



Market Drayton Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123382
LEA Shropshire
Inspection number 281460
Inspection dates 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006
Reporting inspector Kathryn England AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Longslow Road
School category	Community		Market Drayton
Age range of pupils	2 to 7		Shropshire TF9 3BA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01630 652909
Number on roll	277	Fax number	01630 656185
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Steven Boughey
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Malcolm

Age group 2 to 7	Inspection dates 17 January 2006 - 18 January 2006	Inspection number 281460
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Market Drayton is a medium sized infant school where most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is low. Twenty per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. When pupils start in the Nursery class their levels of skills and knowledge are below those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Market Drayton Infants School provides a satisfactory standard of education, and provides satisfactory value for money. It is an extended school providing full day care registration for young children. The school's own evaluation of its performance is similar. The school went through a difficult period over the last two years with staff leaving and the budget under pressure due to a fall in the number of pupils in the school. These factors together with a high number of Summer born boys, and children with learning difficulties led to lower results than normal in 2005. The problems have now been solved and the quality of education is improving.

The children are well taught in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress despite the fact that they enter school with lower than expected social, play, speaking and listening skills, but remain below the typical standards reached by 5 year olds. They make slower but steady progress in Key Stage 1, but this is not fast enough for them to catch up to the national average by the age of 7. This is mainly because of weaknesses in their writing and because the most able are not stretched enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well due to the close attention to their needs.

Pupils' personal development is good and reflects the benevolent care provided by the staff. Staff know their pupils well in many respects but the systems to keep track of the pupils' academic progress and inform them of how well they are doing are not rigorous. One result of this is that targets for their performance are not high enough for higher attaining pupils.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, despite its recent difficulties. Its clear understanding of where improvement is needed is a secure basis for it to continue making adequate improvement in future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the level of challenge in the work for higher attaining pupils so that more of them reach higher standards by the end of Year 2.
- Raise standards in writing by giving pupils more opportunity to write independently.
- Monitor pupils' progress more thoroughly so pupils are set more challenging targets and know how to reach them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils make satisfactory but uneven progress through the school and leave with standards that are below average. They enter the Nursery with limited skills and knowledge and they have much ground to make up. They get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, where they have good opportunities to investigate for themselves. Activities led by adults are well planned to build confidence and an enthusiasm for learning. Progress slows in Key Stage 1. While it is still satisfactory, the pupils are not extended as much as in the early years, especially those pupils who

are more able. Writing lags behind other aspects of their work. The test results in 2005 were lower than normal due to difficulties in recruiting staff. This is now resolved and better teaching is raising standards, although the targets set for pupils are not sufficiently challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they are well supported by effective teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school and find the lessons interesting. Their behaviour is good and they work and play co-operatively. This helps them to feel safe within the school. They are friendly and polite, and talked enthusiastically to inspectors about their experiences in school. They show maturity when undertaking responsible tasks such as the Year 2 pupils who are 'buddies' to others or helpers in the classroom. The inspection team observed well mannered, pleasant pupils. Attendance is satisfactory.

The pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is good. The school listens to the opinions of pupils by asking them to negotiate their own set of class rules at the start of the school year. There is no school council to develop this further, but one is planned. The pupils' collections for charity and taking part in local events help to develop their understanding of society. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of exercise and which foods contribute to healthy eating. The pupils make a positive contribution to the community by fund raising for charities, joining in the local tennis tournament, and taking part in county shows and music festivals. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being by learning to be problem solvers, using money in play situations and seeing themselves as members of the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but better in the early years than in Key Stage 1. In the most successful lessons teachers plan well and offer a wide range of activities that engage pupils' interest and maintain their concentration. Extensive use of questioning and discussion are used to check progress and give pupils the opportunity to hear the ideas of others. This is made more effective by the fact that teachers have warm relationships with their classes. Pupils engage with 'talk partners' to compare ideas to enhance their learning. Good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties by both their teachers and the teaching assistants, who are well tuned to their needs. Marking provides clear advice to pupils on how to improve.

Where lessons are not so successful, which tends to be in Key Stage 1, too much time is spent on teaching whole-class groups and there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to work independently or in smaller groups. This slows the pace of lessons and leads

to a decrease in concentration levels. There are some lessons where insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils limits the progress they are able to make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets all necessary requirements and gives pupils a balanced education. In the Nursery and Reception classes work is well-organised around topics that interest the children. They can work inside or out through covered canopies or in the 'sensory garden' where there are well-organised opportunities to learn through playing.

There is insufficient provision in lessons to offer increased challenge to higher attaining pupils and this limits the progress they are able to make. Although the school is focused on raising the standards of pupils' writing, there are insufficient opportunities given in lessons for them to write independently.

It is school policy for children to practise writing in history and geography lessons but there are many missed opportunities for children to engage in writing tasks in these subjects.

The school's wide range of activities outside normal lessons supports pupils' learning well. During the inspection the pupils enjoyed watching a puppet show, which was used to enhance their language work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The standard of care and guidance given to pupils is satisfactory, and the staff are very committed to their well-being. The effectiveness of their support for pupils is limited by the fact that it is not underpinned by sufficiently rigorous tracking of their progress. This means that the pupils do not understand well enough how they can improve their work and challenging targets are not set consistently enough for higher attaining pupils.

The school works well with parents and outside agencies to help meet the pupils' needs. There are good arrangements for keeping pupils safe and risks are appropriately assessed. Child protection arrangements for all pupils are firmly in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has steered the school through a difficult two-year period of staffing and financial problems, which included the departure of the deputy head and special needs co-ordinator at the end of 2004. Fewer applications due to a falling birth rate in Shropshire led to a squeeze on the school's budget. These factors help to explain the

dip in Key Stage 1 results in 2005, but they have now been resolved and the school is moving forwards again.

The leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what must be done to improve. It is clear to them, for example, that provision and progress are good in the Foundation Stage. Equally, they recognise that opportunities for written work, the challenge given to the higher attainers and the tracking of pupils' progress all need improvement.

Issues from the previous inspection report have been addressed through planning centred on raising achievement. The governors are acting as 'critical friends' to the school, and the middle managers have made good steps towards becoming a strong team. With improvements already taking place, there is the capacity to move the school further forward.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	NA
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	NA
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

We enjoyed visiting your school and want to thank you for making us so welcome and talking with us about the things you like about school.

You try very hard during your lessons to help each other and listen carefully to your teachers. Your teachers are trying hard to make your lessons interesting, and we can see you are making reasonable progress – that means you are getting better and we can see that by looking at your books.

You say you feel safe and happy in the school and like the many things you can do there. You are polite and help each other a lot.

We are asking your teachers to help you to do even better. Some of you should be doing harder work and also writing more things on your own. The school should follow your progress more closely and make sure you know how to improve your work.

We know you like school and it was nice to see you enjoying the puppets when we were in school.

Thank you for all the kind things you did for us while we were with you and for showing us your good manners and big smiles.

Yours sincerely

Ms Kathy England Lead Inspector