

Worthen CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123518
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340356
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Krishan Sharma

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Ryan
Headteacher	Jonathan Brough
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. One of the inspectors saw 4 teachers during 10 classroom visits typically lasting between 20 to 30 minutes. Approximately 66% of the time was spent on looking at learning. Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body, staff and two groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at some of the school's policies and procedures, pupils' written work and tracking data to monitor pupils' progress. Twenty-five parental responses were considered as well as those completed by Key Stage 2 pupils and staff. Many aspects of the school's work were reviewed. The following areas were looked at in detail:

attainment and progress in mathematics

- the quality of the curriculum and teaching to determine the extent to which they meet the needs of all pupils in mixed-age and mixed ability classes
- the effectiveness of leadership and management to determine the extent to which they have been distributed and how the headteacher balances his teaching commitment with his leadership and management responsibilities.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school. It has three mixed-age classes, often with year groups with small numbers that fluctuate. It serves a rural community close to the border with Wales. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class. The headteacher joined the school in September 2008.

The school holds an Activemark in recognition for its work in sport, the Healthy School Accreditation and, for the third time, the Eco-School Green Flag 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

Worthen is a good school. Most parents are well satisfied with what it provides for their children. One of them spoke for many, saying, 'Worthen Primary is a really happy and inclusive school.' Pupils enjoy being at school and they behave well. Their attendance is above average. The school has nurtured many partnerships, which it uses effectively to improve pupils' learning and enjoyment.

By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, their attainment is above average and most of them make good progress from their starting points, which are at or around the expected levels on entry to Reception. The quality of teaching is consistently good and contributes significantly to pupils' good achievement. Teachers hold high expectations and use their good subject knowledge to get the best out of most pupils and at a brisk pace. The curriculum caters for all groups of pupils and is engaging; particularly its provision for enrichment activities. The provision for the Forest School is universally valued for the practical opportunities it offers for the application of basic skills and for enhancing pupils' personal qualities.

The new headteacher is committed to improving academic standards as well as pupils' personal development. To this end, the current priorities for improvement are the right ones. The school's self-evaluation is good enough to give it a generally accurate overview of its performance. It also reflects the school's good capacity to improve, which has proved its worth by helping it to maintain its strengths and to tackle relative weaknesses. The collection and analysis of data is effective in tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. It enables staff to identify individuals in danger of underachieving, and support them. However, monitoring and evaluation systems are not sufficiently fine-tuned to make them an efficient tool for analysing patterns in a small school where all staff teach. There is not a clear brief for staff at different levels, nor for governors. Currently, a considerable amount of information is collected informally, which is often not recorded for future reference and use. Time committed to monitoring and evaluation is limited and essential skills needed to undertake them are not consistently secure for staff at different levels.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen systems for monitoring and evaluation in the school by:
 - establishing formal, but manageable, arrangements that clarify roles and responsibilities for all staff and governors, activities to be undertaken and an annual programme

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- providing relevant training to develop essential skills
- developing manageable recording formats and reporting arrangements
- demonstrating the use of findings to secure necessary improvements
- balancing the workload of the headteacher better to allow him a reasonable amount of time for undertaking these activities.

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

In all lessons, most pupils achieve well. They are interested in their work and give their best. The pace of learning is usually brisk as a result of challenging teaching and pupils' skills in working diligently without constant supervision. Consequently, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the higher attaining, make good progress. In a small school, there will be some statistical variation from year to year, but for three of the last four years, the end of Key Stage 2 attainment has been above average. Year 6 pupils' current work is above average in English and mathematics. Pupils are articulate and are able to explain well what they are learning. The increasing focus on raising attainment in mathematics is showing a positive impact. Even so, how pupils work out their calculations in mathematics is not always clear in lessons. Their skills in writing to persuade are strong and they enjoy taking sides in an argument.

Behaviour is good and pupils work well with each other. Even so, a significant number of pupils expressed some concern with behaviour in the school. One of the inspectors discussed this with two groups of pupils who described instances of annoying, rather than threatening, behaviour. They assured the inspector that teachers deal with these incidents when they are approached. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and most of their parents agree with them. Most of them have a good understanding of what they have to do to stay healthy, and this is reflected in the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. Pupils take on responsibility for a range of tasks in the school, including their work with the school council. They willingly help others in the community and raise funds for good causes. Good achievement in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and strong personal qualities prepare them well for the future world of work. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They are willing to reflect on their own and others' actions. They learn to respect cultural differences due to the school's efforts in extending its global contacts.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In lessons, teachers have high expectations and secure pupils' commitment to their work and good behaviour. They have strong subject expertise, which is reflected in their clear explanations and instructions. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and their good progress. Teachers' planning caters well for the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities within each class. Effective questioning is used to check and extend pupils' understanding of ideas being taught. Although teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is accurate in lessons, marking does not always make it clear how well they are doing and what they could do to improve their work. Most pupils have a good idea of how well they have done before teachers comment on their work, but not all of them are confident in assessing their own work.

The curriculum is broad and is clearly designed to meet the diverse needs of most pupils. It is impressively enhanced through the provision of a Forest School and an Eco Laboratory in the school's grounds which add to pupils' environmental awareness and opportunities to practise their basic and personal skills. The planning for literacy and numeracy skills is suitably informed by the national primary strategy and links between literacy and other subjects are strong. Problem solving in mathematics and extended pieces of writing are less well represented in pupils' written work. The numerous enrichment opportunities are taken up by a large number of pupils, who enjoy the experience.

Effective care and guidance ensure that most pupils feel supported. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive targeted support and make good progress as a result. Those who are considered to be potentially vulnerable are quickly identified

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and provided with suitable support. The new arrivals are made to feel welcome. The school is able to demonstrate that its arrangements for pupils who speak English as an additional language have worked well. The induction and transition arrangements effectively ensure a smooth transfer.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's commitment to maintaining at least above average levels of pupils' attainment, as well as developing their strong personal qualities, is shared by staff and governors. As a result, the school continues to perform well on both counts. Teachers share their enthusiasm about improving their practice, and there is very high morale. Consequently, the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning are effective, even though monitoring is significantly supplemented by informal sources of evidence. The developing systems for tracking pupil's progress have now taken shape. This means that the school is able to maintain an overview of pupils' attainment and progress and sets challenging targets for itself. However, most of the monitoring and evaluation are currently undertaken by the headteacher, whose teaching commitment for four days a week reduces its scale. The other two teachers make a constructive contribution mainly to the development of the areas for which they are responsible. The current arrangements for recording, reporting and the use of findings to identify improvements have yet to be fully tested out in practice. The governing body is supportive of the school and maintains a sound overview of its performance. It recognises that its evaluation of the implementation of the school's key policies and plans is not fully systematic.

The school enjoys good relationships with parents and carers and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Partnerships with local churches, the secondary school, environmental and sports organisations are good because they bring additional expertise to enhance pupils' achievement and enjoyment. The commitment to equal opportunities has resulted in the strong performance of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented pupils.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, although there have been occasional administrative lapses in reviewing them. Staff are suitably trained. The school is aware of the nature of the community it serves and has clear plans for preparing pupils for their contribution towards the local and the wider community, with all its diversity. Links

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have already been established with other countries in Europe and further afield to raise pupils' cultural horizons. The use of pen pals abroad is bringing a global dimension to the school's efforts in promoting community cohesion.

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	3
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	3
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

As a result of effective teaching, most children make good progress. They do well across all areas of learning, but particularly in the development of their personal and social skills. The focus on phonics and numbers ensures that they get a good start in the basic skills. Occasionally, adults intervene too soon and restrict the opportunities for children to explain how they are working out their response. They enjoy listening to stories and confidently express their opinions. The use of outdoor provision, including the Forest School, provides numerous opportunities for children across all areas of learning. Most of them are good at mixing colours, making observational drawings and enacting roles in the home corner. In the physical development sessions, they move confidently and have an awareness of the space around them. Planning includes a suitable range of activities that caters well for all groups and effectively promotes children's independence. Regular assessments are made and used to plan the next steps in their learning. Adults take very good care of children and ensure their welfare and safety. Links with parents and carers and pre-school groups are valued. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. There is a good team spirit and an understanding of how to make learning enjoyable.

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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

About half of the parents and carers returned their questionnaires. Most parents and carers are positive about the school. They feel happy with what the school does for their children and that their children enjoy being at school. They also acknowledge that the school keeps them informed about their children's progress and that the quality of teaching in the school is good. There are isolated concerns across 7 out of 13 questions asked of all parents and carers. A very small number of parents and carers were concerned about the extent to which the school helps them to support their children's learning and how it deals with unacceptable behaviour. The views represented by a very small minority were heavily counterbalanced by the positive responses from a very large majority. The inspectors looked at pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school and found it to be good. Although the school has taken steps to inform parents and carers about how they could engage with their children's learning at home, it has not sought their views about the sort of guidance that they would like to have from school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Worthen CofE Primary 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	68	7	28	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	56	6	24	3	12	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	60	10	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	52	11	44	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	60	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	52	7	28	5	20	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	56	6	24	3	12	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)	12	48	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	52	11	44	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	48	8	32	0	0	2	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	48	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	52	9	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	64	8	32	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 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.



Wednesday 10 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Worthen CofE Primary School, SY5 9HT

Thank you very much for all the help you gave me with the inspection of your school. I enjoyed looking at your work and talking to you about it. I judged that you attend a good school. Here are some of the positive things that I found out about your school: Most of you make good progress in lessons and reach above average standards by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6.

You say you feel safe, enjoy being at school and attend regularly.

In lessons and around the school, your behaviour was good during the inspection.

Although I noted some of you were concerned about the behaviour of a small number of pupils in the school, we agreed that the behaviour was annoying, not bad.

You work hard in lessons and are keen to learn.

Your teachers and others take good care of you.

Your school is good at making sure that all of you are treated fairly.

You like many of the extra-curricular activities the school offers you, particularly the Forest School and Eco Laboratory.

To improve your school further, I have asked the people in charge to work on one important thing:

Make sure that staff and governors check more carefully how well your school is performing and whether it is doing as well as you would all like it do.

I send you and your friends my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma

Lead inspector

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