



Worcester, St Barnabas CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116858
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290659
Inspection dates 5–6 February 2007
Reporting inspector Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Worcester
Age range of pupils	4–11		WR3 8NZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01905 22766
Number on roll (school)	410	Fax number	01905 619828
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Robert Morrison
		Headteacher	Angela Deakin
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a disadvantaged area. Children's attainment on entry is well below expected levels, most notably in their personal, language and mathematical development. The vast majority of pupils are White British. There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds but all pupils speak English fluently. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and has several good features. In particular, the personal development and well-being of pupils is good. Despite its size, it is a school with a happy, family atmosphere where pupils of different ages work and play well together. The school benefits from a particularly good governing body that has a constructive influence on how the school works and on bringing about improvements.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily but there are some groups whose progress is better than others. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps the children to achieve well. They make good progress because they are taught well in a stimulating learning environment. They make great strides in their personal and social development and this prepares them well for other aspects of their learning. Throughout the school, the significant number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress. This is due to the high quality of support they receive.

Strategies introduced by senior staff to raise standards in literacy and numeracy are starting to have a positive effect. Achievement is improving for most pupils in Years 1 to 6, apart from in science and also more generally for the small proportion of more able pupils in the school. Inconsistency in planning work that is suitably challenging for the more able is the main reason that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has some good features and these include an impressive range of activities for pupils out of school hours. An additional feature of the school's work is its outstanding promotion of Internet safety, for which it has a national reputation. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils receive helpful educational guidance in literacy and numeracy through thorough assessment, good marking and processes for setting targets. Unfortunately, these procedures are not effective enough in science.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's latest self- evaluation is not wholly accurate as it has not waited long enough to ensure that changes introduced are having a positive effect on achievement. Nevertheless, senior management's strategies for tracing pupils' progress are far more effective than in the past. This is one of several improvements since the last inspection and indicates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Senior staff check the quality of teaching regularly but they are not yet looking carefully enough at the quality of learning in the lessons they observe.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in science by developing assessment and processes for setting targets in line with what is now in place in English and mathematics.
- Improve the achievement of more able pupils through planning and provision of work that challenges them.
- Ensure senior staff and subject leaders monitor more closely how well pupils are learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards, although below average, reflect children's good achievement over the year because they make very good progress in their personal development and good progress in all other areas of learning.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 have been below average and falling in recent years due to increasing numbers of pupils with learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy. Boys' achievement has also been far lower than girls' in literacy skills in Years 1 and 2. This difference is being reduced successfully, by extra support where necessary, and by ensuring that the learning activities capture boys' interest. The Year 6 national test results have fluctuated annually but have usually been below the national averages. There was an overall trend of slight improvement in English and mathematics until 2006, when results in all subjects fell due to the particularly high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities in the year group. Throughout the school, achievement and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are now improving due to the new subject leaders helping the teaching to improve. Science remains a weakness and standards are not high enough. Similarly, the achievement of the more able pupils in all subjects could be better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

A high priority is placed on personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage so children develop good attitudes to school from an early age. Pupils say they feel safe in school and enjoy their lessons. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils know what is meant by a healthy lifestyle and understand the importance of eating healthy food and having plenty of exercise. The school council is actively involved in decision making and pupils are very proud of their part in helping the school to gain awards such as the Healthy Schools award and the Eco Schools Green Flag award. The effective links with the local church and numerous fundraising events give pupils a good understanding of how they might contribute to their community. Relationships are good at all levels and most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. This view is supported by the overwhelming majority of parents. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and an atmosphere of mutual respect is evident throughout the school. This is a strong factor in the good behaviour observed in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils develop a good insight into different faiths and cultures and say how much they enjoy the activities arranged for World Week held in the summer. Pupils' good social skills, experiences gained from activities like fund raising and their improving basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills mean they are satisfactorily prepared for future education and eventual economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Adults have good relationships with their children and have their care and welfare at heart. They include parents well in their children's learning, through, for example, running courses for parents on how to help their children improve their mathematical development. Teachers throughout the school have good relationships with pupils and most manage behaviour very well so pupils usually enjoy their lessons and take pride in their learning. Classrooms are bright and colourful and celebrate pupils' achievements through attractive displays of their work. It is clear from teachers' planning and from pupils' books, that teachers plan work well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Learning support assistants are used well to support this group. However, learning activities are not always accurately matched to the needs of the most capable pupils. As a result, this group does not make as much progress as they could and this is reflected in the results of national tests. Some pupils agree that they could do with some more challenge, as one pupil commented, 'We can do all the maths – it's quite easy, but solving word problems is hard.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. Good links are made between all areas of learning and calendar events are used well to promote children's learning about other cultures. For example, during the inspection, children were celebrating Chinese New Year. Teachers provide a good balance between direct teaching and guiding children to make some of their own choices for learning. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. It is enriched well and contains a good emphasis on keeping pupils fit, healthy and safe, as shown in the wide range of awards the school has gained over the last few years. A good range of visits and visitors provides pupils with valuable first hand learning experiences. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and this is a factor in their good progress. The curriculum is adapted less well for the most capable pupils and not all of these are achieving their potential.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe because they are cared for in a secure, supportive environment. Their teachers and the headteacher know them very well. Policies and procedures to protect pupils and ensure their health and safety are made clear to all staff and are rigorously implemented. The school works effectively with outside agencies and successfully involves parents in supporting pupils. Vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are identified at an early stage and good measures are taken

to meet their needs. Pupils receive excellent guidance on how to improve their work in literacy through teachers' high quality marking and a very effective system for setting targets. Similar systems are being developed in numeracy. However, in science, there is insufficient involvement of pupils in the setting of targets. This means that they are not involved in evaluating how well they are doing or in thinking about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management has undergone a range of changes in the last 12 months with large-scale redistribution of areas of responsibility. In many cases, it is too soon to judge the impact of these changes on pupils' achievement or the quality of provision. The headteacher, with very able support from the acting deputy headteacher, has developed an effective method of using data to check on pupils' performance and progress. When this identifies where pupils are not making expected progress, there is a prompt response and provision is put in place to help the pupils to catch up. This is an improvement on what was done in the past. The review of progress is leading to direct action to improve the achievement of all pupils in literacy and numeracy. It is already evident that the improvements to the curriculum and the assessment procedures are raising achievement in writing throughout the school. Both the literacy and numeracy coordinators have a tighter grip on assessment and achievement than is evident in science, which is where achievement remains lowest. Senior staff carry out regular classroom observations but there is not sufficient focus on the quality of learning and this diminishes the impact of some of this work and limits the potential improvements that could be made.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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 making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school is doing a satisfactory job in helping you to learn. The school does some things well but could improve in places. The things we particularly appreciated are:

- Your school is a very friendly, pleasant place to be and you show respect for other people's faiths and cultures.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are helped to do well.
- There are a lot of good, interesting learning activities for Reception children.
- Your teachers expect you to work hard, they mark your work in English and mathematics well and this is helping you to improve.
- Everyone seems to get on well with one another and your behaviour is good.
- Your governors are doing a good job in trying to make the school even better.
- We think your school could get better if:
 - Those of you who find the work too easy, had more challenging work to do.
 - Senior staff checked carefully on what you are learning in lessons.
 - You learned more in science.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St Barnabas School a good school to be at.