

Bromsgrove, Sidemoor First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116664
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338856
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Platt
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Shearwood
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Six teachers were seen teaching 12 lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils and informal meetings were held with parents. The inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised a wide range of documents including the school development plan, school assessment and tracking data and pupils' books. Sixty-seven questionnaires from parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly children's typical attainment on entry and provision for the outdoor curriculum
- the quality of the school's assessment and tracking systems
- pupils' behaviour in and around the school.

Information about the school

The school moved to new, spacious, purpose-built accommodation shortly after the last inspection. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is increasing and is above average. The school has an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It has achieved the Healthy School status, the Arts Mark, Active Mark and Green Flag 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Sidemoor First School is an outstanding school. In its new and exciting accommodation, the school has improved steadily and significantly. It continues to do so under the strong and inspiring leadership of the headteacher who provides a very clear sense of purpose and direction, closely linked to school improvement. This leadership has ensured that teaching and learning have improved at a rapid pace and clear priorities have been set for further improvement. The excellent teamwork and the driving ambition of the whole staff are central to the school's significant improvement since the last inspection and its continuing success. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and delighted with their child's experiences in it. Typical comments included, 'We are extremely happy with the school and are very glad that our children attend Sidemoor' and, 'My child is always happy to go to school and comes home every day with a positive attitude towards her learning'.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well. Most pupils start in the Nursery or Reception class with skills that are broadly as expected for their age although their communication and language skills are frequently lower. By the time they leave the school, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have made excellent progress, attaining well above average standards in the core subjects. Teaching is consistently good or better and is a strong contributory factor in pupils' excellent progress. Pupils display very positive attitudes to their learning, as evidenced in the good attendance of the majority. However, the attendance of a small but persistent minority of pupils continues to give the school cause for concern and overall attendance levels remain average. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils have a wide range of responsibilities in the school and, through the work of the school council, make a very good contribution to the school community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their exceptional social skills and the excellent standards achieved equip them well for the future.

The excellent curriculum and teaching result in pupils developing a very wide range of skills for the next stage of their education. These include strong leadership and team-work skills honed through their involvement in school life and in the community. Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils are able to learn and develop confidence, regardless of their individual circumstances. The school has an excellent understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next, and due to the high quality of its self-evaluation, it has an excellent capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve overall rates of attendance by:
 - ensuring all parents clearly understand the importance of regular attendance in securing good and consistent progress for their children
 - devising further strategies to motivate pupils to improve the overall rates of attendance from average to above average.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All groups of pupils make outstanding progress. Although teachers and many pupils from Years 3 and 4 were away at a residential trip during the inspection, a careful analysis of pupils' books and assessment and tracking data from the school indicates strongly that high standards and excellent progress of previous years are continuing. Observations of lessons in Key Stage 1 and a scrutiny of Year 2 books confirm that learning is exceptionally rapid. Pupils' exemplary behaviour is an outstanding factor in the excellent progress they make in lessons and creates a very positive school ethos. The response of pupils in lessons is always very enthusiastic. They take great pride in presenting their work well and it is vibrantly displayed throughout the school. They work well together and individually without the need for constant reminders and there is no evidence of disruptive behaviour.

Pupils say they feel very safe in and around the school. They comment very positively on the many adults and pupils who look after them and help them resolve their disputes. They know and understand the important factors that affect their health and respond well to the school's health promotion strategies that have earned the school the Healthy Schools' Award. Pupils value their school community and willingly take on responsibilities. They participate constructively in school life, suggesting and taking actions to help improve the school, and are involved in a wide range of community activities in and out of school. They respect each others' needs and interests and are curious about the world around them. Although the great majority are very well-equipped for the future with their well-developed academic and social skills, a small but persistent minority are not taking full advantage of the excellent opportunities offered by the school due to their low rates of attendance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Outstanding teaching was observed in most year groups across the school, with all lessons at least good and a significant proportion exemplary. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which enthuses and challenges pupils and contributes to their very good progress. They know the needs of every pupil very well and this ensures that they are able to provide high quality learning experiences, resulting in excellent progress for pupils of all abilities. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that are routinely shared with pupils. Activities are planned to meet the needs of the different ability groups within each class. Very good use is made of resources, including new technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Excellent classroom management skills ensure that pupils work well together and there are no marked differences in the responses of boys or girls. Teachers' high expectations and carefully targeted questioning draws out pupils' ideas and develops their thinking and reasoning skills. Support by teaching assistants is skilled and well-focused and makes an excellent contribution to the quality of learning in many lessons. The detailed and rigorous whole-school assessment and tracking system provides the school with secure and detailed data on individual pupil's progress as they move through the school. The senior management use this data very well to make a detailed and accurate analysis of groups' or individual's progress and to amend the curriculum to better meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Very good marking of pupils' work, the use of small group and individual targets that are referred to regularly and peer and self-assessment by pupils are all used very effectively to promote pupils' learning.

The curriculum provides a continual diet of interesting, challenging and carefully adapted activities to ensure all groups of pupils experience success. This was demonstrated very well during the inspection when Year 3 pupils spent a half-day with a chef, dressed in chef's aprons and chef's hats, learning how to make samosas. Pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities including sports activities. Collaboration with other schools and a range of partnerships further enrich the experiences pupils are given. Excellent relationships ensure that the school is a caring and welcoming environment for all its pupils. The school's outstanding

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arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute to their excellent development and well-being and support their learning extremely well. Staff know and care deeply for all pupils and provide rigorous safeguarding and welfare procedures to help ensure the safety of all pupils, including those facing difficult situations. Case studies demonstrate numerous ways in which the school has helped pupils overcome significant barriers. Much is already done to raise attendance and the school’s support for pupils when they return from significant absence is strong. Transition of pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1 and from the Year 4 class to middle school is handled sensitively and is very well managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has consistently communicated to the staff her high expectations about continuing to improve provision. The result of this is clearly evident in the significant improvements made since the last inspection. With the able support of an enthusiastic, committed and well-motivated staff team she has identified and has rigorously and successfully tackled areas requiring improvement. Planning is robust and followed through. All staff regularly take advantage of professional opportunities to enhance their work. The governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and fully and systematically involved in evaluating its work. School leaders and governors have an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures and adopt recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work. The school has a highly positive relationship with parents and carers. This effective liaison with parents and with other partners contributes significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. The school promotes equality of opportunity in all its work and is constantly alert to any variation in achievement. The performance of pupils is tracked very closely, with particular attention to the performance of different groups. It is pro-active in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. As a result, Sidemoor is a highly inclusive school and all pupils are able to take full advantage of all it has to offer. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local community very effectively. It has good links with a school in a contrasting environment and circumstances in the United Kingdom and is developing links with a school in France. The school makes excellent use of all its resources, in particular the skilful deployment of staff where they are most needed, and provides excellent value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in their time in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the consistently good teaching, the high quality planning and daily organisation. They make particularly good progress in their communication, language and literacy skills because of the strong focus on developing children's understanding of the sounds that letters make and their speaking and listening skills. Children clearly enjoy school, settle into the routines well and play happily together and individually. They undertake a variety of whole class and group activities and, in most cases, co-operate well when working with others. They delight in learning and seeing new things. Good relationships are developed with parents and carers through daily contact at the start and end of each day. Very effective pastoral care and welfare arrangements mean that the children are safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, are very well-supported and are integrated well into all activities. Provision for the outdoor curriculum is good because the excellent accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage classes, which has free access to secure, covered, outdoor areas, is well-resourced with a good range of free-choice and adult-led activities. This allows children to explore things with purpose and challenge throughout the year, and encourages the development of their independent learning skills. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Adults have a good knowledge of the welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and good understanding of learning development. Good systems for the long-term assessment and tracking of children's progress are in place. Staff monitor and record children's progress effectively on a day to day basis and observations and achievements are recorded in individual 'pupil profiles'. Development planning is very

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effective, as demonstrated by the way the opportunities provided by the new accommodation have been used to enhance the curriculum. The school has rightly identified its next areas for development.

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 vast majority of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire declared themselves to be extremely satisfied with the school, an exceptional response reflecting the school’s outstanding links with them. All parents and carers agreed that their children enjoy school; that the school keeps their children safe; that teaching at the school is good; that the school encourages a healthy lifestyle and that the school is led and managed effectively. The overwhelming majority agreed with all the other statements. There were many positive comments and very few concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bromsgrove, Sidemoor 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 268 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	78	15	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	72	19	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	54	30	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	54	30	45	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	70	20	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	61	25	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	61	26	39	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)	35	52	27	40	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	61	25	37	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	55	25	37	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	49	31	46	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	58	28	42	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	69	20	30	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sidemoor First School, Bromsgrove, B61 8QN

Thank you so much for helping me and my colleagues when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and observing you at work and at play. You made us feel very welcome and made our short visit very enjoyable. Together with your parents, you think Sidemoor is an outstanding school. We agree with you.

You clearly enjoy learning and taking part in many activities. You make very good progress and achieve very high standards. Your behaviour is outstanding; you have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and you feel very safe and secure in school. It was good to hear from the school councillors about how you are helping to improve the school. Teachers work very hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy being at school. All the adults in school take excellent care of you. Your school is very well led and managed and is continually improving.

You told us that you really enjoy school and are proud to attend. However, taking everybody together your attendance is only average. So, to help you all to make even better progress, we have asked you and the school to improve overall attendance by:

- ensuring all parents fully understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and
- encouraging pupils to attend more regularly by, for example, providing weekly incentives for the best class or year group

I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis
Lead inspector

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