

Withington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116748
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	326441
Inspection date	27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	82
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	Rachel Rice
Headteacher	Andrew Massey
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lock Road Withington Hereford HR1 3QE
Telephone number	01432 850289
Fax number	01432 851791

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	27 March 2009
Inspection number	326441

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This very small school serves a rural area of Herefordshire. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is very high for the size of the school. The school provides a morning Nursery as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Nursery feeds Withington and other local primary schools. Approximately half of the children who attend the Nursery join the Reception class at Withington Primary, and new children join the school for their Reception Year. The school also provides a breakfast club and after school care. A private Nursery operates on the school's premises most afternoons each week, together with a lunchtime club. Once a week, the school hosts a privately organised club for parents and toddlers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Withington is a satisfactory school. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, and start Year 1 with standards that are average for their age. In recent years, there have been signs that pupils have underachieved in Years 1 to 6, and their standards have not been high enough. Currently, the picture is more positive and pupils are on track to reach broadly average standards when they leave Year 6. This rise in standards has been brought about by improvements in teaching and the curriculum, which are satisfactory. Consequently, pupils' progress is satisfactory in most years and subjects. Progress is good in science, but not enough progress is made in writing in Years 4 and 5, where there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length. The curriculum provides a good focus on improving pupils' basic skills, while teachers question pupils more effectively to check that they understand the work. Assessment now provides the basis for good academic guidance, but is not always used as well for planning lessons in Years 1 to 6 as it is in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most pupils find the work suitably demanding for most of the time. Sometimes, however, it can be a little too easy in Years 1 to 6, so pupils quickly finish the work and have to wait patiently for the teacher to give them the next task. This patience is one indicator of their good personal development. Pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance. Many get off to a healthy start to the day at the good breakfast club and take advantage of the extra activities at the after school club. The good standard of care they receive ensures pupils feel safe and well looked after. Pupils behave well and enjoy good relationships with their peers and teachers. Many parents comment on the happy, family atmosphere of the school.

Satisfactory leadership and management, with support from the local authority, have ensured that the school's main weaknesses have been tackled and that the school has made sound progress since it was last inspected. There have been several changes in staffing, including a new headteacher, which have led to changes in the management structure. Currently, the headteacher carries too great a load with few management tasks undertaken by other staff. Governors have made great strides forward in the last two terms. There is now a much greater focus on checking the quality of what the school provides and the impact of any actions taken to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and leave with standards that are typical for their age. Progress is equally as good in Reception, where new children join. They, too, start with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age, but all do well and are ready to start Year 1 with standards that are average for their age. Whenever they join, children settle in quickly because staff communicate well with parents and provide good quality care. Parents very much appreciate the contact they have with staff in the mornings, so that teachers are aware of any small concerns that may exist. It also gives staff the opportunity to tell parents of improvements in children's skills and understanding. Such improvements are carefully assessed using frequent and detailed observations of the children at work and play. Good leadership and management ensure that the records of assessments are carefully recorded, although the Nursery and Reception use different systems, which hinders accurate tracking across the two years. The

assessments are used effectively to plan a good balance of adult-directed activities and those that children select themselves. These build on what children have already learnt. The indoor and outdoor environments provide stimulating and exciting areas in which to learn, although there is no free flow between them in the Nursery.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing in Years 4 and 5.
- Ensure that pupils are consistently given work that is well matched to their needs and abilities.
- Increase the management role played by other members of staff.

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

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but, in recent years, progress from then on has been slow and standards have been too low. Standards are now average. Pupils' achievement is improving. Standards at the end of Year 2 had been well below average, but improved in 2008 to average and current standards are similar. Achievement has also improved in Years 3 to 5. There have been clear signs of underachievement in the past but achievement in 2008 was satisfactory and the school's current data on pupils' progress show that this is continuing. Achievement is good in science, and satisfactory in mathematics and reading. Pupils' achievement in writing is restricted by slow progress in Years 4 and 5 due to insufficient opportunities to write at length. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils love coming to school because everyone is so friendly and helpful. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and that if it did occur staff would do something about it straight away. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, and use this when considering their own actions. As a result, behaviour is good both in and out of lessons. Pupils demonstrate their good understanding of how to stay safe in the playground, for instance by making sure there is no danger to others when using the many pieces of climbing apparatus. Their understanding of how to play a part in the community is satisfactory. They take responsibility in school and the local community, but their understanding of communities further afield is less well developed. Pupils get good opportunities to develop their economic awareness from an early age, handling real coins instead of toy money. The improvement in their basic skills ensures that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their learning. Pupils are well aware of the benefits of a healthy diet and plenty of exercise. Sweets and crisps are rare in the playground, and pupils much enjoy the healthy lunches.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage use information for assessments to plan lessons that children find stimulating and challenging, and which help them learn at a good rate. The same sort of information is available in other years, but is not always used as well, so the work is not matched as effectively to the pupils' aptitudes and abilities. This can lead to some pupils being given tasks that they can do too easily, so they finish quickly and do not have more demanding work immediately available. Teachers are good at questioning pupils to find out what they know. Pupils are given time to think carefully about their answers and to explain what they mean. Relationships are good throughout the school, with pupils wanting to do their best for their teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

One reason for pupils' improved achievement is the concentration on improving their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics more consistently. This is proving successful in reading and mathematics, but insufficient attention is paid to improving writing in Years 4 and 5. In these year groups, pupils write a lot of shorter pieces, but do not have enough opportunities to write longer stories or reports. Good use is made of the school's beautifully maintained outdoor environment, especially the forest area, to improve standards in science, art and geography. Standards in information and communication technology are average, although opportunities to use such skills in other subjects are limited. Pupils have many opportunities to learn by working with the local community. This and the strong focus on pupils' personal development and well-being helps them to develop respect for adults and good manners.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care because they are known well by their teachers. Parents appreciate the good lines of communication, with staff available before and after school each day to discuss any concerns. Child protection and health and safety arrangements meet current requirements. One reason for rising standards lies with the improved systems for tracking pupils' progress and providing them with good academic guidance. Pupils' progress is discussed and noted at frequent meetings, but the results do not always appear in a precise form on the school's computerised tracking system. Nevertheless, all pupils now know their targets and what they have to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of education provided by the school is improving, as the headteacher takes actions to remedy weaknesses. Checks on what the school provides have produced a clear picture of what more needs to be done. The headteacher sought much increased support from the local authority, and this has proved particularly successful in mathematics. Achievement in mathematics, identified as a key weakness at the last inspection, has improved significantly.

Given the recent improvements, managers have demonstrated satisfactory capacity for improvement. Improvements in writing have been slower and the school has recognised this. Changes to the curriculum and targeted training for staff are already being implemented to address this. Governors were relatively slow to challenge the school prior to the current academic year, but the focus on standards and achievement is now much improved. Almost all of the major management roles are undertaken by the headteacher, although responsibility for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has recently been allocated to another member of staff. This somewhat limits the time available to the headteacher for each of the roles, and reduces the contribution of other members of staff to the school's drive for improvement. Good links are maintained with parents, who are strongly supportive of the school. The school has audited the needs of pupils in terms of community cohesion and accurately evaluates provision as satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

30 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Withington Primary School, Withington, HR1 3QE

Thank you very much for your help when we recently visited your school. You were all very polite and well behaved, and made us feel very welcome. You told us how much you love coming to school, because everyone is so kind and helpful. We agree. You all get along well with one another, and all the grown-ups take good care of you and make sure you are not unhappy.

Yours is a satisfactory school that is trying to be even better. The youngest ones get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. They settle in quickly and soon learn to work and play happily together. From Year 1 onwards, you all learn new things at the sort of rate that we usually see, and you do well in science. Your teachers now make sure you spend enough time learning to read, write and doing maths. You could do better in your writing in Years 4 and 5. So we have asked your teachers to make sure that you get lots of chances to write longer stories. Sometimes you finish your work too quickly and have to wait for the teacher to give you more. We have asked the teachers to always give you work that really makes you think hard, and to make sure that you cannot finish too quickly. Your teachers are good at finding out how much you already know, and they always give you time to think about your answers.

The people who run the school are making it a better place to learn. They know what needs improving and what they have to do to make it better. Your headteacher does a lot of the work himself at the moment, so we have asked if some others can help by doing more of the work for him. You can help, too, by always trying your best in lessons.

With all best wishes for your futures

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector