

## Redditch, St Stephen's CofE First School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116845
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326462
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Watters HMI

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	157
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Irene Yates
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Skan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Mabey Avenue Redditch B98 8HW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 63911
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 597566

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 July 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area of significant social and economic deprivation. Twenty nine per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Currently, almost half the pupils in Year 4 have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Around 42% of the pupils speak English as an additional language, and are almost exclusively from Pakistani backgrounds. Thirteen per cent are from other minority ethnic groups and 45% are White British. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is located in the Nursery and Reception classes, their attainment levels and social skills are generally well below what is typically expected for their age. Attainment in literacy and numeracy is significantly low. There is a Children's Centre on site and the school has full extended school status. The school holds a number of awards, including Activemark, Healthy Schools and Investor in People. Privately managed childcare provision is based in the Children's Centre.

## 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 a highly effective school that has achieved much success in raising standards from a very low level and ensuring pupils' achievements are outstanding. One of the school's aims is 'to provide the highest quality education working with all other relevant agencies for the benefit of every child'. This aim is met extremely well, particularly in the drive to ensure that all pupils achieve their best, whatever their different starting points and capabilities. The school recognises that, while standards are broadly average, there is still much to do to raise attainment levels further, across the curriculum and in literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement and rates of progress are exceptional, for individuals and different groups within the school. Because of this, the school provides excellent value for money.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good with a number of outstanding features. Their behaviour is excellent and pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their school life. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy their lessons and have great fun learning new skills and discovering new ideas. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, the pupils talked enthusiastically about making a Spanish omelette, using their home grown potatoes! This provided a really stimulating context to learn about weights, measures and capacity. Attendance is broadly satisfactory, although the rate of persistent absences is too high.

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of all pupils extremely well. Planning for literacy and numeracy is excellent and there are many opportunities for enrichment, such as after-school clubs and visits to places of interest. During the inspection, the Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed a great day out at the Severn Valley Railway, and this experience was used effectively to extend their learning.

The school provides exemplary care, guidance and support for all pupils. Safeguarding arrangements currently meet national recommendations and pupils are looked after well. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils is excellent. Pupils really like, respect and trust their teachers and the teaching assistants who work with them each day. A small number of parents returned inspection questionnaires and the majority of these were positive. One parent said, 'My child's progress has been excellent, largely because adults are firm but fair, approachable and friendly.' The school did not supply parents with inspection questionnaires in languages other than in English, and this might account for the low response.

The quality of the school's leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher provides strong and clear leadership and is supported effectively by the senior leadership team. Staff have high expectations for all pupils and high aspirations for the school community. The extended school status demonstrates well the positive partnerships with other agencies, and links with the Children's Centre make a very positive contribution to the quality of education for the youngest children. The school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection and has excellent capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

The children receive an outstanding start to their school life. The quality of provision and outcomes for all children are excellent. Given their very low starting points, the children's achievements are exceptional. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with

extremely low attainment levels, particularly in their personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. Many are 8–12 months behind in their social and emotional development. Despite this, they make excellent progress and, by the time they enter Key Stage 1, a significant proportion of children have caught up in their learning. Excellent leadership and management and high quality teaching and learning experiences ensure that children learn and develop effectively and that their welfare is promoted well. The children's 'learning journey' records are further evidence of the exemplary practice in the Nursery and Reception classes, and show clearly how teachers' and teaching assistants' careful assessments are used effectively to raise standards. The bilingual teaching assistants make a particularly positive contribution to this process.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to raise standards by ensuring all intervention strategies make a consistently positive impact on lifting attainment levels even higher, across all subjects and particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Work more closely with all parents to improve pupils' attendance, by engaging the local community more effectively.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 1**

From extremely low starting points, the pupils make exceptional progress. They achieve extremely well in reading, writing and mathematics, acquiring new skills and making good gains in their knowledge and understanding in literacy and numeracy. The pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and the pupils who speak English as an additional language also make excellent progress. While overall standards are broadly in line with the levels expected for the pupils' ages, some pupils do even better and reach standards which are above the average for their age. The results of the 2009 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments show a rise in standards since the previous year. There is a clear trend of rising attainment from Year 1 to Year 4. The gap between the pupils' current attainment levels and what they should be reaching for their age is closing rapidly and consistently.

### **Personal development and well-being**

#### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Cultural development is good. Attendance is broadly average, although too many pupils do not attend school sufficiently regularly. As a result of the school's excellent provision, the pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and know what they have to do to stay healthy. Pupils really enjoy their time in school, are good humoured and extremely polite. They show great independence when working in small groups and are often engrossed in their tasks. They have a very well developed understanding of how to keep safe. Some pupils participate effectively in decision making as part of the school council, although other opportunities to develop their understanding of personal rights and responsibilities are more limited. Special themed days in school successfully bring families together from the local community, for instance when Eid is celebrated. Pupils' friendliness towards each other is nurtured by their understanding of each other's religious beliefs, although they are less certain about the many other different cultures and faiths represented in British society. The pupils are gaining a range of personal skills they will need as adults. For example,

they are developing an understanding of democracy through electing a school council and also learn about financial planning when organising funding for the purchase of playground equipment. Their excellent achievements in literacy and numeracy prepare them increasingly well for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The pupils make exceptional progress because the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers provide interesting and exciting learning opportunities for the pupils, who respond well to their high expectations. There is a strong and positive focus on teaching key skills and this helps pupils learn quickly. Planning is excellent. Pupils' different starting points and capabilities are taken into account to provide a good level of challenge and appropriate level of support for all pupils. Assessment is used effectively to target areas of need and ensure pupils have a secure understanding before they move to the next level in their work. The pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make exceptional progress because teachers know the needs of individual pupils, and ensure equal opportunity for all. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to raising standards and are generally deployed effectively in lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school's new creative curriculum provides an excellent range of opportunities to engage and motivate the pupils, who show great enthusiasm when learning through practical and fun activities, for example growing vegetables in Year 2. One of the strengths of the curriculum includes an appropriate balance of subjects. Literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology are taught separately and, where possible, these skills are practised in topic work. Some excellent programmes of work successfully contribute to the pupils' personal development and personal qualities, for example learning how to express emotions and feelings through conversations about real-life situations. Pupils from Year 2 upwards have the opportunity to learn French, and they really enjoy learning another language. Enrichment activities are excellent and play an important role in developing the pupils' skills, confidence and enthusiasm. There is a good range of after school clubs, with the cheerleading club being one of the most popular ones. Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, such as the local Forgemill museum, extend pupils' learning successfully. Pupils contribute to the local community through fund raising activities and involvement with the local church.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils, who trust the staff completely and know exactly what to do should they need help. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are good at getting things sorted.' This high quality care is based on a commitment to meeting the individual needs of all pupils and successfully developing excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Adults know the pupils well and respond quickly to their needs. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe at school are in place and reviewed regularly. The school works well with parents to keep them informed about what their children are expected to learn.

Teachers' thorough monitoring of pupils' achievements ensure that they have a detailed picture of the individual needs of each pupil. They use assessment information effectively to pitch the pupils' work accurately to their different learning needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils make excellent progress in acquiring and improving their academic and personal skills. Teachers' marking is consistent across the school and effectively informs pupils about what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The collective leadership of the school is outstanding. The headteacher has high aspirations for all members of the school community and leads by example. She skilfully drives the school forward and has been instrumental in developing the role of senior leaders and managers, who give excellent support. Senior teachers are held accountable for raising standards and respond well to challenge. Staff morale is high. There is an excellent team spirit and a strong and successful commitment to improving the life chances of all pupils. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and provide an accurate picture of how well the school is doing, as well as identifying areas for further improvement. Regular checks are made of pupils' books, teachers' planning and lessons. Teachers are given helpful feedback about improving their work and are held accountable for the standards attained by the pupils in their care. The deputy headteacher has introduced an exemplary system for tracking pupils' progress and their achievements. This is extremely rigorous and used effectively to set challenging targets and plan intervention strategies where needed. Governance is secure and the governing body meets statutory requirements. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school takes account of different faith and ethnic groups in the local community and actively seeks to promote better understanding of different cultures through the curriculum. However, the school recognises that the pupils' understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse society is less well developed.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	1

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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**

10 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's CE First School, Redditch, B98 8HW

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with you about your work and all the interesting and exciting things you do. We also enjoyed tasting the Spanish omelette, prepared and cooked by the children in Year 2! We were really impressed with the way all of you look after each other so well, and we could see that you enjoy coming to school.

Many of you told us that you love your school and think that it is really good. So do we. In fact, we think it is excellent. You have many opportunities to go on visits to places of interest and also enjoy having visitors to your school. One of the best things about your school is that Mrs Skan, the teachers and all the other adults who work with you take great care of you and make sure that you do your very best in all your work. This is why you get on so well and learn lots of interesting and important things.

Although your school is outstanding, which means that it is one of the best in the country, we have asked Mrs Skan and all the teachers to continue working with you to help you learn even more, particularly in your reading, writing and numeracy lessons, and to work more closely with your parents and carers to help all of you attend school more often.

Thank you again for making us so welcome. We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Watters

Her Majesty's Inspector