

Palfrey Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104160
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	377023
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Alwyne Jolly

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mohammed Afzal
Headteacher	Gary Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2009
School address	Milton Street Walsall West Midlands WS1 4LA
Telephone number	01922 721092
Fax number	01922 641729
Email address	postbox@palfrey-j.walsall.sch.uk

Age group	7–11
Inspection date(s)	12–13 January 2012
Inspection number	377023



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Alwyne Jolly

Additional inspector

Gary Kirkley

Additional inspector

Alison Lamputt

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. The inspectors observed 14 teaching staff for a total of nine hours while visiting 17 lessons and part lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information, minutes of governing body meetings and arrangements for safeguarding. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised, along with 170 completed by parents and carers. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized school of its kind. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are from a minority ethnic background, predominantly Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi, and speak English as an additional language. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school has met national floor standards over the last three years, except for last year when fewer pupils made the expected level of progress in English and mathematics.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is rising after a dip in 2011. The school has successfully analysed the reasons for the dip. It has implemented effective strategies to support the learning of pupils of all ethnic groups and abilities and is proving to be successful in raising attainment.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils effectively. It has good links with its own community and beyond, which foster the pupils’ good understanding of life in the United Kingdom today.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory. All groups attain in line with their counterparts nationally. Pupils make better progress in the final years of school after a slightly slower start to their learning. Standards of reading are average and pupils are prepared satisfactorily for secondary school.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory over time, but is improving as a result of an effective professional development programme and a clear focus on the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of how to engage the interest of their pupils and develop their learning. Occasionally, the lessons lack the pace to accelerate pupils’ progress sufficiently and written tasks sometimes lack sufficient challenge needed for more-able pupils.
- Pupils’ behaviour in lessons and relationships are consistently good, which provides a harmonious and inclusive environment in which pupils can learn. Parents, carers and pupils spoke very positively about the arrangements for

pupils' safety, which meet requirements fully.

- There is a concerted approach to school improvement. Essential systems to track pupils' progress have been implemented recently, which are being used to identify potential underachievement at an early stage and to accelerate progress. Early indications are that these are having a beneficial effect.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve pupils' overall achievement from satisfactory to good, the school should:
 - make effective use of information on pupils' attainment on entry to ensure they make consistently good progress after they join the school
 - ensure that written tasks given to pupils promote sufficient challenge for the more able more consistently
 - ensure that all lessons proceed at the pace of the best teaching in the school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In the latest national test results, the percentage of pupils making expected progress in both English and mathematics was below the national floor standards. There was underachievement by boys and Pakistani pupils in particular. This was a significant dip after an encouraging improvement in 2010. The school has responded by introducing a range of initiatives to motivate pupils further and improve their progress, particularly Pakistani boys. As a result, those pupils are now making much better progress and attaining at considerably higher levels than last year.

In the large majority of lessons observed, pupils made good progress and achieved well. Pupils are attentive and engage enthusiastically with the activities offered. The level of attainment in reading is average by the time pupils leave the school. All pupils are acquiring at least satisfactory skills in reading relative to their starting points, as a result of a successful whole-school focus to accelerate the progress made in developing skills of literacy and communication.

Data show the previous underperformance of Pakistani pupils was a feature of the one cohort throughout its time in school. Pakistani pupils were observed to be making at least satisfactory progress in all lessons during the inspection. Similarly, the strategies to engage boys' interest, particularly in reading, show early indications of success in their clear motivation in lessons. It is clearly evident that the gap is closing on pupils' attainment nationally.

In their first year at school, pupils settle well socially. Although they make satisfactory progress, it is slower at first. This is because teachers do not use the information gained from previous test performance and baseline measures quickly enough so that pupils' progress is tracked and accelerated by appropriate actions where necessary. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs have continued to receive well-targeted support so their progress is at least satisfactory. Higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, although, occasionally, they are not challenged enough in lessons to reach the levels of which they are capable, particularly in writing.

The school has responded well to the issue in the last report related to attainment in mathematics so that the percentage reaching the expected level has been in line with the national average for the last two years. Also, current work in English shows pupils are now making accelerated progress. Pupils' attainment overall in Year 6 is average and reflects satisfactory progress from their starting points.

There is a clear improving pattern, which confirms satisfactory achievement. Pupils are proud of what they achieve and have a strong motivation to do better. Parents and carers are positive about the school's influence, summed up by the comment, 'My son's motivation convinces me that he gets a lot of positive support and feedback from the school.'

Quality of teaching

Parents, carers and pupils speak positively about the quality of teaching in the school, which was confirmed by observations during the inspection. However, some past underperformance indicates that teaching has been less successful over time. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons well and create engaging learning activities which are enjoyed by most pupils. Pupils are managed and motivated well so that lessons proceed smoothly. Clear learning outcomes are identified and shared with pupils so they understand what they need to do to be successful. Good support is given, particularly to pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs, so that they make good progress in lessons. There is good-quality collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants. Staff and pupils know the levels at which individuals are working and understand the targets to help them improve.

All teachers are responsive to developing the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the passages read with pupils often involve other cultures and raise moral issues to discuss. Some of the best teaching features an imaginative use of information and communication technology. In an outstanding lesson with Year 5 pupils, for example, the teacher involved pupils in a fast, engaging use of the interactive whiteboard to enable them to grasp the conventions, characters and settings used in fairy stories quickly. Teaching is at its best for the oldest pupils, which accelerates their progress. However, some inconsistency in teaching still exists in the rest of the school. Occasionally, lesson introductions are prolonged before pupils attempt the main activity, limiting the time available for them to complete the tasks and hence their progress. Also, written tasks are sometimes insufficiently

challenging for the more-able pupils. The marking is invariably thorough, detailed and constructive, but, on rare occasions, insufficient advice is given to pupils on how they can improve.

The school recognises that some aspects of teaching and the curriculum did not fully meet the needs of all pupils last year. They have, therefore, adapted teaching approaches and the curriculum to engage Pakistani boys more fully, some of whom underperformed in the previous tests. As a result, the pupils' work shows all groups are making at least satisfactory progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The standard of behaviour in the school is good and improving considerably. Although most parents, carers and pupils, generally, speak very positively about behaviour, a few consider it is not good. The staff reported that the misbehaviour of a minority of boys affected the learning of others in the previous academic year. However, currently, behaviour in lessons is consistently good and often outstanding. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and staff, which creates a calm and pleasant atmosphere in the school. The school council is an effective mechanism to consult pupils, listen to their views and work with them to improve the school. Pupils are active members of a harmonious learning community in which all feel valued and respected. The level of attendance in the previous two academic years was below the national average. However, the school has worked, together with other local schools, to take decisive action to reduce absence. This successful strategy led to above-average attendance last term. Pupils say they feel safe at school because adults care well for them and they feel confident to seek help and support when they have concerns or feel unwell. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe in and out of school and they confirm that bullying is rare, but dealt with quickly and effectively when it does occur. There are rigorous systems for safeguarding, appreciated by pupils and their parents and carers.

Leadership and management

The headteacher gives decisive, considered leadership to the school. Although relatively new to their positions, team leaders are starting to make an impact. The school leaders now have a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and pupils' attainment. They have been successful in creating a harmonious community which promotes equality and resists any form of discrimination. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is exemplified by the range of initiatives they have introduced to motivate Pakistani boys and, consequently, narrow the gaps with other pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective.

The governing body is knowledgeable and includes community representatives, parents and carers, and the headteachers of the linked infant and high schools. It operates as an effective body, recognising its monitoring role and raising searching questions as necessary, for example about the dip in test results in the previous year. The school's promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective and sits at the heart of this cohesive learning community. It is exemplified by the improving quality of learning and progress for the wide range of

different groups in the school and the effective care and guidance they receive. The school's curriculum is increasingly promoting these elements well and giving a balanced and broad perspective to meet pupils' needs. There is an increasing range of clubs and activities to extend pupils' learning and opportunities.

The school has an improving relationship with parents and carers. Attendance is improving at workshops for parents and carers, who appreciate what the school does for their children. Links are also developing with the infant school and high school in addition to other local schools.

A strong, commitment to professional development has led to improved teaching. The monitoring of teaching is on a planned schedule and carried out largely by the headteacher, who is suitably rigorous in identifying both strengths and areas for development. The implementation of strategies and actions as a result of this monitoring is informing future development. Some strategies have had an immediate impact, such as the improved attendance levels. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and, as a result, a pattern of improvement has been established. The school has addressed effectively the issues raised at the last inspection, and taken effective action to eradicate underachievement which indicate it has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Palfrey Junior School, Walsall WS1 4LA

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. Palfrey Junior School is a satisfactory school and improving.

This is what we found out about your school.

- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- You are well behaved and enjoy your lessons.
- You told us that you feel very safe in school and that the staff care for you well and we agree.
- You make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching.
- The leadership and management of your school are satisfactory.

The headteacher, staff and the governing body are working hard to help you to do better. This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Improve the progress you make when you first join the school. You can help by working hard at any tasks you are given.
- Make sure you are always given suitable written work at the right level for each of you so you can make rapid progress, especially those of you who find learning easier. You can all help by telling your teachers if you find work a little easy.
- Ensure that in all lessons you learn at a fast pace; you can help by concentrating fully at all times.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Alwyne Jolly
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**