

Madresfield CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116898
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312439
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew McDowall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hughes
Headteacher	Debbie Langston
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	40 Madresfield Village Madresfield Malvern WR13 5AA
Telephone number	01684 573620
Fax number	01684 573620

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Introduction

The Additional Inspector conducting the inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

achievement in Key Stage 2

the effectiveness of the academic guidance pupils receive, and

the quality of the school's own monitoring and evaluation processes.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work, the school's assessment data, school documentation and discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school. Approximately nine out of ten pupils attending the school come from White British backgrounds. Consequently, the percentages of pupils who are learning English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic groups are well below average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is also well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

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 quality of education. The parents are very supportive of the school and value the family ethos, good pastoral care and rich learning experience it provides for their children. The school fosters good personal development and a sense of belonging in the pupils, who are very friendly and considerate of the needs of others. The school is improving because staffing is now more stable and actions taken by the headteacher to raise achievement in the school are beginning to have an impact.

The children start at the school with a wide range of skills and abilities. They make satisfactory progress during their time there and standards are broadly average at the end of the Foundation Stage and both key stages. Progress is not yet good because some of the more able pupils are not reaching the higher levels they are capable of at the end of both key stages, and progress in writing for all pupils is not as good as it should be.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their work. Everyone gets along really well and the pupils say they feel safe, 'because we are a big team and there are no bullies here.' Attendance is well above average and the pupils demonstrate good levels of self-discipline in the way they move around school. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They have been instrumental in the recent introduction of hot school dinners and enjoy the good opportunities they get to play and exercise. The school and ECO councils are influential and enable pupils to feel involved in developing their school and protecting the environment. Pupils are rightly proud of the 'park and walk' path they have been involved in creating to promote exercise and ease the parking problems near the school. Year 6 pupils are conscientious and enjoy the range of responsibilities they have to help the smooth running of the school. Links with the church and the local community are good and involve the pupils in activities ranging from participation at local fêtes to working with the residents of a local housing association. However, pupils' economic well-being is only satisfactory as their key skills are limited in terms of only average standards in literacy and numeracy.

Because relationships between the staff and pupils are good, the atmosphere in classrooms is relaxed and supportive. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and have a positive impact on the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but sometimes they are not effectively deployed at the start of lessons. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and not yet good, because the needs of the more able pupils are not consistently addressed. All pupils are frequently given similar work to do, when some of the older or more able pupils are capable of more challenging activities. In addition, the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow to promote good progress. The curriculum provided by the school is good and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Music and the arts feature strongly and promote good cultural and spiritual development. Special events such as the annual Eisteddfod provide good opportunities for pupils to work with visiting experts and extend their creative skills. A good range of clubs and lessons in Spanish further enriches the curriculum. The older pupils engage in a range of adventurous activities as part of an annual residential opportunity provided by the school.

Pastoral care is good. The partnership between home and school is good because the staff know the pupils and their families well. Parents appreciate the good communication with the school and the accessibility of the staff before and after school. The strong nurturing ethos in

the school and the close attention to the social needs of individual pupils help them all to grow in confidence and have high self-esteem. Procedures to safeguard pupils are secure and staff are trained in first aid. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, because the quality of the academic guidance is not as effective as the pastoral support pupils receive. The school is developing systems to track the progress of each pupil, but these are not fully effective in all areas. The system works best in mathematics and science, where assessment is improving. Consequently, standards in these subjects are beginning to rise because the work set for the pupils is more closely matched to what they need to do next to improve. This is not the case in writing, where teachers are less secure about what it is they need to do next to raise standards. Older pupils have a sound understanding of what it is they are learning in each lesson, but are less clear about their individual targets and have little involvement in setting and reviewing them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. There is a good team spirit amongst the staff and a commitment to improve. The headteacher is providing the school with clear leadership and is developing the management systems to deliver improvement. She has a secure view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has produced sound plans for improvement. Subject coordinators are becoming more involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and, as a result, are beginning to take more responsibility for standards and achievement. The targets the school sets are generally challenging and are raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, some of the targets in the school development plan are not precise enough to enable the school to assess its own success. The governors provide good support to the school. They have recognised that they have not been sufficiently involved in monitoring the school's performance and have taken action to improve this aspect of their work. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start in the Foundation Stage with a wide range of skills and abilities and make satisfactory progress during their time in the Reception class. They are happy in school and enthusiastic to learn. Personal and social development is good. Children play well together and demonstrate good speaking and listening skills. Recent changes in the way the children are introduced to letters and sounds have been effective in improving progress in early reading and writing. The inside accommodation is restricted and this limits the number of activities that the staff can make available each day for the children. The school compensates for this well in the good use it makes of the varied and interesting outside area.

There are two reasons why the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and not yet good. Sometimes, the timetable dictates that children are sitting for too long and, as a result, the children have less opportunity to play and learn for themselves, and sometimes opportunities are missed to plan activities that are suitably challenging for the more able children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of the more able pupils, particularly in writing.
- Improve teaching by increasing the pace of learning and the level of challenge for pupils in lessons, and ensure activities are planned to meet the needs of all ability groups.
- Improve assessment in writing in order that teachers are clear about the next steps for each pupil, and involve the pupils more in setting and reviewing their own targets.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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 Madresfield CE Primary School, Malvern WR13 5AA

Can I start by thanking you all for being so friendly and making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently to talk to the teachers and see your work.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. The staff take good care of you and keep you safe. The three things I liked best were the way you all behave well in school, the fact that everyone gets along so well, and the way you are all keen to learn. Keep it up! I could see that you enjoy coming to school. The school and ECO councils are doing a good job in helping the staff to make decisions about the school and well done to everyone for winning the award for the 'park and walk' scheme.

Your headteacher and all the staff are working hard to help you to improve your work and you are getting better in your numeracy and science. Your writing is not so good. You can help by remembering your targets every time you do some writing and check your work to see if it is improving.

I have asked your school to do these three things to improve.

- The first thing is to help more of you to reach the higher levels in your work, especially in writing.
- The second thing is to make sure your teachers plan work that is just right for all of you in the class.
- Finally, I have asked the school to improve the way the teachers assess your writing and to make sure you know your targets so you can check how you are doing for yourselves.

Thank you again and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall Lead inspector