



Norbury Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123385
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292645
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Norbury
School category	Community		Bishops Castle
Age range of pupils	3-11		SY9 5EA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01588 650207
Number on roll (school)	39	Fax number	01588 650207
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sue Cook
		Headteacher	Elizabeth Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school, which has a part-time nursery, caters for children from the surrounding rural community, where social and economic circumstances are broadly average. Attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year, but is usually as expected for children's ages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Following the previous inspection, there were several changes of staff. A new headteacher was appointed in 2004, following a period when the school had been considerably unsettled.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The quality of education provided by this small school is satisfactory. The school is improving and its capacity to improve further is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. This is because the headteacher's good leadership has successfully brought the school out of a period of instability and has motivated staff and governors to do everything in their power to raise achievement. The school's own evaluation of its work is accurate and perceptive. The school is tackling its weaknesses systematically and successfully. Achievement is satisfactory but pupils' progress has accelerated in the past two years, mainly because the systems for assessing learning and tracking their progress have been made more robust. Standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Weaknesses in pupils' ability to solve problems, and to recall number facts quickly, led to a drop in standards in mathematics in Year 6 in 2006. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and reach average standards because of the sound provision made for them. Pupils with learning difficulties also achieve satisfactorily. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan pupils' work and to set targets for them. However, pupils are not entirely sure about their targets or how to reach them, and teachers' marking does not always guide them sufficiently in this. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and teachers plan well for the pupils' different ages and stages of learning. They successfully promote literacy skills in other subjects but not mathematical skills. The curriculum, also satisfactory, does not have enough guidance on this for teachers or pupils. However, it is being adapted well to the needs of the pupils, for example through the 'Forest School' project, which encourages a practical approach to learning. Pupils praise this highly. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their behaviour, are satisfactory, as are the care, guidance and support given to them. Pupils feel safe in school and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. The school does a great deal to support them in these areas, and good results show this. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, reporting that it is 'small and friendly', and 'learning is made fun by the teachers'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' mathematical skills and ensure teachers and pupils have explicit guidance on how to promote and use them in other subjects.
- Help pupils to understand their targets and how to achieve them, and make sure teachers' marking always shows them how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall, achievement is satisfactory and standards are average by Year 6. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and reach the nationally expected goals by the end of Reception. The school's tracking systems show that pupils have made faster progress in the past two years than they did previously when they had

several changes of teachers. The effectiveness of the school's considerable efforts to raise achievement is most noticeable in Year 2, where standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average, and progress is good. In this age group, however, fewer pupils reached the higher level in mathematics than in reading and writing. In Year 6, no pupil reached the higher level in mathematics. Gaps in the pupils' mathematical learning led to the school missing its target for mathematics although it did reach its target for English. Much is in place to improve mathematics but weaknesses remain in pupils' recall of number facts and in their ability to solve problems. Building on the improvement now evident in pupils' work, the school has set challenging targets for the next two years. Pupils use and extend their reading, writing and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well in other subjects. They do not do the same with their mathematical skills because there are not enough opportunities for them to do so.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children settle quickly in Nursery and Reception, sharing experiences, working and playing well together. Attendance is good and pupils clearly enjoy school. They are particularly enthusiastic about their 'Forest School' work, describing it as 'great because you get to go outside and build things'. Relationships are good and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their behaviour, is satisfactory. The challenging behaviour of a small minority of older boys, commented on by pupils and parents, rightly continues to cause concern for the school. It is being dealt with properly to minimise any impact it might have on learning. Pupils report there is no bullying. They feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They are confident that staff will always help them if they have a problem. Pupils have a good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle, for example joining wholeheartedly in exercise and choosing healthy options at lunchtime. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council, readily accepting responsibility and contributing satisfactorily to the school and wider community. Their good use of ICT, together with their satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, ensure that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stages of schooling and in gaining an awareness of what is needed for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides clear direction in teaching and learning. For example, she asks teachers to consider carefully who they are planning for and this has resulted in good plans that are adapted well to meet the pupils' different ages and stages of learning. Most planning is securely based on what teachers learn from assessing pupils' work. This information is also used to set targets for individual pupils, which are clearly

noted in teachers' books. At the start of each lesson, teachers make sure pupils know what they are expected to learn and how they will know they have learned it. Strategies such as 'thumbs up' in the younger class and the use of smiley faces in the older class give pupils good opportunities to begin to assess how well they have done, as a lesson draws to a close. Pupils appreciate this and it contributes to their enjoyment of learning. However, when they mark pupils' work, teachers do not consistently give pupils points for improvement, and very rarely do they do this in mathematics. Thus opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to improve their own learning and become more independent, both of which are skills the school is rightly trying to promote.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is planned well to meet the different needs of the mixed-age classes and to build pupils' learning systematically. Imaginative planning, including the effective use of teaching assistants, ensures the Foundation Stage curriculum is implemented well. Good links are made between subjects, and literacy and ICT skills are promoted well in most. Insufficient attention is given to promoting mathematical skills in this way. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties. The recent introduction of the 'Forest School' provides a more practical approach that has raised pupils' enthusiasm for learning. It has injected fun into mathematical activities, for example, as pupils learn how to measure the height and width of trees and estimate their ages. Pupils respond well when engaged in practical activities and this benefits their learning, as does the wide range of enrichment activities in and out of normal school hours.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils throughout the school are well cared for and supported. The procedures for safeguarding pupils, including those for child protection, are good. These, and the school's good links with external agencies and other schools, contribute effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being, and to their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The academic guidance given to pupils is less well developed. Targets are shared with pupils but pupils are often not sufficiently clear about them or what they need to do to reach them. This limits their usefulness as a tool to accelerate learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since her appointment, the headteacher has worked tirelessly with staff and governors on ways to raise achievement and focused them clearly on how to do this. As a result, rigorous procedures are now in place to track pupils' progress and there is a strong emphasis on the impact of teaching on learning. However, the full impact of this work is not yet evident in the outcomes of the national tests, especially in mathematics.

The perceptive checks made on teaching and learning have led to several changes to the curriculum to accommodate the different ways pupils learn. As a result, it now reflects pupils' greater commitment to learning when they are engaged in practical tasks. This has kindled their enthusiasm for learning. However, more remains to be done to ensure their mathematical skills are promoted as much as possible in order to improve them more rapidly. Governors fulfill their roles satisfactorily. They are becoming increasingly involved in checking the school's work and in helping to determine how it is to move forward. Their improvement plan sets the right priorities and provides a good scaffold for further improvement. Despite the ups and downs the school faced after the previous inspection, overall, it has improved.

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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	3
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

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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
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	3
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?	3

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	2
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 very much for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You clearly enjoy school and feel that your teachers make learning fun for you, especially through the Forest School project. Your school is satisfactory. That means there are good points and a small number of areas that need a bit more work. Here is a summary of the good points:
- Teaching, and your learning and progress are satisfactory. All of these are improving because your teachers now keep a close eye on how well you are doing and try to help you learn faster.
- The good care, guidance and support the school gives you ensure you know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy.
- Your behaviour is satisfactory and you are learning to appreciate the world in which you live.
- Your school is properly led and managed. The headteacher is good at helping the staff and governors understand what needs to be done to help you learn better. They are all trying hard to improve the school in every way. We have asked your school to help you make even better progress by:
- Helping you to recall number facts and solve mathematical problems more quickly, and by taking every opportunity to give you more practice at doing these things in other subjects.
- Helping you to understand your targets and how to achieve them, and making sure that teachers always show you how you can improve your work when they mark it. We hope that, as a result of these improvements, you will make faster progress in the future and that you will continue to enjoy learning now and throughout your lives.