



# Redditch, Astwood Bank First School

Inspection Report - Amended

**Unique Reference Number** 116720  
**Local Authority** Worcestershire  
**Inspection number** 290611  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Anthony Shield

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Church Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Astwood Bank
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–9		Redditch B96 6EH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 892681
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	297	<b>Fax number</b>	01527 892615
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	John Cassidy
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Rider
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
5–9	12–13 September 2006	290611

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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Astwood Bank First School is a little bigger than most primary schools, drawing its pupils from both the immediate village and neighbouring Redditch. The school is usually oversubscribed. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with few pupils from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than average, and most children start school with good social and language skills. A small number of pupils have learning difficulties, mainly in terms of speech and language. A few have physical disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Astwood First is a good school with a number of outstanding features. The school is passionate in its commitment to the care and progress of every pupil. This is demonstrated through high quality relationships, the welcoming environment and above all, the belief that all pupils can achieve. The school makes plain its values and they are a touchstone for all its work. Pupils achieve well. The school gives children an excellent start in the Reception class. Building on this very good foundation, the school skilfully extends pupils' academic skills through carefully nurturing their well-being and self-belief. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is not so rapid in Year 3, particularly for the more able pupils in writing and mathematics, but ground is largely made up during Year 4. As a result, standards at the end of Year 4 are above average. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is often exemplary and pupils show a sensitive concern for others. They enjoy school and always try their best. The school's emphasis on promoting pupils' creativity has helped develop pupils' self-awareness and independence. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes outstanding. The atmosphere in classrooms is always positive and teachers encourage pupils to be confident learners and where possible work things out for themselves. Pupils are increasingly aware of the next step in their learning because teachers plan carefully and involve the pupils themselves. The curriculum is outstanding. It is imaginatively planned and enriched by an excellent range of visitors and other activities. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's inspirational leadership has created a rich climate for learning where pupils feel safe. Staff at all levels make an effective contribution, particularly through a thorough programme of monitoring and support. The school knows itself well and has comprehensive procedures to check on developments. A committed team of governors offers thoughtful challenge and support. The school works well to promote an effective partnership with parents, and has their confidence. The school is far from complacent and, given the recent progress made, is well placed to improve further. As one parent commented 'a truly remarkable school and we regard every day our child is there as a privilege'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress of the more able pupils in Year 3, particularly in writing and mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

When children start school, they arrive with many advantages, and the school capitalises on this through the outstanding provision in the Reception Year. Progress during this year is excellent because of the careful attention given to children's individual needs and the way in which their confidence is developed. As a result, children thrive, and standards are above average as they enter Year 1. Good progress is made in Years 1

and 2. Standards in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly above average. Progress slows a little in Year 3. In particular more able pupils do not make the progress they should during this year in both writing and mathematics. This is because expectations are not always high enough and work is not always planned to challenge the more able. The school has been working to further improve standards in writing in all years and this is beginning to have an impact. The rate of progress picks up again in Year 4 and standards at the end of the year are above average. During the inspection, while it was not possible to make judgements about all subjects, some high standards of work were observed in art and music. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils develop excellent personal qualities during their time at the school, starting in Reception. This is demonstrated in the fascination they show in their learning. They clearly enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. 'School is great', as one pupil explained. Pupils understand the benefits of regular exercise and know the value of choosing healthy food for their packed lunches. They understand how to keep themselves safe in school and who to turn to for help and advice. The school's strong ethos of caring for others and careful attention to developing creativity underpins pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships and behaviour are excellent. Pupils respond well to the school's emphasis on developing their sense of responsibility and well-being. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and enjoy involvement in helping to plan the curriculum and the appointment of staff. They make an excellent contribution to their community and enjoy fund raising for the local carnival. Pupils' good key skills and ability to work in teams mean they are well prepared for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Throughout the school, teachers have good subject knowledge, supplemented very effectively by the skills of teaching assistants and visiting specialists. A particularly good feature is that pupils help to plan topics, so they are fully involved in their learning. Lessons are sharply focused, with stimulating resources, practical activities and competitions, encouraging excellent attitudes. Teachers are very good listeners and ensure that discussion offers valuable explanations when pupils have not fully understood. Staff in Reception skilfully build on what children know and can do, teaching them to choose from a range of interesting activities within a carefully organised and exciting environment. Years 2, 3 and 4 are taught in ability sets for English and mathematics, allowing teaching to be more finely tuned. As a result, tasks are generally well adjusted for pupils of differing abilities, and this is particularly

effective for pupils with learning difficulties. However, more able pupils are not always fully stretched, particularly in Year 3, where expectations are not always high enough.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is well balanced and exciting. Resources for information and communication technology have greatly improved since the last inspection, and are being used effectively to enhance learning. Imaginative links are made between subjects to increase pupils' interest. There is a strong emphasis on creativity and learning from first-hand experiences. This is boosted by an excellent range of additional activities, visits and visitors. Among these are drumming sessions, open to all but with particular benefit for pupils with coordination difficulties as well as those with musical talent. Extra-curricular clubs cover a wide range of academic, arts and sporting interests and are popular with all pupils. The school is well resourced, and the extensive grounds, including the forest area, are particularly well used for teaching.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding levels of care reflect the value the school places on individual pupils. Children settle quickly in the Reception class because of the highly effective induction programme. Pupils say they are confident that any concerns they have will be heard sympathetically and dealt with promptly. An excellent feature is the monitoring of each pupil's well-being, including their motivation, so that extra care can be given to the few individuals who are having difficulties. Academic progress is very thoroughly tracked to secure pupils' best progress. Test results are carefully analysed to identify where teaching and learning could be improved. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported particularly well. Targets are set for each pupil in English and mathematics, and pupils understand these and what they have to do to achieve them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads with imagination and purpose and has created a school whose values are widely shared. She provides outstanding direction for the Reception Year, ensuring that children get the best possible start to their education. A newly appointed senior team is supportive and already making an impact. Staff at all levels confidently lead in their areas of responsibility. This is because the school's systems for monitoring and review are thorough and actively involve all staff. Staff analyse carefully what works and what needs to be improved, and this is backed up by a strong commitment to professional development. As a result, the school knows itself well. Recent action to improve writing has had a positive impact but the school recognises that more needs to be done, particularly to iron out inconsistencies in the levels of challenge for more able pupils. There are regular procedures for monitoring teaching, and these are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching. The school improvement plan, drawn up

after taking into account the views of all stakeholders, provides a good focus for development. Governors bring insight and commitment to their work in overseeing the school. The school has the confidence of the community it serves. Many parents are particularly pleased with their children's enjoyment of school. 'My child is full of school and filled with enthusiasm' was typical of several comments received.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We liked meeting you and your teachers and watching you learn. We particularly enjoyed talking to so many of you. Your school is good and does almost everything very well. What we liked most about your school
- We like the enthusiastic way you work hard and join in all the activities at school.
- You are very well behaved and polite, take good care of each other, and get on well with the teachers.
- When you join the Reception class, the school helps you to settle in well, and gives you a great start to school.
- Your teachers take very good care of you and help you to grow up into sensible children.
- Good teaching is enabling most of you to do very well and learn lots of exciting things.
- All the teachers are working hard to make your school even better. What we have asked your school to do now
- Make sure that those of you in Year 3 who are quick to learn are given work that really makes you think, particularly when you are writing or doing mathematics. Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. Good luck in the future!