

# Redditch, Astwood Bank First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116720
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338878
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Eadie

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Kevin Sherrington-Lodge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Debbie Yarnold
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Astwood Bank B96 6EH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of inspection time looking at learning, where they observed 12 teachers in 19 lessons or part lessons. Inspectors met with staff, groups of pupils and the chair of governors. They observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of policies, including those concerned with safeguarding, anti-bullying, equal opportunities and behaviour. The inspection team examined the school improvement plan, governing body minutes and data showing the progress that pupils are making. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 122 parents and/or carers and those completed by pupils in Years 3 and 4 and by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well different groups of pupils are supported in their learning, such as those who do not speak English as their first language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the progress made by pupils in Years 3 and 4, which was an issue at the time of the last inspection.

## Information about the school

The school is above average in size. A very large majority of its pupils are White British, the others representing a range of other ethnic groups. A few do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have communication or physical difficulties, or moderate learning needs. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in two Reception classes. The headteacher joined the school in January 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

The key to the success of this outstanding school is the inspirational leadership of the new headteacher and the senior management team. Continuity from the previous management has been seamless and there has been no loss of momentum. Their enthusiasm has been communicated extremely well to all staff and is evident in comments they made, such as 'It's a joy to come to work every day.' All parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the leadership and management of the school.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature in a long list is the richness and variety of the curriculum. The school has tapped into an exceptionally wide range of opportunities, many involving outside agencies such as Young Enterprise personnel and modern dance teachers, to ensure that learning is relevant, interesting and exciting. The enthusiasm generated spills over into all aspects of school life and pupils show excitement and keenness in lessons and around the school. Typical comments such as 'School is awesome' and 'School is brilliant' from pupils demonstrate this well.

Pupils are developing exceptionally well into polite, extremely well behaved and confident young people who are very conscious of their place in society and their responsibilities towards it. This is largely due to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for them. The school has a very high commitment to equality of opportunity and all pupils and their needs are very well known to staff. Pupils are being prepared outstandingly well, not only for the next stage in their education, but also for their life of work and beyond.

Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently at least good for all groups throughout the school, including in Years 3 and 4. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly effective and is used as an exemplar in the local area. These pupils are supported extremely well and have exceptionally clear plans made for their learning, which enable them to make outstanding progress. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported extremely well and make the same good progress as their classmates. Children make outstanding progress in the Reception classes, due to the outstanding provision made for them. This is a further area for which the school is used as a local exemplar.

The school is keen to continue to drive standards up and improve the rate of pupils' progress. Although most pupils are given clear next steps for learning in writing, these are not used as effectively in mathematics. There are some excellent examples of good guidance being given by teachers when they mark pupils' work, but this is not

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consistent. The school is aware that these are the key areas for development within teaching.

There is a shared determination to continue to improve. Governors play a very full role in this, supporting and challenging managers extremely effectively. All staff who responded to the questionnaire felt that they are involved in evaluating the school's effectiveness and planning for its future, and a very accurate picture of strengths and areas that they wish to develop has been created. Considerable improvements have been made in provision since the last inspection, and the school is exceptionally well placed to continue its upward momentum. There is no complacency here!

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve pupils' attainment and the rate of progress, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:
  - consistently give them clear and specific next steps in learning
  - give clear, regular guidance in their marking on how pupils can improve.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Learning is typified by enthusiasm, excitement and a desire by pupils to do well. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were retelling the Tiger Child story, pupils were very keen to complete the challenging task and proud to share their results. Pupils are keen to rise to challenges and extend their knowledge and learning. For instance in Year 4, when a Young Enterprise project on how the country's economy operates was being introduced, the teacher was asking searching questions and pupils were very eager to be involved and give their opinions and contribute to the understanding of the project. Enjoyment is much in evidence, such as when pupils in Year 2 were sorting two-dimensional shapes. Their excitement at each new shape and their success at recognising whether they were symmetrical or not was clear. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 4 was seen to be above expected levels for their age. The school has analysed that in some tests girls do not do as well as boys, but during the inspection all were seen to be making the same good progress except those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who were doing even better.

Almost all pupils who completed the questionnaire regard themselves as being safe in school. They are extremely well aware of what constitutes an unsafe situation, when using the internet for example. They make a considerable contribution to the smooth running of the school, often independently seeing something that needs doing and just getting on and doing it without being asked. They take the initiative in charity fundraising, organising their own events for instance. They are also involved well in the local community, regularly entering a float in the local carnival. Their excellent knowledge and application of a healthy lifestyle was exemplified well when one of the youngest children asked an inspector if he would open his muesli bar wrapper at break time. Whilst opening it the inspector was treated to a lecture on how healthy it was and

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that 'ones with chocolate chips in are nice but not so healthy'. Attendance is good, although a number of families take their children on holiday during term time.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Lessons are exciting and interesting. Many initiatives have been instituted to achieve this end. For instance, a creative partnership was observed during the inspection, where two digital artists were working with the pupils in a Year 2 class to produce animations. Digital cameras were being used by pupils in small groups to take pictures around the school grounds of colours and textures that could be used as backgrounds for their animated pictures. Subject specialist expertise is used very well. For instance a modern languages teacher is employed to teach German to Year 3 and French to Year 4. External agencies are also extremely well used to provide support for pupils with specific needs, either temporary or more permanent. This support is extremely effective in allowing all to take part in all that the school has to offer.

Teachers are constantly looking for innovative ways in which their pupils' learning can be extended. Careful records are kept of what pupils have achieved and these are used

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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very well to identify any in danger of falling behind. Very effective strategies are then put in place to support these pupils. Teachers are also generally good at providing work at an appropriate level for the pupils in their classes and adapting this when pupils are finding it too difficult or easy. However, pupils in different classes are not always given a clear indication of what they need to learn next to make faster progress. There are also inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Although there are examples of outstanding practice, there are occasions when pupils are not given work appropriate to their abilities and their learning slows.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

A good example of how leaders and managers are constantly striving for improvement is the development that has taken place in the curriculum since the last inspection. Although it was graded outstanding then, there have been constant enhancements. For instance, the school is currently developing its own Forest School programme, where learning outside is the focus. The school has worked hard and successfully to involve parents and/or carers in supporting their children's education. Recent developments of drop-in times and planned governors' surgeries are good examples of this and of the support and involvement of the governors. Leaders recognise that, although monitoring of teaching is thorough, it has not yet been fully effective in eliminating inconsistencies. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding procedures were extremely thorough. They are constantly under review to ensure that best practice is included. The care taken of each child is indicative of the high priority put on equality of opportunity. The school has done exceptionally well to enable some pupils with significant barriers to their learning to achieve well. The local community and its context are understood extremely well by the school. A comprehensive audit has been conducted and clear plans have been actioned to promote community cohesion in all its aspects. For instance, links have been established with schools in France, the United States of America and Russia to give pupils a wider understanding of other communities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception classes with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected for their age, and make excellent progress. This is due to the excellent provision made for them. Planning is very thorough and ensures that skills already learnt are built on and developed. An enthusiasm for learning is inculcated from the earliest days, with children involved in the planning so that their interests can be used. A lively and engaging environment has been created both indoors and outside, and children were observed fully involved in their learning whilst measuring their beanstalks for instance. There is a good balance of activities led by an adult and those that children can choose for themselves. When selecting their own activities, children were seen making sensible choices and sticking with their chosen task rather than flitting from place to place.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led outstandingly well. The leader has created a very strong team ethic, where all are valued and all adults make a considerable contribution to children's learning. The weekly team planning meetings build on and plan in, the children's choices, ensuring that learning is constantly moving forward for each child. A very accurate picture has been developed of strengths and, although provision is already excellent, a number of developments are planned to enhance it even further.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents who responded to the questionnaire and those spoken to during the inspection are extremely positive about the school. No significant concerns were expressed and a number made specific comments praising the school. A very small minority considers that the school does not prepare their children well for their future lives, but the judgement of the inspection team is that this is outstanding, with several almost unique features. A few parents do not think that their views are taken into account sufficiently. However, the inspection team judge that the school listens well to parents and is, for example, presently planning two developments as a direct result of parents' suggestions.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Redditch, Astwood Bank First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 276 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	66	38	31	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	58	48	39	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	35	74	61	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	55	49	40	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	48	60	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	41	67	55	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	45	67	55	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	39	56	46	2	2	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	44	60	49	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	27	75	61	5	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	27	76	62	6	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	48	58	48	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	57	51	42	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



3 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Redditch, Astwood Bank First School, B96 6EH

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly to your school and telling us how much you enjoy it. We thought you were exceptionally polite and well behaved, and we really enjoyed seeing your work and chatting to you. All of you we spoke to told us that you are proud of being at Astwood Bank First and we are not surprised, as we judge it to be an outstanding school.

These are some of the best things we found about your school

Your headteacher and all the staff and governors are extremely keen to continue making your school even better. They treat you all as individuals and are dedicated to helping you to do your best.

You are provided with an excellent and extremely interesting range of things to do in lessons. As one of you said, 'My school helps me to learn in every lesson.'

All adults look after you outstandingly well. You told us how caring they are and how they help you.

You are developing exceptionally well into responsible and sensible young people who know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

You behave extremely well and are being prepared exceptionally well for your future life at middle school and beyond.

You are making good academic progress because you are being taught well.

This is what we have asked the school to do so that you make even faster progress

We think your teachers should always give you targets, like those you often have in writing, in mathematics. We also think that although teachers sometimes tell you how you can improve your work when they mark it, they do not do this often enough.

You can do your bit to help by making sure you ask if you are not sure how to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie

Lead inspector

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