

Pershore, Abbey Park First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116716
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338877
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Thorne
Headteacher	David Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of their time was spent looking at learning. Twelve lessons and six teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and a governor. They observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, the school's development plan, records of checks on teaching, documents relating to safeguarding of pupils and the responses to 43 parental questionnaires.

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

- whether higher attaining pupils are given work that is sufficiently challenging in writing in Years 1 and 2
- the impact of actions taken to improve attendance
- whether the school's analysis of data provides an accurate picture of pupils' progress.

Information about the school

This small school draws its pupils from the town of Pershore. There are significantly more boys than there are girls at the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school site also houses the Abbey Road Playgroup, but this is not managed by the school's governing body and so is subject to a separate inspection. A new headteacher took up post in September 2008.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. The first thing that any visitor notices is how happy, polite and exceptionally well behaved the pupils are. Even the very youngest children are usually perfectly behaved, because they are constantly being reminded of how they should conduct themselves, and praised when they meet the highest standards. This stays with them as they move up the school and plays a strong part in their learning. Teachers rarely have to overtly control behaviour. A simple glance at a pupil is enough to get them back on task. In this calm and orderly atmosphere pupils make good progress in most of their subjects because they are taught well. The exception is in writing, where progress is satisfactory. Opportunities are often missed to encourage children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to start to make marks or make the shapes of letters, while the more-able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not always given work that is hard enough for them. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is at least good in all subjects, because the work is more closely matched to pupils' needs. In Year 4 it is outstanding. Pupils' learning is constantly checked during lessons, so the teacher knows exactly when to give individuals harder work or more support.

All of the pupils said that they felt very safe in school and had no worries whatsoever, and the parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire agreed. The school places a great emphasis on keeping pupils safe, and teaching them how to check for dangers themselves. The result is pupils who have an excellent understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation, and when they need to tell an adult about it. Attendance is average. The school has reduced significantly the number of pupils who are persistent absentees, but the message about the importance of frequent and regular attendance is not being heeded by some parents, because the point is not made often enough.

The school has shown good improvement since it was last inspected. Progress has improved because the school's leaders have a clear picture of where its strengths and areas for improvement lie, and have taken concerted action to raise standards. There is a good team spirit among staff, and this also contributes to the school's good capacity to continue on its journey of improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all pupils make good progress in their writing by:
 - taking every opportunity to promote mark making and early writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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- providing more challenging work for the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Raise attendance to at least 95.1% by more frequently stressing the importance of regular attendance to parents.
- Use the examples of outstanding assessment apparent in Year 4 to promote equally effective practice across the rest of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well at the school, and lesson observations confirmed that levels of attainment are above average by the time they are preparing to move on in Year 4. While the most able do not do as well as others in writing, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are often taught in small groups where the work can be more accurately matched to their needs. In lessons, pupils work hard and concentrate very well, with even the youngest prepared to persevere with tasks that they find difficult. Younger children are particularly proud of their work and are keen to show it to visitors. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment is smaller than that seen nationally, because the school has adapted its teaching and curriculum to help boys learn more effectively. Boys particularly enjoy solving problems, and all pupils like being active in the learning. Special events such as Viking day go down particularly well. Pupils get to dress up as Vikings and are taught by characters such as Thora, the mighty Viking warrior. They learn Icelandic and convert their writing to runes. Such an approach helps to put pupils' learning in a new and exciting context, so they are enthusiastic and highly motivated. It also allows pupils to apply their good numeracy and computer skills in different topics. Pupils play a good part in the local community. Pupils in Year 4 have many opportunities to take responsibility within school, but these are more limited for younger pupils.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1

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

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The pace of learning in lessons is good because most lessons are broken up into short activities that maintain pupils' interest and motivation. Lessons usually start with a whole class activity using the interactive whiteboard. These are used well because it is often the pupils themselves who use them to explain a point to the class, rather than the teacher doing all the talking and showing. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to discuss their ideas with a partner, so that they can clarify their thoughts before reporting back to the class. Sometimes, these sessions can go on for too long with the whole class working on the same task. Pupils' concentration may wane a little, but they never misbehave. The school provides a good range of extra clubs and activities, and makes sure that all pupils take part in at least one activity that promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are happy in school because they feel exceptionally secure. The school ensures that they all have someone to talk to if they are unhappy. The approach to promoting the best possible behaviour is entirely consistent across the school. The school has had notable success with pupils who have behaviour problems joining from other schools. They quickly learn to modify their behaviour to fit in with everyone else, and this often leads to them being removed from the register of pupils with special educational needs in a very short time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders go to good lengths to ensure equality of opportunity. Data on groups of pupils are analysed well to provide an accurate picture of their progress. This allows the school to target any groups who are not doing as well as others. Pupils'

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involvement in other activities is also checked, to ensure that all take part in a club or activity that interests them. The school's leaders have carried out a detailed analysis of pupils' understanding of different communities, so that the curriculum can be changed in order to fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Good progress has been made in engaging pupils with others in the local and national communities, especially the elderly and pupils in an inner-city school who have very different backgrounds from those of the school's own pupils. Plans are in place to improve the international aspect of community cohesion by forging greater links with schools abroad. Governors play a good role in monitoring the work of the school, especially through their increasingly effective visits to lessons. The expertise of governors is used well, especially in financial matters. All statutory requirements are met, and governors ensure that the school adopts good practice across all areas of safeguarding. The success of the school, however, can be traced to the good leadership and drive provided by the headteacher and his deputy. Checks on teaching, mainly carried out by the headteacher, provide a clear picture of what needs to be improved and all teachers know what they have to do to provide an even better education for the pupils.

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 make exceptionally good progress in their personal development in the first two years of their schooling. Routines are established very quickly, so children soon become aware of what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour. Praise is used very well to reward children, but they are also reminded of their impact on others if they stray from

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the highest possible standards of behaviour towards one another. All feel very safe and secure in the friendly and stimulating environment. The range of activities is particularly wide, with a good balance between those led by adults and those chosen by the children themselves. The outdoor area is used very well to provide different stimuli for children, especially the 'forest school' area. Assessments are accurate, but sometimes individuals in the nursery are left too long without an adult checking on how well they are doing or providing them with a stimulus to take their learning further. The results of assessments have not been transferred accurately from nursery to reception until recently, so the school has not developed a clear and accurate picture of progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, it is clear that progress is improving. Children start nursery with skills and knowledge that are generally below those expected for their age, and start Year 1 with broadly average standards. Progress is now good in almost all areas of learning. Children quickly learn the sounds that letters make, but they are slower to learn their shapes or to write them. The manager has a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensures all welfare requirements are met. The priorities for improvement are currently being distilled from the school development plan into a separate one, to more clearly focus the actions required to drive up achievement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Virtually all parents and carers are very happy with all that the school provides. Many praised the school and its teachers for helping their child to enjoy their education and keeping them safe and secure. Inspectors entirely agree with parents' views. The small number of individual concerns did not fall into any particular pattern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pershore, Abbey Park First and Nursery 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 139 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	65	15	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	51	18	42	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	58	16	37	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	70	12	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	67	13	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	65	15	35	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)	21	49	20	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	56	16	37	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	47	21	49	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	44	22	51	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	53	19	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	84	7	16	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



26 February 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Pershore, Abbey Park First and Nursery School, Pershore, WR10 1DF

Many thanks for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. Your parents and carers can be very proud of your excellent manners and behaviour.

You told us that you go to a good school, where you all feel very safe and happy. We agree. You learn quickly in most of your subjects and leave Year 4 knowing more than we often see in schools. You like all the extra clubs, and the way that your teachers make learning fun and interesting. You don't make as much progress in your writing as you do in your other subjects. So, we have asked your teachers to give you lots of opportunities to start writing letters in the nursery and reception classes, and to give some of you more difficult tasks in Years 1 and 2.

In Year 4, you are always given work that you find just hard enough, so that you will be able to do it if you really think and work at it. Your work is continually checked to see how well you are getting on, and you are given harder work or more help when you need it. We think this is a really good idea, so we have asked all the other teachers to do it too. Your teachers take good care of you, and make sure you always have someone to talk to if you have a problem. Some of you do not always come to school as often as you could. So we have asked the people who run the school to remind your parents and carers just how important it is that you don't miss any lessons without good reason. You can help by reminding them as well.

Your school is getting better and better. The people who run it know what works well, and where there is still room for improvement. All the teachers are working together to make the school as good as it can possibly be.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector

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