

Aqueduct Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	123444
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	314599
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Johanna Saunders
Headteacher	Mark Wadhams
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Castlefields Way Dawley Telford TF4 3RP
Telephone number	01952 386210
Fax number	01952 386229

Age group	4-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils come from White British backgrounds, with just over 9% from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Many children enter the school with skills and experiences that are below the levels expected for their age. There are some mixed-age classes. The school has the Healthy Schools Gold Award. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Aqueduct is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils' personal development is good and thrives in the school's happy atmosphere. Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected in their good behaviour and in their attendance, which has improved from below average to above average during this school year. Pupils feel very safe in school and make good efforts to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Their contribution to the community is outstanding. Pupils relish taking responsibility as monitors and as members of the school council and they enthusiastically support a range of local and national charities.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Through good leadership and management the school has successfully tackled the recent history of underachievement in Years 3 to 6 by rapidly improving the quality of teaching, rigorously checking the rate of pupils' progress and improving boys' attitudes and behaviour. As a result standards have risen and are broadly average in Year 6. Standards in writing, however are below average. Pupils are rapidly catching up lost ground but weaknesses in pupils' use of vocabulary and the accuracy of their spelling remain. Children make good progress in the Reception Year because of the good teaching they receive. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are generally interesting and relationships are good. Because of this pupils are keen to learn and work hard. However, variation in practice means teaching is not consistently good. For example, teachers do not always plan work that matches the needs of more able pupils or set lesson targets that pupils clearly understand. This means that progress sometimes slows. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good, which ensures that any boisterousness is quickly and effectively dealt with.

Parents are very pleased with the good pastoral care the school provides. One parent summarised their views by writing, 'My children are safe, happy and well looked after in the school's friendly atmosphere.' Children make a good start in the Reception Year. Sensitive support ensures pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their peers. The quality of academic guidance varies too much and pupils are not always sure about what they need to do to improve their work. This means that care, guidance and support overall are satisfactory. The curriculum is good and supports pupils' personal development well. It has been improved by the introduction of work that appeals to boys as well as to girls. More opportunities to practise solving problems are raising standards in mathematics.

The members of the leadership team and other staff enthusiastically share the headteacher's unrelenting drive to improve standards and the quality of education, and staff morale is high. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive but also challenge the school over its performance. Parents are very happy with the quality of education the school provides and many commented positively on the recent improvements. This record of improvement shows the school is well placed to make further gains.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing by broadening their vocabulary and developing accurate spelling.
- Ensure teachers set lesson targets that pupils understand and plan for the needs of more able pupils so that they are consistently challenged.
- Ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are broadly average and have risen markedly over the past year. Achievement is satisfactory. Boys' standards have caught up with those of the girls and boys and girls now make similar progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties has also improved and is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Reception classes especially in their mathematical development and their personal, social and emotional development. Most pupils reach the expected standard by the time they start Year 1.

Standards in writing are a relative weakness in all years, a legacy of past underachievement. The accuracy of spelling is below average and pupils do not use a wide enough range of vocabulary to express and develop their ideas.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect each other, adults and the world around them. A clear moral code underpins their good behaviour although occasionally there is inattention at the end of lessons. Pupils are polite and considerate to each other and to adults. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and are very tolerant of people with views and traditions different to their own. Pupils feel very safe at school and report that the rare incidences of bullying are quickly and effectively dealt with. They enjoy lessons and appreciate the way achievements are valued and celebrated. They have a good understanding of healthy living. Most take regular exercise and make sensible choices about what they eat, although lunch boxes often contain crisps. Pupils maturely accept responsibility and make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. For example, the school council promotes healthy living and contributes to decisions on staff appointments. Pupils readily volunteer to act as playground 'buddies' and enthusiastically participate in environmental groups and local arts events. Broadly average standards and good attitudes to learning are preparing pupils securely for secondary school and their future in employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy learning and have positive attitudes in class. This is because teachers make lessons relevant and plan activities that involve pupils in their learning. For example, teachers frequently ask pupils to discuss and clarify their ideas in pairs and provide educational games to develop understanding. These measures are particularly effective in improving boys' attitudes. Teachers make good use of test results to plan booster work for pupils who are underperforming. However they do not consistently plan work that stretches the more able pupils so that they are suitably challenged. Lesson targets are not always clear enough to ensure pupils make a quick start to activities. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties. Teaching in the Reception Year is good because teachers are very knowledgeable about the needs of children. Children are provided with choices and lively activities that quickly develop their independence and social skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The reception curriculum is good overall and provides a mixed balance of adult-led and child-led activities. The extensive and varied outdoor provision makes a valuable contribution to children's developing independence.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. For example, well planned assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on spiritual matters. Frequent visits to places of interest such as museums and visitors to school promote pupils' social and cultural development. The school's drive to raise standards in writing through improving the quality of speaking and listening in lessons is new and it is still too early to judge its success. However, it is already clear that this strategy is raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem as they become more articulate. Clubs and sports activities are well supported and the good range broadens pupils' interests and raises their aspirations. Information and communication technology provision is satisfactory and the school has firm plans to improve this aspect of its provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Children and pupils are well cared for by staff. Pupils report that they can readily turn to an adult if they have a problem, confident that their concern will be quickly resolved. Health and safety and child protection arrangements are robust. The support for pupils with behaviour difficulties is particularly good and ensures they remain in school and avoid exclusion. The school uses its many links with outside agencies and other schools well to support learning. For example, behaviour experts have strengthened this aspect of the school's work. Teachers' marking and feedback on test results clearly show Years 5 and 6 pupils what they need to do to improve their work. In other years this guidance is not as effective and pupils are not sure what action they need to take to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction for the school. With the good support of the leadership team and the local authority he has established rigorous procedures for checking and improving the school's performance. The school has an accurate view of the quality of education it provides and has accurately identified clear priorities for improvement. The leadership team has been strengthened by new appointments this year and the good leadership and management at all levels have resulted in rapid and significant improvements in recent months in standards and achievement, behaviour, the quality of teaching and the curriculum. For example, the leadership team's work with teachers has improved their use of test results to plan appropriate work and their class management skills so that lessons are not interrupted by behaviour problems. The introduction of rigorous procedures to check pupils' progress every half term, together with effective measures to ensure that pupils whose progress slows catch up, have been particularly effective. However these measures do not check the progress of more able pupils against their starting point and it is not always clear how well they are doing. Staff are deployed to keep teaching groups small so that pupils get more individual teaching and this has been effective in supporting improved achievement.

Governors are well informed and check the school's performance regularly to ensure standards are rising. They challenge the school over the quality of education provided. For example, the governors have asked the school to reduce class sizes in science so that more practical work can take place.

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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
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

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 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	2
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	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?	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	3
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

14 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Aqueduct Primary School, Dawley, Telford, TF4 3RP

We enjoyed our visit to your school. You were very polite and friendly and you made us feel most welcome. We enjoyed the discussions we had with you about the work and activities you do at school. You clearly get on with each other and the adults in school well and you are proud of the school's happy atmosphere. We decided Aqueduct is a satisfactory school with some good features. Here are some of our findings.

- You make satisfactory progress in your lessons in Years 1 to 6 and good progress in the Reception Year.
- The satisfactory teaching helps you to reach average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You enjoy school, behave well and feel safe at school.
- You accept responsibility very well.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The good curriculum helps you understand why it is important to be healthy.
- Adults in the school look after you very well.
- The headteacher leads the school well and teachers are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to do three things to help the school improve further.

- Make your writing better by improving your vocabulary and spelling.
- Make sure teachers plan work that helps everyone learn quickly and achieve well.
- Tell you what you must do to make your work better.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin Lead inspector