

# Apley Wood Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 123450             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Telford and Wrekin |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 327915             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 4–5 June 2009      |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Susan Walsh        |

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>  | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>   | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |   |
| School (total)   | 413   |
| 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>   | Derek Lees  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Allyson Brown                                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 9 May 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>  | Pool Farm Avenue<br>Leegomery<br>Telford<br>TF1 6FQ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01952 386180  |
| <b>Fax number</b>  | 01952 246961  |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–11          |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 4–5 June 2009 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools and has rapidly expanded in recent years. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average because the school provides for a number of pupils with complex needs, including physical disabilities. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The school has had several changes of headteacher in recent years. A consultant headteacher has looked after the school since September 2008 and an acting headteacher was appointed in February 2009. The acting headteacher has now been appointed as the substantive headteacher from September 2009 and support from the consultant headteacher is being gradually withdrawn. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through two Reception classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory standard of education, and is particularly effective at encouraging pupils' personal development and well-being. Strong leadership from the consultant headteacher and the acting headteacher has led to rapid improvements during this current school year. During the last two years the school had gone through a difficult time. There had been a relatively high turnover of staff and significant staff absence. Progress had slowed and pupils were making inadequate progress, particularly in Key Stage 2 with standards dipping to below average. However, staffing is now becoming more stable, and progress has accelerated and is now satisfactory throughout the school. Standards have recovered and are now broadly average. This is because teaching and learning have improved to satisfactory. The majority of teachers have enthusiastically embraced guidance from the local authority and school leaders. Staff morale is rapidly improving and staff are keen to develop their practice. There is an increasing proportion of lively lessons which capture pupils' interests, although the school is aware that there is not yet enough good teaching to secure good progress for the pupils. In a minority of lessons, work is not finely matched to pupils' needs during introductions to lessons and during independent work, and sometimes teachers spend too long introducing lessons, restricting pupils' opportunities to practise new skills.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. While pupils are well cared for and receive good guidance regarding their personal development, academic guidance is only satisfactory. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking and academic target setting is not always used effectively. As a result pupils are not always fully aware of how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Parents have been very concerned about frequent changes of leadership and instabilities in staffing, but have appreciated the way that some staff worked particularly hard to keep the school functioning during challenging times. They recognise that the new leaders are speedily improving provision and especially welcome the way that communication is now more open and effective. However, inadequate leadership and management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has resulted in delays in identifying and providing support for some pupils who find learning difficult. Although this situation is improving, the school is aware that not all pupils have full access to appropriate personalised support. Nevertheless, the school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident and the school is becoming more inclusive as support mechanisms improve. The support for those with particularly complex needs is good.

Pupils' obvious enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance rates and good behaviour. The good attention paid to personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are well informed about how to stay healthy and safe. Safeguarding requirements are fully met. The breakfast club is clearly enjoyed by those who attend. It provides a good range of interesting activities for pupils and makes particularly good use of the outdoors. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors that enhance their experience of school. Opportunities to contribute to the school community are increasing and pupils are keen to help others. The work of the School Nutrition Action Group is helping to improve other pupils' awareness of healthy eating and the 'Keen to be Green' initiative is raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The quality of provision is sound and children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Reception classes. They enter the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with those expected nationally, and reach average standards by the time they join Year 1. There are some variations in the children's progress, with most doing well in their personal, social and emotional development but making slightly slower progress in their creative development. They enjoy school and play happily with others. Children are generally confident and have learnt to take turns and behave well. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers' explanations are clear so that children know what they are expected to learn. However, children are sometimes required to listen to adults for too long, and do not always receive the focused support they need in order to make the most of the tasks they have chosen for themselves. There is a satisfactory range of activities that interest children and good use is made of the outdoor facilities, but planning for the creative elements is a relative weakness. The quality of care and support is satisfactory and welfare requirements are fully met. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved and are now satisfactory. There is a sensible improvement plan that is already having a beneficial effect, and increased teamwork among the staff is also helping to enhance provision.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the work set in lessons consistently meets the needs of all pupils, and that pupils have ample opportunities for active learning.
- Make sure that pupils with additional learning needs are identified quickly and given the support they need.
- Enhance teachers' marking and the use of academic targets so that pupils know exactly how to improve their work.

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 to reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 2. Although there were signs that progress was slowing in recent years it is now starting to improve, especially in reading and mathematics. Last year pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 was too slow and the standards they reached at the end of Key Stage 2 were below average in English, mathematics and science. Good support from the local authority combined with more decisive leadership within the school has improved the quality of teaching. This has boosted progress to at least satisfactory and some pupils are starting to make good progress. Although there are still some minor inconsistencies between different classes, pupils are catching up and reaching average standards. Those in Years 5 and 6 are making particularly good progress. Presentation has much improved and pupils are producing a good volume of accurate work. Although those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other pupils who find academic work challenging usually make satisfactory progress, they mark time in some lessons when the work is not accurately matched to their needs.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is reflected in a high level of racial tolerance, with pupils saying that no way of life is better than another, 'just different'. Pupils work hard in lessons, especially when they have the opportunity to work independently. They are developing a real pride in their school as they see the positive changes that are enhancing their experiences. Hence their behaviour is good both in and out of classrooms. Teachers are usually very proficient at managing behaviour in the classroom and those pupils who display particularly challenging behaviour are skilfully supported by both teachers and teaching assistants. Behaviour on the playground is very calm and during the inspection Key Stage 1 pupils were having a wonderful time playing on the school field. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Senior leaders carefully investigate any fallings out. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They make healthy choices of food and participate enthusiastically in sports and after-school clubs. They know how to keep safe. Confidence and positive attitudes to learning, combined with average standards in basic skills, ensure that pupils are adequately prepared for their next stage of education and later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

An increasing proportion of lessons challenge and interest pupils, especially at the end of Key Stage 2. Many staff are enthusiastically taking on board advice from the local authority and school leaders, and these new ways of working are becoming embedded in the practice of most staff. There is now greater clarity about what pupils are expected to learn and the measurement of pupils' progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and usually provide clear explanations at the beginning of lessons. The match of work to pupils' needs is improving, but in a minority of mathematics lessons middle ability pupils and those who find learning more difficult are set the same work. Some teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons and, as a result, pupils can lose focus. Teachers' questions are occasionally not pitched correctly. They sometimes provide insufficient challenge for more able pupils, and pupils who are struggling have limited opportunities to answer questions in some lessons. Recent training has improved the skills of teaching assistants, who are now able to provide more effective support in lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Sound provision is made for English, mathematics and science and this is reflected in pupils' satisfactory progress in these key subjects. Nevertheless there are relatively weak areas that have been identified by the school. In particular, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to write at length and develop their writing skills in subjects other than English. In addition, pupils do not have enough opportunities for practising problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigations in science. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development and this is clearly reflected in their positive attitudes and good behaviour. Pupils are successfully encouraged to appreciate the importance of conservation and ecology through recycling and the popular gardening club. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enhance learning opportunities. They are greatly enjoyed by pupils. For example, on a recent visit to a

local museum pupils remarked, 'We dressed as Victorians and found out how life was very different then.'

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Good pastoral care contributes extensively to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good personal development. The school is a caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are usually very good. Consequently, pupils feel respected and secure. In the past the school has been slow to identify pupils with additional learning needs and it has sometimes been difficult for teachers to take issues forward. The progress of all pupils is now being carefully checked. National strategies that have been designed to help pupils catch up have now been put in place and are already boosting pupils' progress. Nevertheless the school is aware that it is still not doing enough to ensure that pupils receive timely support that is closely tailored to their individual needs. Where pupils have been identified as vulnerable or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, links with external agencies are used well to strengthen support. For example, pupils are able to access the Apley Active Club for pupils with physical disabilities that is run in partnership with the local occupational therapy team. There has been an intense focus on improving the quality of teachers' marking. As a result there is now some good marking, but occasionally it is congratulatory and does not provide pupils with sufficient information about how to produce better work. The pupils' knowledge of their academic targets is not always fully secure because targets are not personal and are not always referred to in lessons or in teachers' marking.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The consultant headteacher and acting headteacher have quickly identified the serious issues facing the school and together with the local authority have taken effective action. Staff are now working successfully as a team, spirits have lifted and the ethos of the school is much improved. Careful monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders has helped to pinpoint exactly where improvements are needed. The successful coaching of teachers and support staff has strengthened their practice but senior leaders are aware that the proportion of good teaching is still not high enough to ensure pupils achieve consistently well. Many of the school's middle leaders are rapidly developing their skills but the leadership of learning difficulties and/or disabilities needs to be improved in order to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage in their education and receive effective support. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Involvement with its local community, which is enthusiastically promoted by the governing body, is a real strength but pupils have limited opportunities to meet pupils from different backgrounds. Governors are very supportive and have done much to ensure that the school's finances are secure. The school's satisfactory capacity for improvement is illustrated through improved teaching and learning which has accelerated pupils' progress and raised standards.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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? | 2 |
| 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 <sup>1</sup> 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 |

<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                                     | 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 | 3 |

## The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 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?   | 3 |

## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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**

8 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Apley Wood Primary School, Telford TF1 6FQ

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we came to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and listened very carefully to what you had to say. I am writing to tell you what we found out. Your parents and the staff at the school told us that the school has been through a very difficult time. It is thanks to the hard work of the staff that you now go to a satisfactory school that is getting better all the time. We are pleased to see that you all behave well and are working very hard in class. You are making satisfactory progress but it is improving. The standards you reach are rising and are now similar to those reached by pupils in other schools.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but improving, and many of your lessons now help you to learn more quickly. We did notice that in a few lessons you had to listen to the teacher for too long and did not have enough chance to practise your skills. We have asked your teachers to improve this and to make sure that you always get work to do that is not too hard or too easy for each of you. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that their marking and the way they use academic targets help you to improve your work. The school is aware that some of you who find learning difficult have not always had your needs identified or received the help you need quickly enough, and it knows that this needs to improve.

We were impressed by the way you contribute to the school, including through the school council, the school Nutrition Action Group and the Eco Committee. We thought the school allotments were fabulous. You are working hard to improve both the school and the local environment. It is clear that you enjoy school and you have the chance to take part in some very exciting visits that help you learn.

You told us that the staff look after you very well and we agree. The people who run your school are working very hard indeed to make it a better place. I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Susan Walsh Lead inspector