

Aqueduct Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123444
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	340342
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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 of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shelley Bates
Headteacher	Mark Wadhams
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They spent most of their time in school looking at the quality of pupils' learning. Inspectors observed 12 lessons and, in doing so, saw all of the school's regular teachers. They also held discussions with senior staff, governors and pupils, scrutinised the school's planning and policy documents, checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and considered the views of parents and carers expressed in the 51 questionnaires that were returned.

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

- standards in mathematics throughout the school, with particular emphasis on higher attaining pupils
- the achievement and progress of pupils in Key Stage 2, with particular emphasis on the progress of boys
- the impact on pupils' progress of recent initiatives to improve teaching and the curriculum
- the effectiveness of leadership and management, especially in embedding ambition, driving improvement and strengthening the school's capacity for sustained improvement

Information about the school

Aqueduct Primary is an average-sized school.. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that in schools nationally. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. Of the few with minority ethnic heritage, almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average for a school of this size.

The school holds the following awards: Healthy Schools, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Eco Schools (Silver) and the Be Smart Water Conservation award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Aqueduct Primary School is an improving school in which pupils make satisfactory progress. Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because, in most respects, provision meets their learning and developmental needs effectively. However, children currently in Reception have too little access to learning out of doors, although the school has plans for a major programme of outdoor refurbishment. Standards in all key subjects are broadly in line with national averages and age-related expectations in Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards in mathematics have improved. In most year groups, pupils of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, are making the progress that they should. The school is well on the way to eliminating historic patterns of underachievement amongst some of the boys and of more able pupils in Key Stage 2. Achievement is satisfactory. More pupils in the current Year 6 have progressed at the expected rate than in recent years, and there is clear evidence of accelerating progress in a number of other classes.

Teachers are working hard to improve their planning for pupils with differing abilities and their use of assessment information to guide pupils learning. Good practice is taking root and, as a result, pupils' learning and progress are improving. Most pupils behave, respond and apply themselves well. This gives the school secure foundations on which to build. Nevertheless, though satisfactory overall, pupils' learning and progress remain uneven, because weaknesses in levels of challenge and in teachers' marking, monitoring of learning and use of time still affect some classes.

The quality of care that the school provides to all pupils is good. It is based on strong partnerships with parents and sound links with schools and support agencies. These partnerships successfully underpin the school's drive to promote equality and to eliminate discrimination. The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being are good and pupils themselves have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They make a good contribution to the school as a community and to the community beyond the school gates. The current curriculum is a satisfactory vehicle for academic development and has strengths in the ways in which it promotes personal development. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The headteacher and senior staff have introduced a range of worthwhile initiatives to strengthen leadership and management at all levels and to improve quality and consistency in the classroom. A satisfactory balance of support and challenge has already begun to produce clear signs of improvement. While there is still much to be done, especially in securing consistently good academic outcomes for all pupils, early successes indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement

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in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' learning and progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to match work closely to pupils' prior attainments and to plan tasks that challenge pupils across the ability range
 - securing greater consistency in teachers' marking so that it gives pupils a clear understanding of how to improve their work
 - ensuring that all teachers use time efficiently and check pupils' work-in-progress regularly so that they make good gains in all lessons.
- Increase the rate of school improvement by ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels are relentless in their drive to accelerate pupils' learning and achievement.
- Improve provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - carrying through plans for extending the outdoor learning area
 - developing an outdoor curriculum that covers all areas of children's learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Standards are in line with national averages in both key stages. More importantly, most pupils of all abilities throughout school are demonstrating satisfactory rates of progress and there are clear indications of progress accelerating from satisfactory to good in some classes. It will take longer to eradicate the last traces of underachievement but the gap between boys' and girls' performance has narrowed considerably and more pupils than previously are on course for above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils who find learning difficult make progress at a similar satisfactory rate to most others. Last year, pupils' progress, though still well below that normally expected, began to improve. The school's performance data and pupils' current work in class indicate that this positive trend is set to continue.

Most pupils behave well, show a good degree of enjoyment in their work and make a real effort to improve. A very small number of pupils are restless and difficult to engage and their influence at times contributes to uneven progress in some classes.

Pupils say that they feel well cared for in school. Most enjoy constructive relationships with staff. They show a good understanding of how to keep healthy and say that they feel safe when they are in and around the school. Pupils are proud of their school and make a good contribution to its strong sense of community. For example, the school councillors, and through them the wider pupil body, play a prominent role in important decisions, such as the appointment of staff, changes to school uniform and colour

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schemes for the new extension. Similarly, the Year 6 'buddies' do an excellent job in caring for the school's new arrivals. The school and its pupils are well integrated into the local community and the developing curriculum is strengthening their understanding of the wider world. Levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Sound basic skills and positive attitudes to learning provide pupils with a satisfactory preparation for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

As a result of recent improvements in teaching, most pupils now progress at the expected rate and achieve satisfactorily over time. Lessons are generally interesting. Teaching includes a satisfactory range of activities to motivate and engage pupils. Most teachers use additional adults effectively to support pupils' learning. The best lessons really make pupils think. Teachers know how well pupils are doing and focus their teaching closely on what pupils need to reinforce or learn next. Pupils respond well in these lessons. They 'get stuck in' and make good progress. However, not all lessons are of this quality. Lessons that are insufficiently challenging or take too little account of

¹ 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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pupils' differing needs do not enable pupils to make the best possible progress. Similarly, when pupils spend too long 'on the carpet' or when the teacher fails to notice or take action if pupils begin to go off task, the pace of learning slows. Teachers' marking is satisfactory, although there are inconsistencies in the targets that some teachers set through their marking and in the quality of guidance to pupils on how to meet them.

Staff are currently revising the curriculum in order to make it more relevant to pupils and to build more links between subjects. A lot remains to be done but there is evidence that recent developments are beginning to benefit the pupils. For example, the new project on Japanese geography, history and culture has done much to broaden pupils' horizons, and the interest that this project has aroused in boys has improved their all round performance. A stronger focus on developing basic literacy skills has been a key factor in raising standards in English, particularly in writing. The school modifies the curriculum satisfactorily for pupils who find learning difficult and for pupils who are especially gifted. The curriculum gives a good range of experiences to support pupils' learning. Visits to places of interest both locally and further afield, visitors to school, special events extra-curricular activities add to pupils' enjoyment and motivation. Together with an emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of learning that permeates the curriculum, they make strong contribution pupils' personal development. The good care which the school provides to all pupils is a strength of its current arrangements. It has been an important driver towards positive attitudes, behaviour, relationships and achievement in the last two years.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders are keen to improve the school. They know what needs to be done because their evaluations are generally accurate. The recent down-turn in pupils' progress has added a much needed sense of urgency. Senior staff have tightened up the criteria against which they judge the quality of teaching and learning and have instilled a clear understanding of accountability amongst staff. The targets that they set for staff, pupils and for the school as a whole are suitably challenging. Consequently, after two years, during which progress in Years 3 to 6 was less than might have been expected, the 'ship has begun to turn'.

There were gains last year, particularly in English, and those gains are increasing

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steadily as early initiatives begin to take effect. Progress to date indicates that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Good governance has supported the school's drive for improvement. Governors bring wide-ranging professional and community experience that enables them to support and challenge the school effectively. Their oversight of the school is well informed and authoritative because they collect a wealth of first-hand information to support their judgements.

Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being are thorough and fully meet current government requirements. Other important factors that promote pupils' well-being are good levels of engagement with parents and carers and sound links with other schools and with outside support agencies. The school's investment in staff training has paid off, for example in the quality of its nurture provision, which has been effective in promoting equality of opportunity by supporting the school's most troubled pupils and reducing the incidence of exclusion. The school has a sound understanding of the area that it serves. Pupils' involvement in initiatives such as the youth engagement project promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. In relation to the quality of education and current outcomes for pupils, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and gives children a good start and a firm foundation for their future learning.

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Many children enter the Reception class with levels of skills and understanding that are typical for their age although, for some, attainment is much lower. The majority make good progress relative to their starting points in all areas of learning. The most rapid gains are in their behaviour, attitudes to learning and relationships with one another and adults. This is because of the good quality of care, support and guidance offered to children and their parents or carers, which begins before they start school. It cements the strong relationships between staff, parents and carers and their children that endure throughout their time in school.

Children also make good gains in aspects of early literacy and numeracy. Accurate assessments give staff a clear picture of the progress children are making and learning is tailored well to meet individual needs. As a result, children benefit from the consistently good quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum ensures the right balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities, enabling all children to enjoy their Reception year thoroughly. The staff provide a stimulating environment that is well resourced and their careful planning ensures a good range of learning experiences indoors. Outdoor learning is satisfactory but restricted by limitations of space and resources. The school is currently awaiting the start of work aimed at improving this area.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents who returned questionnaires expressed confidence in and approval of most aspects of the school's work. One parent wrote: 'I am entirely satisfied. Teaching staff seem to have a genuine interest in children's development and happiness'. Other parents commented favourably on the quality of support for children with learning difficulties and for those who are particularly gifted, the approachability of staff and the school's efforts to involve parents in their children's education.

A few parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour and felt that bullying was a problem. Inspectors saw no disruptive or aggressive behaviour during the inspection. Staff are generally successful in managing those pupils who, at times, lack self-control. Pupils who spoke to inspectors confirmed that they feel safe in school and that bullying is not a serious concern for them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aqueduct Primary 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 242 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	53	21	41	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	59	19	37	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	39	30	59	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	47	21	41	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	53	20	39	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	47	22	43	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	47	24	47	1	2	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)	19	37	25	49	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	39	26	51	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	35	25	49	4	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	37	27	53	3	6	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	49	24	47	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	55	20	39	2	4	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aqueduct Primary School, Telford, TF4 3RP

Thank you for making my colleagues and I so welcome and for taking time to answer our questions. We enjoyed talking with you. The things that you told us showed us that you think that your school is getting better - and we agree. We enjoyed seeing Year 5 and 6 pupils working on the Japan topic. It was good to see how interested you were and how much you enjoyed your work. I was also impressed by how well you play together at lunchtime and how responsibly the playground 'buddies' take care of the younger children.

I thought that you would like to hear more about our findings.

Yours is a satisfactory and improving school.

Children in Reception get a good start to their time in school.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. Standards are broadly average and rising.

Those who find learning difficult make progress as well as everyone else

Your behaviour and the way that you respond in lessons are good, although a few of you need to try harder to do your best all of the time.

Staff help you if you have problems and take particularly good care of anybody who is having a hard time.

The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to improve the school.

Because everybody wants Aqueduct Primary to be as good as it can possibly be, we have made a few suggestions that should help it to improve further. This is what we would like the school to do.

Make sure that teachers:

- plan lessons that are at exactly the right level to help you make good progress
- mark your work in a way that shows you exactly how you can improve
- use lesson time wisely and check that everybody works hard to the very end.

Keep driving hard for improvement so that the school gets better even more quickly.

Provide children in Reception with more opportunities to work and play out of doors.

Yours sincerely

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector

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