

Much Wenlock Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 123407 |
| Local Authority | Shropshire |
| Inspection number | 292652 |
| Inspection date | 2 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Frances Gillam |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 127 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Malcolm Gribbin |
| Headteacher | Ruth Atkinson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 March 2002 |
| School address | Racecourse Lane Much Wenlock TF13 6JG |
| Telephone number | 01952 727634 |
| Fax number | 01952 727 634 |

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|--------------------------|------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Much Wenlock is smaller than an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to most schools, though the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is higher. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. Most children are taught in mixed age classes. At the time of the inspection, the school had an acting deputy headteacher and two staff on temporary contracts.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. The school provides a warm and caring environment, which enables pupils to flourish and make good progress in their personal development and well-being. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and make sensible choices about their diet and partake in regular exercise. The emphasis on a healthy lifestyle is a strength of the good curriculum, which is further enriched by the wide range of activities outside normal lessons. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community and the school council does a very good job of helping to make the school a better place to be. Care, guidance and support are good with a number of particularly strong features. Many pupils comment on how much they enjoy school because they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils get on well together and look out for each other. They thrive because staff value their efforts and praise their achievements. This builds their self-esteem and confidence and enables them to work successfully. All pupils have ambitious targets for learning but targets to help some pupils improve their behaviour are not sufficiently shared with the pupils concerned.

Children's attainment on entry to the Reception Year is broadly as expected and most children achieve or exceed the goals for their age on entry to Year 1. The quality of provision in the Reception Year is good and provides a firm foundation for future learning. Good teaching throughout the school ensures that most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Pupils are interested and excited by what they learn and this results in them doing well and working hard. Pupils find their work appropriately challenging, though sometimes in mathematics teachers do not use assessment information well enough to ensure activities extend pupils' learning. This is especially true when pupils work on their own and for the more able pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Staff work well together. Recent improvements to the quality of teaching in English have raised standards, increased the pupils' rate of progress and enhanced their enjoyment of learning. Though most pupils behave well, a small number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are sometimes easily distracted from their learning because the school's strategies to encourage good behaviour are not always focused enough on these pupils.

Good leadership and management ensure that staff and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and the areas that require further improvement. The headteacher sets a clear direction for school improvement. Together with the staff and governors she ensures priorities are well focused and that the action to bring about change for the better is implemented successfully. The school's capacity to improve is good. This is reflected in how the school has continued to sustain above average standards and the way in which issues from the last inspection have been dealt with successfully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan mathematics activities that challenge pupils when they work independently, particularly the more able in Years 3 and 4.
- Make sure that pupils with behavioural difficulties receive better guidance about how they can improve, and that staff use strategies to encourage good behaviour consistently, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. Children in the Reception Year do well. Activities build effectively on their experiences, which enables the children to make good progress. Pupils continue to make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully. This enables senior managers to quickly identify pupils who are struggling and to put in place effective programmes to help them with their work. It also provides good information about pupils' performance, which helps the school to set challenging targets in English and mathematics.

Pupils' achievement in English has improved. Standards in this subject are now high by the end of Year 6 and pupils produce good quality written work. Efforts to develop more effective problem solving skills in mathematics are proving successful. At times, however, activities for the more able pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not challenging enough and so these pupils do not always make the progress they might.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they like school a lot. They find it a happy place to be and their attendance is good. They have a very clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and make very good choices about their diet and general well-being. Pupils make an extremely good contribution to the wider community. They take part in town events and their involvement in local recycling schemes enables them to have a good understanding of how to care for the environment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good relationships with adults and each other, and most pupils care well for themselves and others. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and most behave well. A small number of pupils in Years 1 and 2, however, are not always fully aware of the consequence of their actions and this leads to some low level disruption in lessons

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. Activities interest children and stimulate them to explore and find things out for themselves. For the most part staff throughout the school plan well for the different ages and abilities within their classes. This enables pupils to build effectively on what has gone before and to make good progress in their work. Most pupils settle quickly and work well on their own or with others. They do this because they know what is expected of them and teachers explain clearly to them what they are going to learn and why. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well focused support from teaching assistants. This helps these pupils to build self-esteem, to try their best, and encourages them to take a full part in lessons. Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully and use this information to identify what pupils need to do next. This works well in most instances, though, at times in mathematics, activities are not always closely matched to what the more able pupils in Years 3 and 4 are capable of achieving

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils, including children in the Reception Year, have an interesting range of learning activities, which many say they enjoy. These activities promote literacy and numeracy skills well and help to prepare pupils successfully for the future. The exciting and wide range of activities outside normal lessons, including sporting events, the orchestra and visits to places of interest, as well as the school's strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles, contribute very well to pupils' personal development and well-being. Work to ensure the curriculum provides the right balance between subjects, and that it enables pupils in the mixed age range classes to make good progress is developing well. The school acknowledges, though, it has yet to fully assess whether the science curriculum is securing good progress for all pupils. This is especially the case this year in the juniors, where pupils are taught science in classes with a wide age range of pupils spanning Years 3 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children feel safe within the school's warm and friendly environment. They say there is always someone they can talk to should they have a problem. Child protection procedures are robust. The school's work on healthy lifestyles helps pupils to clearly understand the necessity of a balanced diet and the need for regular exercise. These features contribute very well to pupils' personal development and well-being. All pupils have learning targets that challenge and encourage them to try their best and these help pupils to develop their learning effectively. Though staff remind pupils of the need to care for themselves and others, targets to help pupils improve their personal skills are not shared well enough with the small number of pupils with behavioural problems.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's work provide the headteacher, staff and governors with a clear idea of how well the school is doing. These procedures identify the strengths and the weaker areas in the school's work and ensure that the right priorities for improvement are identified. The action to bring about change for the better is often successful, such as the strong coordination of English, which has led to improved standards. There is also evidence of successful action in the more effective tracking of pupils' progress, though as yet the school has not addressed fully the weaknesses in the use of assessment information in mathematics in Years 3 and 4. Good links with outside agencies and local schools help to support pupils' learning further. Parents are very supportive but the school acknowledges it could provide better feedback, for example, on the effectiveness of its initiative this year to reorganise the teaching groups in the juniors

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| 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 | 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

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 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 | 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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

Dear Children

Inspection of Much Wenlock Primary School, Much Wenlock TF13 6JG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the team of inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing all the exciting things you are doing. Here are some of the good things we found about your school.

- You have a good school, where you work hard and make good progress.
- You enjoy school and make very good use of all the interesting clubs and activities you have outside your normal lessons.
- You are well cared for. You get on well together and you are friendly and polite.
- You eat sensibly and take plenty of exercise, and this is helping you to grow up strong and healthy.
- Your school council works hard on your behalf and you care for your environment and take part in lots of local events.
- The people in charge and your teachers do a good job of helping you to do well. This enables you to reach standards in your work which are above those expected by the end of Year 6.

To improve the school still further we have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on two things.

- To make sure that you are always challenged to do your best in mathematics, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- To make sure that those of you who struggle with your behaviour get better guidance about how you can improve and that adults use strategies to encourage good behaviour more consistently, especially in Years 1 and 2.

You can all help by keeping up the hard work.

With best wishes for the future,

Fran Gillam Lead inspector