



Droitwich, Westlands First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116671
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 295402
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Arnalena Bee

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

Type of school	First	School address	Farmers Way
School category	Community		Westlands
Age range of pupils	3–9		Droitwich WR9 9EQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01905 772740
Number on roll (school)	239	Fax number	01905 779656
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Stuart Beardsall
		Headteacher	Julie Millard
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2006		

Age group 3–9	Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007	Inspection number 295402
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Droitwich, Westlands First School is of average size. It serves an area with high levels of deprivation and almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average. Children enter the school at the age of three, with extremely low levels of attainment. There have been considerable changes to the teaching staff since the school's last inspection. When the school was inspected in 2006 it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to achievement and standards. It was given a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Droitwich, Westlands First School has improved since it was last inspected and now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. In all year groups, pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Standards remain low but are improving. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. Together with her capable, newly formed senior management team, the effective system they have developed to check pupils' performance is beginning to have a positive effect on raising achievement and standards. The governors have received recent training and are now able to support the school well. Teaching is satisfactory and in some classes it is good. Pupils have sound opportunities to write in many subjects but basic writing skills are not well developed, in particular when teachers mark pupils work. At times, teachers do not address the wide range of abilities within their classes.

The school has a strong ethos of caring for all individuals. Pupils write that they want 'everyone to help and respect each other like a family'. Pupils' personal development and well-being continue to be good. Most pupils enjoy school and all that it offers. They learn to get on well with each other and respect each others' feelings. A strength of the satisfactory curriculum is the experiences pupils receive outside the classroom. Visits to places of interest are thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by all pupils and greatly enrich their lives. Pupils in Year 2 say they can hardly wait to go to the Black Country Museum. Foundation Stage provision has developed well since the school was last inspected and is now good. Few children reach the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Despite this, in relation to their low starting points, they achieve well. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The way the staff look after the pastoral needs of the pupils is outstanding which contributes to pupils' good personal development. These good personal and social skills help pupils to settle into their next school more easily. Academic guidance is not so strong. Targets have been introduced since the last inspection but they are not focused on enough in lessons. Marking does not consistently inform the pupils of what they need to do to improve.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that all teaching is good by checking that activities are always accurately matched to the wide range of abilities in each class and writing skills are developed effectively across the school.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking and the use of pupils' targets so that all pupils are aware of what they need to do to get better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in relation to their low starting points. The results of pupil assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, in 2006, have improved with pupils reaching well below average standards. This is a result of pupils' progress being tracked more regularly and the introduction of successful intervention strategies such as daily Grab Bag sessions, where the many pupils with learning difficulties work in small groups on the targets in their individual education plans. In these sessions pupils achieve well because they receive good quality support. However, the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory overall. By the time the pupils leave the school in Year 4 they have made satisfactory progress although the standards pupils attain remain well below what one could expect for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. When taken in the context of the high proportion of pupils who have emotional, social and behavioural needs, the good moral and social development is a significant achievement. It is noted in pupils' good behaviour in and out of lessons, good relationships and pupils' input into creating school rules and the mission statement. Pupils say, 'We would like our school to be a special place.' Their spiritual and cultural development are both satisfactory. Pupils are proud of their school, saying, 'It's a good school where we feel safe and always have someone to talk to if we have a problem.' Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with effectively. The number of school exclusions has been high but only involve a small number of pupils.

Pupils form positive relationships with each other and the adults who help them. They are learning to adopt healthy lifestyles and have a clear understanding of the need for safety, regular exercise, and healthy eating. A substantial number of pupils further contribute to the school through the school council and by being Redhats, helping in the playground. In addition, pupils have raised funds for wider world events. The school does its very best to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly. Despite this, attendance struggles to be satisfactory. Although standards are low in literacy and numeracy, the school prepares pupils well for their future in relation to their development of personal and social skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy the activities they are offered. Lessons are generally well managed and teachers deal well with challenging behaviour. Teaching assistants contribute

effectively to pupils' learning, in particular, during Grab Bag sessions when they work with pupils with learning difficulties. Activities are not always accurately matched to pupils' individual needs. Sometimes they are too difficult, other times they are not challenging enough. In lessons where learning is good, there is a greater awareness of pupils' individual needs. For example, during question and answer times, teachers carefully make sure that all abilities are catered for. As a result more pupils are confident to have a go at answering questions. In all lessons, teachers develop good relationships with their pupils and value the contributions they make to lessons. Pupils have opportunities to write in subjects other than literacy but teachers do not promote basic literacy skills effectively throughout the school. There is also too little focus on the need to present work neatly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A strength of the curriculum is the way that it promotes pupils' personal development. As a result, it enables pupils to develop good personal and social skills. There are a wide range of activities for pupils to be involved in which run after school. These enrich and develop learning in many subject areas such as physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). All pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils were seen during the inspection enthusiastically learning to play wind, string and percussion instruments. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. It is good when these pupils receive specific support to work on their individual targets. The provision for literacy and numeracy is improving, but standards are low and do not prepare pupils well for their next stage in education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff care for pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. There are outstanding strengths in the way staff look after the pastoral needs of the pupils. The Rainbow House provides very good support for pupils with social and emotional needs. There are good links with support agencies helping to provide for the specific needs of a range of pupils. Procedures for safeguarding children are effective and robust, resulting in pupils feeling safe and secure in school. The school has appointed its own pastoral care worker, ensuring that parents, carers and pupils have access to support for a wide range of issues. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well in the school through school meals, discussions and aspects of the personal and social curriculum.

Assessment and tracking procedures have improved and are now good. The use of targets is not yet fully embedded. Teachers do not consistently explain them to pupils effectively. As a result, many pupils are unsure of what they need to do to improve. Marking is sometimes good but the picture is inconsistent. The best examples clearly inform the pupils of what they need to do to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has given the school a clear direction and has shown determination in seeking improvements in all aspects of school life. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The local authority has supported the school well. Staffing is now more stable. The headteacher has established a new and enthusiastic management team, which is now working effectively. Assessment procedures have already improved and pupils' progress is tracked regularly. The staff show great determination to tackle the challenging task of pupils' underachievement. As a result, this has now been reduced. Teaching is satisfactory with a minority of good teaching. Systems for checking the quality of the school's work are good. The quality of data that is gathered is good and teaching is regularly monitored. Some subject leaders have become increasingly more involved in observing teaching, checking how well pupils are doing, and the standards they are reaching. However, there has not been enough time for this to impact fully on standards, although it has resulted in curriculum targets being set, interventions put in place for literacy and numeracy, and achievement improving throughout the school.

Governors are now much more familiar with the working of the school through visits and regular reports. They have developed a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are now better able to pose challenging questions and hold the school to account for its actions. All these factors demonstrate that the headteacher, her staff and governors have the capacity for further improvement.

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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	4
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?	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	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	3
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	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

You may remember that we came to visit you. Thank you for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed our time in your school.

I am writing to tell you what we especially liked about your school.

- We know that you are really well cared for and if you have a problem you can go to an adult.
- You behave well and are kind to each other.
- We think you have a good idea of the importance of eating healthy foods and keeping fit.
- We think the teachers arrange some very interesting visits for you. We especially liked hearing about your visit to the seaside and your future visit to the Black Country Museum.
- The headteacher and her senior teachers have a good idea of how well each of you is doing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The youngest children in the school get off to a good start.

To make the school even better we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that by the time you leave school you reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure that you are always given work that is not too easy or too hard
- check that whenever you do writing you are told how to make it better
- make sure that when work, especially writing, is marked you are told what you need to do to improve further
- keep reminding you what your targets are and how far you have got to go to reach them.

Keep smiling and working hard.