

Dodford First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116670
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338859
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Antony Ranger
Headteacher	Mrs Marianne Baker
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2007
School address	Fockbury Road Dodford Bromsgrove
Telephone number	01527 831569
Fax number	01527 831569
Email address	office@dodford.worcs.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed and all four teachers seen. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and governors.

Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at all key policy documents, tracking data and the self-evaluation form. They also scrutinised 27 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Pupils' progress in lessons, especially in Year 4.
- Evidence to clarify children's starting points in Reception.
- The accuracy of the school's very positive view of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Information about the school

This is a small but expanding village school which draws some pupils from its rural surroundings but far more from the nearby town of Bromsgrove. Almost all are White British heritage and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very low. The Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of a Reception class, taught alongside Year 1. The current headteacher is in her second year in post and there has been significant discontinuity in the staff responsible for Year 4. The school has achieved National Healthy School Status, Artsmark bronze and the bronze Eco-School award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Some features remain satisfactory, but the leaders have demonstrated the capacity to transform provision and aspects of the school's work are already outstanding. Parents and carers are right to be highly supportive, talking about a sense of family, the happiness of their children at school and the constant striving for improvement shown by leaders.

The school has been focussing on sustaining its small, manageable size and village-school atmosphere while establishing high standards and an exciting curriculum. It has been successful for some time in several respects, including the good quality of teaching and above-average standards in Key Stage 1. The positive ethos, strong support for pupils and impressive backing from parents and carers engender excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Standards in Year 4 are broadly in line with expectations. At times, discontinuity in school leadership and in the teaching of Year 4 has adversely affected the commitment and attainment of this year group, but recent action has led to secure improvement. The new headteacher, with close governor support, has reorganised year groupings and subject leadership so that in Year 4, mathematics and science are now the responsibility of a permanent member of staff who is consistently performing at a very high level. This is ensuring that progress overall, from entry into Reception to the time pupils leave the school, is good. The quality of teaching and rates of progress in the Reception Year and Year 1 are satisfactory and do not match those now found in the rest of the school. Where teaching is satisfactory, lessons proceed at an adequate pace and do not involve pupils actively enough, whereas these are strong features in the good and sometimes exceptional teaching in Years 2 to 4.

The headteacher provides real energy and vision, successfully taking staff with her as she pursues new and higher expectations of them and the pupils they serve. A good capacity to improve is demonstrated in the adoption of an entirely new curriculum which is motivating pupils and staff very effectively. Assessment arrangements have been radically improved, enabling academic progress to be more reliably checked and more challenging targets set. Much of this improvement has been achieved by the headteacher with governor support, but further momentum and capacity is now derived from effective subject leaders, a role previously lodged with the headteacher. Governors are well informed and show imagination and drive in carrying through academic and accommodation projects. They challenge the headteacher well. Staff questionnaire returns show remarkable levels of support, which has facilitated the successful introduction of innovations and developed a strong sense of team work amongst administrative, support and teaching staff.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils enjoy school immensely because teaching is good and care, guidance and support are outstanding, encouraging them to contribute well to school life and the community, promoting high attendance and excellent approaches to healthy lifestyles. They show a strong sense of security, based on the good safeguarding systems in place and the excellent relationships between pupils and staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching quality and pupils' progress in Reception and Year 1 to at least match the good quality found in the rest of the school by:
 - making sure the pace of lessons is consistently brisk and includes a high level of active participation by all pupils.
- Ensure that standards in Year 4 in 2011 exceed national expectations by a greater margin than that seen in Year 2 tests by:
 - setting targets in English, mathematics and science that substantially exceed national expectations for Year 4
 - ensuring that these targets influence expectations in day-to-day teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Good outcomes predominate because of good overall progress in lessons and impressive personal development. Attainment at the end of Year 4 has been broadly in line with expectations, varying widely from year to year. The teaching linked to this lacked continuity but has been replaced since January 2010 by a permanent appointment, and the year group now enjoys consistently high-quality teaching and high expectations. Current progress in lessons in Year 4 is always at least good and sometimes outstanding. With equally effective and well-established quality in Years 2 and 3 and satisfactory development in Years 1 and Reception, pupils now make good overall progress. Standards in Key Stage 1 tests are significantly above average and show a rising trend, reflecting the impact of sustained good teaching in Year 2 as well as strong management of tracking and target setting. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, benefiting from effective class teaching and very good use of teaching assistants. Staff are good at planning work for the full range of ability, so that all groups perform equally well.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are remarkably polite, confident but respectful in virtually every situation. They are a credit to themselves and their families, but also owe much to the school's sustained efforts to lead by example, challenge negative attitudes and constantly encourage good behaviour. Their positive attitudes to learning have a major impact on progress in lessons. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and participate very heavily in sport during and after school. They consistently eat healthy food at lunchtimes. Attendance is well above average and constructive attitudes, coupled with good learning skills, make pupils well placed for the next stage of their

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

education. The school council plays a significant role, giving pupils a clear voice that is listened to by staff. As a result, pupils have chosen the charities the school supports, created many of the fund-raising strategies and lobbied for better arrangements for supporting lonely pupils at playtimes and for a canopy to provide shelter from sun and rain. Pupils contribute to village life far more than usual, not only through singing at numerous events but in helping run Mothers' and Fathers' Day meals and a range of village fetes. They have gained a good understanding of some aspects of different cultures within the United Kingdom and globally but the school has yet to make this as extensive as it might be. Pupils have developed into thoughtful and reflective individuals and, consequently, all aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, promoting effective learning. In Years 2, 3 and 4 lessons are never less than good and some outstanding practice is present. The quality in Year 1 and in Reception is satisfactory. Throughout the school, teachers collaborate very successfully

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

with teaching assistants so that lessons fully exploit possibilities for group work or support for individuals. Relationships in all lessons are positive and very encouraging for pupils. In the best lessons, the pace of teaching and learning is good, sometimes excellent, keeping interest levels high at all times. Scope for pupils of all abilities and interests to be fully challenged is always present in these lessons. Where teaching is good, staff also circulate swiftly, checking on progress and offering encouragement or redirection as required. Quick-fire question-and-answer sessions involve many pupils in these lessons, and they often come out to show the class their ideas on the interactive whiteboards. There is little fear of failure and a great deal of confidence in most lessons. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the pace of work is slower and fewer pupils are actively involved in answering questions or showing their work to the class. There is also less circulation and checking of work by staff. Assessment data are used well. They shape initial lesson plans and are frequently seen in the way teachers pose questions or set fresh tasks as the lesson develops. Pupils are clear about the next steps to take to improve their work.

Teaching has been boosted by a successful redesign of the curriculum. While its full impact on standards has yet to be felt, the new approach is already ensuring high levels of approval and interest from pupils and their parents. With its emphasis on creativity, an integral place for information and communication technology and the extended development of key themes, it is already promoting good learning. Enrichment opportunities are also good, especially the school's strong commitment to specialist sports providers, music tutors and the collaborative work of the local schools' pyramid. The award-winning school garden is another valuable asset, offering practical learning opportunities as well as enriching the school's environment.

Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Excellent systems are in place to promote good attendance, outstanding behaviour, awareness of safety and good lifestyle choices. There are many more opportunities than usual to contribute to school and village life and that of the wider community. Links with families are strong and there is excellent support for families of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff make the most of the school's small size by getting to know pupils and their families extremely well. Their consistently pleasant, encouraging and approachable style explains much of the happiness and sense of security that pupils display.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Leaders and managers already ensure that this is a good school and their ambition means that it is improving significantly. The headteacher leads by example, interacting very effectively with pupils, staff and parents and also teaching successfully. Her enthusiasm and commitment are contagious and her planning and decision-making convert these virtues into good progress, with better-organised provision, a fresh curriculum, well-judged appointments and a widening of leadership responsibilities. Parents and carers, other schools and commercial providers are all drawn in for the benefit of the school. Discrimination is countered by very effective promotion of values of care and respect, and the 'cultural diversity' theme in the curriculum helps to promote awareness of other cultures. Safeguarding is led and managed well, with governors offering considerable expertise to the process. The school uses its small size and detailed knowledge of pupils to ensure they feel especially secure. The promotion of community cohesion is good, with a clear awareness of local, national and global issues. Recent changes in the leadership and membership of the governing body has ensured a fresh appraisal of what the school needs and how governors can best support this. They contribute significantly to the school's development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in Early Years Foundation Stage and make the progress expected of them. Most children arrive with skills that are a little above expectations and this gap is marginally greater when they join Year 1. Many start Reception quite confident in communication, language and literacy. They broaden their vocabulary

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

appropriately and become confident in expressing themselves verbally. They find exploring mathematical skills enjoyable. They benefit from the pleasant and safe ethos that pervades the Early Years Foundation Stage and the whole school, so that their personal, social and emotional development is also good.

Staff have created a stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors, and a good welcome awaits children and their parents each morning. The curriculum has recently been revised and offers good opportunities for creativity, practical activities and a good blend of independent and guided learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, though the pace of lessons is generally steady rather than brisk. A modest number of children are drawn into question-and-answer sessions. Leadership and management of Early Years Foundation Stage ensure adequate progress, but there are general rather than specific and challenging expectations about children's progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. Nearly 60% of families returned the inspection questionnaire and offered very positive agreement on all topics. This confirms the commitment shown by so many in their choice of this school when there are others closer to their homes. Respondents were especially pleased with how their children enjoy school and how they are kept safe and encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. A very small minority believed their children could be making better progress and that more could be done to help smooth transition between year groups and schools. Inspectors found that current rates of progress are good, but agree that they could be higher in the Early Years Foundation Stage and that in the past they have not been high enough in Year 4. They found no evidence to support the minority view about pupil transition.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dodford First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 63 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	70	8	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	37	15	56	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	52	9	33	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	52	12	44	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	52	12	44	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	52	13	48	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	41	12	44	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	59	10	37	0	0	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	44	14	52	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	37	15	56	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	52	12	44	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	67	8	30	1	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dodford First School, Bromsgrove, B61 9AW

Thank you for your warm welcome when I and another inspector visited your school recently. You say that you enjoy school a great deal and your parents and carers think you are at a good school. You will be pleased to know that inspectors agree with this. In fact, some things about the school are outstanding, while one or two are satisfactory.

We were most impressed with:

- your excellent behaviour
- teaching in Years 2, 3 and 4
- the high standards in your Key Stage 1 tests
- your excellent approach to keeping healthy
- the way you look out for each other, do things for the village and raise money for charities
- the excellent care and support the school gives you
- the good leadership your headteacher and the governors provide.

So that your school improves further, we have asked the headteacher and other managers to:

- raise the quality of teaching in Reception and Year 1 so it is as good as it is in the rest of the school
- make sure that the good progress Year 4 pupils now make in their lessons is matched by really high standards by the time they leave.

You can help as well by continuing to join in fully in lessons. Year 3 have a great opportunity by taking the hardworking attitudes you have shown already into Year 4 and working with your next teacher to reach the best standards the school has seen.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Dodford.

Yours sincerely

Robert Drew

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.