentrate hard in lessons and make good progress. The standard of your work is higher than that of most schools.
- You have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives.
- You like your teachers and they are doing a good job. They make lessons interesting so that you enjoy learning.
- You enjoy the good range of activities planned for you and the many opportunities to develop your artistic talents.
- You nearly always behave well, and you take good care of each other.
- You have a good understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.
- Your school is run well by people who know how to improve it further.
- All the adults take good care of you and are always there if you need help.
- The youngest children get a good start to school.

What we would like the school to do now

- Help you to do better in numeracy by giving you more practice at doing quick mental calculations. You can help by trying hard to do things like learning your multiplication tables.
- Give you more opportunities to learn how other people in the world live and worship.

Best wishes for the future!

Yours faithfully

Terry Elston

Lead inspector