

John Randall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123445
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	327910
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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)	209
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	Elizabeth Swift
Headteacher	Elizabeth Middleton
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Queen Street Madeley Telford TF7 4DS
Telephone number	01952 388390
Fax number	01952 388390

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

John Randall is slightly smaller than other primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than typically found. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. There is one Nursery and one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils who either leave or join the school, other than at the usual times of the year, is higher than that normally found. Since the last inspection, there has been significant staff turnover.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The school is popular with parents and comments such as, 'I'm very happy and so are my children,' and, 'My children love coming to school because it is so friendly,' represent the views of the majority. The school has strengths in the care, guidance and support it provides for pupils and in their personal development, which are both good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are friendly and polite to visitors and work well with each other. This was seen in an interesting assembly about worship led by Year 5 pupils. Other pupils listened carefully to what they said and spontaneously applauded their efforts. Behaviour overall, in and around the school, is good. This is an improvement on when the school was last inspected and reflects the success of the school's strategies for improving behaviour.

High staff turnover, although managed well by the headteacher, has nevertheless led to inconsistencies in pupils' progress in the recent past and to underachievement. However, the school has begun to successfully address this issue so that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average and have improved on the previous year. Attainment in English is not as high as that in mathematics and science, mainly because pupils' writing is not as strong as reading. The school has introduced a number of appropriate initiatives to improve pupils' writing with varying measures of success. Although pupils are being given far more opportunities to develop their writing, standards are still too low, particularly in Year 2. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage but the children's progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills is slower than other aspects of their development, particularly their writing.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily because of the satisfactory teaching and learning. Although the proportion of good teaching is steadily improving, this is not sufficient to ensure that pupils make good progress all of the time. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1. Pupils are generally enthusiastic learners and show positive attitudes to their lessons. Where teaching is less successful, it is the result of lower expectations and insufficient challenge for all groups of pupils, but particularly the higher attainers. Currently, the proportion of good teaching is higher in Key Stage 2.

The school's satisfactory curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils know the importance of living healthy lifestyles for example, and how to stay safe in different situations both in and out of school, including when using the internet. Pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development is reflected well in their eagerness to work with each other sensibly in lessons and in their concerns about the world. The eco warriors, for example, are rigorous in ensuring that the school's carbon footprint is minimised. Pupils' understanding of the different religions, cultures and beliefs found in modern Britain and the wider world is less secure.

Because there is still work to be done with regards to improving pupils' achievement and standards, leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good. However, there is a momentum of improvement and the headteacher and staff have been successful in providing pupils with a safe, caring environment in which they are happy and well looked after. Recent improvements in pupils' progress indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make a steady start to school. From starting points which are usually well below the level expected for children of this age, they make satisfactory progress overall. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, their attainment is still well below the levels typically expected, mainly because there are still significant weaknesses in children's language and communication skills, particularly their writing. Progress is faster in their mathematical development due to their successful achievement in counting and recognising numbers. Children enjoy their experiences playing and working well together. They successfully develop their social skills, for example taking responsibility to clear away at the end of activities. Learning opportunities are further enriched around a good range of topics which arouse the children's interest and are stimulated by experiences such as farm visits. However, there are occasions when children could be challenged more effectively either in work with adults or when they undertake activities by themselves. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's needs and interests are considered, evidenced by a recent 'superheroes' topic. The learning environment has been recently developed and children are benefiting from increased opportunities to learn outdoors as well as inside. The care provided by the staff is satisfactory; staff form good relationships with the children, who enjoy the secure environment. The recently appointed leader is making positive improvements which parents have recognised. For example, she has improved arrangements to ensure that the staff keep a more accurate check on children's development so that their needs can be better met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's progress and standards in writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure this is built upon in subsequent years.
- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, so that more pupils make good progress.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn about different religions, cultures and beliefs found in modern Britain and the wider world.

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

Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average, although better in mathematics and science than in English. Standards in English are being held back by below average standards in writing. Since the last inspection, progress has been uneven for a minority of pupils as a result of staff turnover and less effective teaching. School practice was not consistent. This issue has been resolved and most pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Previous underachievement has been eradicated. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 2 because the quality of teaching is more effective. Pupils' progress towards targets is being monitored effectively and this has had a positive impact on improving pupils' achievement. The school works effectively with groups of pupils, enabling those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make the same progress as their classmates. Classrooms are well ordered and calm. All lessons are typified by good relationships, mutual respect and warmth.

Most teachers are good at ensuring that pupils know exactly what they will learn in lessons. Teaching assistants are usually effective and contribute well to the learning of the individuals and groups they work with. The quality of teaching is steadily improving at the school but there are still too many lessons where the overall pace of learning is not quick enough, particularly in Key Stage 1. In addition to this, activities undertaken by different groups of pupils are not always accurately matched to pupils' needs so they can either find work too hard or too easy. In these instances, learning is slower.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and show a great eagerness to answer questions and 'join in' lesson activities. Their satisfactory progress in their basic skills makes them soundly prepared for the next phase of their education. Pupils say that they feel very safe and that rare bullying incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils who have arrived from other schools are complimentary about their welcome and how successfully they have settled in. Although figures for attendance show an improvement, levels are still below average despite the school's best efforts. Pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities to themselves and others both in the school and wider community. They willingly take on roles such as school councillors and monitors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Classrooms are well ordered and calm. All lessons are typified by good relationships, mutual respect and warmth. Most teachers are good at ensuring that pupils know exactly what they will learn in lessons. Teaching assistants are usually effective and contribute well to the learning of the individuals and groups they work with. The quality of teaching is steadily improving at the school but there are still too many lessons where the overall pace of learning is not quick enough, particularly in Key Stage 1. In addition to this, activities undertaken by different groups of pupils are not always accurately matched to pupils' needs so they can either find work too hard or too easy. In these instances, learning is slower.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to make steady progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. However, higher attaining pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging activities in science. Staff have worked hard to ensure that the pupils are provided with an interesting curriculum that they find interesting. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to benefit from 'first hand' experiences through trips and visitors to school. Year 6 pupils, for example, spoke very positively about their visit to Telford College of Arts and Technology where they could experience different vocations as part of their preparation for the world of work. A good range of extra-curricular clubs run through the year are well attended. The curriculum is particularly effective in supporting the pupils' good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support is a strong feature of the school. The school's breakfast club, for example, successfully prepares those pupils for the day ahead. Pupils who find school difficult are well supported through school by successful initiatives and the close links with external agencies and parents. Procedures for safeguarding are firmly in place and fulfil requirements. Although there are still a few inconsistencies between classes with regard to the academic guidance provided for pupils, overall it has been effective in improving pupils' progress. Year 6 pupils speak very positively about the benefits of teachers' marking in their books and how they have a good understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and other senior staff have provided a clear agenda for improvement and satisfactory progress is being made. The school is in the process of broadening leadership responsibilities at all levels. However, the greatest impact on improvement is currently provided by senior staff. The monitoring of teaching, pupils' work and their progress is thorough and provides a clear and accurate picture of what is going well and what needs improving. Recent improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are testament to this. Governors are very supportive of the school and demonstrating an increasing involvement and knowledge of the school. Appropriate plans are in place to further develop a system of governor visits so that they can gain a deeper insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Currently, they are too reliant on the headteacher for this information. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, although there is a clear view and plans in the school to develop this. Although the school is a harmonious community, pupils have limited opportunities to meet and work with others from different backgrounds.

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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?	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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	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	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**

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Randall Primary School, Telford, TF7 4DS

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and I would like to say a special thank you to all of you who gave up your time to meet with us and to Year 5 for their super assembly. At the moment, we think that your school is satisfactory. This means that we found some good things but also things that need improving.

Your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other and with your teachers. By the time you leave in Year 6, you have generally made satisfactory progress so that standards are similar to those found in most other schools. Standards in English are not as strong as mathematics and science because standards are lower in writing. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to look at this so that standards in writing improve in all classes.

Staff work hard to ensure that lessons are interesting and you are provided with a good range of trips and visitors to school. Many of the lessons are good but we have asked the school to increase the number of good lessons you all receive. The school is popular with your parents. In school, you feel safe and know there are adults you can turn to if you have worries or concerns. Those of you who attend the breakfast club get a good start to the school day. Although you all work well together in school, your knowledge of people who have different beliefs or religions to yourselves is more limited. We have asked the school to provide you with more opportunities to get to know more about people from other communities in the United Kingdom and around the world.

The staff and governors are very keen that the school gets even better. You can help by working hard and making sure that you attend regularly. Thank you once again for helping us during the inspection.

Best wishes for the future

Chris Kessell

Lead inspector