

Dothill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135496
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	334459
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2009
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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)	478
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	Jo Ward
Headteacher	Nick Renshaw
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Severn Drive Wellington Telford TF1 3JB
Telephone number	01952 386870
Fax number	01952 386874

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2009
Inspection number	334459

© 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 three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school formed by the combination of a former infant and junior school. A new principal, with overall responsibility for both schools, and a new head of primary phase took up post in September 2008, when the school entered into a federation with the neighbouring Charlton secondary school to form a 'learning community', aiming to provide more integrated education from ages 1 to 16. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average. A few pupils have English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. There is also a pre-school group on site that is privately run.

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. It has some outstanding strengths within the leadership and management. The senior leadership team has successfully managed the merging of the infant and junior schools and at the same time worked with the local secondary school to form a federation. In addition to this, a wide range of partnerships have been developed to provide extended services for families. This has been done in a very short time, during which senior leaders have pursued their clear and challenging vision for the school. Behaviour has been improved, local community cohesion has been successfully promoted in the area and standards are rising significantly. The partnerships that senior leaders have established to support pupils' well-being and education are outstanding as is their capacity to improve the school further.

Progress is good throughout the school. Children start Reception with skills close to expected levels and then enter Year 1 with standards generally above the national average. Some of the good practices seen in Reception are not immediately built on when pupils enter Year 1. As a result the good skills that they have acquired in Reception are not extended as much as they might be. In Year 2 progress is good. The current Year 2 pupils are predicted to attain standards that are above average in reading and writing, but there is some variation in how well they are doing in different subjects. Standards in mathematics are similar to, rather than above, the national average. Pupils do not make progress at the same rate in this subject as in English and science. Predictions for the current Year 6 confirm further improvement with standards in English, mathematics and science significantly higher than the 2008 cohort in the junior school. There is a strong focus on equal opportunities and a notable achievement is the equality of progress made by boys and girls. Pupils of all abilities make progress at similar rates, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Teaching is good with some outstanding practice particularly in the teaching of mathematics for older pupils. Academic guidance is well developed and work is generally well matched to pupils' ability. Marking and the use of target-setting is developing well, especially in the upper year groups where pupils are actively involved in their own assessment and are given good guidance on how to improve. Teaching assistants work effectively to support those pupils who need extra help. Whilst the curriculum meets statutory requirements, the leaders are developing a more stimulating curriculum which builds continuously on previous learning to help raise standards further. Although pupils are aware of world faiths and cultures, leaders are aware that this is an area that needs to be developed further. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of well supported after-school activities and visits.

The pastoral care of pupils is very good with all safeguarding requirements in place. Pupils are fully involved in school life and their views of it include 'perfect' and 'excellent'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well and know how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is good and pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, eat healthily and take part in sport with enthusiasm. The good basic skills they acquire, as well as their good personal development, ensure that they are well prepared for their future lives.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children quickly settle in to the stimulating setting in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good teaching, clear routines and high quality of care ensure that they achieve well. Practitioners plan lively activities ranging from exploring 'Dinosaurland' in a small wooded outdoor area to playing hockey. The outdoor area is extensive, enticing and well used and there is a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. The focus on teaching phonics is making a positive difference to progress in aspects of early literacy.

Personal development is good. Children take turns and solve problems together. They know how to stay safe and healthy. They feel secure and have excellent relationships with the adults who work with them. At the same time, the planned activities encourage them to take risks, resulting in growing self-esteem and independence. Children say how much they enjoy school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Children come from many different pre-school settings and staff work hard to get to know them. Systems to ensure an accurate knowledge of children's initial skills are developing well but are not yet fully embedded into practice. Despite this, the curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of the children and any found to be falling behind are supported well. A careful check is kept on their learning and progress. The 'Learning Journey' books are well designed to help children, staff and parents keep track of individual achievements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 by extending the good teaching methods seen in the higher year groups into Key Stage 1.
- Develop the curriculum provision to fully meet the vision identified within the school improvement plan, including extending pupils' understanding of world faiths and cultures.
- Extend the Early Years Foundation Stage learning practices into Year 1 to maintain the good progress that children make in the Reception Year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress across the school and this is resulting in standards rising. Although this is a new school and comparisons cannot be made directly with previous years, the evidence produced by the leadership team from their tracking data shows clearly that the same pupils are now making much more progress each year than they did two years ago. Year 2 pupils are working at levels above the national average in English and science and close to the national average in mathematics. Progress from Years 3 to 6 is consistently good and all groups of pupils make at least good progress resulting in rapidly rising standards, especially in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress from their often lower starting point. Pupils with English as an additional language do well in acquiring an early understanding of English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, with excellent relationships across the community. Pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity is less well developed than other areas

but involvement in the Telford Culture Zone is helping to improve this. The school has been awarded the Activemark to recognise the sporting opportunities available to pupils. The school council has helped to establish the new school restaurant and healthy break time snacks. The school is a harmonious community where pupils feel safe and they say that bullying is not an issue. In this secure environment, pupils grow in confidence to work independently and solve problems.

Pupils behave well generally and, if they get excited and adults remind them of what they expect, they know how to respond. There is a clear understanding that everyone matters and this means that pupils respect each other and do their best to improve things. 'Friendship Week' strengthened links with the Charlton school and the new, extended learning community is growing in its sense of pride and identity. Pupils show that they are well prepared for life beyond school, cooperating well in groups and being especially confident in expressing their views and listening to those of others. They would like to 'have more computers that work' but greatly appreciate the range of activities offered. This is illustrated in a common response to what is enjoyed most: 'Everything!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The school has a clear and accurate view of teaching strengths and areas for development. This is the result of its comprehensive and accurate monitoring. It recognises that the next step is to ensure that the benefits enjoyed by older pupils, where they are actively engaged in their learning, particularly in mathematics, are spread across the whole school. The best lessons are planned to take account of the various learning needs of groups and individuals. Good support is provided through close collaboration with teaching assistants so that challenging objectives can be achieved. Marking of work is variable with some pupils shown clearly what to do to improve their work whilst others are left with little direction as to how to do better. A notable feature in nearly all lessons is the warmth of teacher-pupil relationships. These result in happy classrooms where pupils are keen to work hard and to support each other, and where teachers are trusted and appreciated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum takes into account the wide range of abilities of pupils. It is currently being reviewed to improve the continuity with which it builds on the previous year's work. New ideas such as the project on the Second World War and VE Day have been well received by learners. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is enhanced through individual provision maps which are strengthening learning partnerships.

Good use is made of local heritage sites and the Telford Culture Zone to enrich provision for dance, music and art. There is a range of visitors who bring in lively activities such as samba drumming. After-school clubs are particularly popular. They include yoga, choir and drama. Sport provides many opportunities for both enjoyment and successfully competing at local and regional levels. Both health and awareness of safety are key elements in the curriculum. Links with Charlton school are strong, enabling the sharing of ideas and improved learning opportunities for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they are very well cared for and consider the school a happy and safe place to be. A notable feature of the school's provision is the large number of pupils who are involved in looking after others, for example through peer mentoring or through Year 6 pupils' support for early years children. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well and are very aware of their learning and emotional needs. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recognised and met. Academic support is a growing strength. There has been a drive to make ongoing assessment an important element in all lessons so that pupils know what and how they will be learning and what will count as success. In many lessons, particularly in upper year groups, the effectiveness of this approach is clear as pupils evaluate and confirm their progress. As a consequence they are well on the way to becoming independent learners. The school's own monitoring has rightly identified that the sharing of best practice in this type of assessment is a priority for future development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The recently formed senior leadership team shares the same vision for improving the school and has worked tirelessly to achieve this. The effectiveness of its work in a very short time has been outstanding, demonstrating an outstanding capacity to improve still further. The strengths of the leadership are recognised by parents and typified by the comment: 'The excellent management team appears driven and focused with the children's best interests at heart, while remaining friendly and approachable.' Although the leadership sets challenging targets there has been insufficient time for all pupils to achieve them. Self-evaluation is a strength of the school, ensuring areas for improvement are correctly identified. Community cohesion requirements have been identified through a questionnaire to parents, there is a clear action plan to address any gaps and progress is regularly monitored.

Cohesion within the school and links with the local community are very good but more needs to be done to represent wider communities. Governors are effective in their role of support and challenge and contribute to overall good leadership and management.

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
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?	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	1
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?	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?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

15 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dothill Primary School, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 3JB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing how your school is helping you learn. We were impressed by how proud you are of your school and how much you enjoy being there.

Your school is providing you with a good education. These are some of its strengths.

- You greatly enjoy being at school and find your lessons are fun.
- You behave well and develop good personal skills.
- The staff care about you and look after you well.
- Relationships throughout the school are extremely good.
- You benefit greatly from being able to mix with the older students from Charlton School.
- You participate in a wide range of clubs, after-school activities and visits.
- You take an active part in school organisation. We really enjoyed eating in your new restaurant which you helped to develop.
- There are good systems in place to monitor your progress.
- Your Principal, Head of Primary Phase and their team are working hard to improve your learning further.

In order to improve the school further, we have asked the people running the school to do three things.

- Help you reach higher standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 so that you do as well in this subject as you do in English and science.
- Improve the curriculum to make it more stimulating and also to help you become more aware of how families live in other parts of the world.
- Extend the methods of learning currently used in the Reception Year into Year 1.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Horwood

Lead inspector