

West Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134279
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	381661
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2012
Lead inspector	Anna Coyle

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	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Morgan
Headteacher	Glenn Duggan
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
School address	Rednal Road Birmingham B38 8HU
Telephone number	0121 4584257
Fax number	0121 4598340
Email address	enquiry@westheathprimary.bham.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Anna Coyle

Additional inspector

Devinder Riat

Additional inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 20 lessons taught by 14 teachers. The majority of these visits were accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team. The inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, and members of the governing body. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at monitoring information assessment records, the minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's action plans and evaluations. They also analysed 95 parent and carer questionnaires, 27 staff questionnaires and 138 pupil questionnaires.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average primary school and serves the local community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or those who speak English as an additional language. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school which has improved over the last three years.
- The headteacher’s good leadership, with effective support from the deputy headteacher and the school improvement team, has helped overcome some of the weaknesses in achievement and teaching so that they are both improving and satisfactory overall.
- Standards in English have fluctuated significantly at Key Stage 2: weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and handwriting hold back pupils’ attainment.
- Pupils say they feel safe and have an adult to go to if any problems arise. Safeguarding procedures are good.
- Behaviour is satisfactory over time. It is often good in lessons and in the playground. Attendance is below average, but improving. There were a high number of exclusions last year due to some incidents of poor behaviour.
- The large majority of parents and carers indicated in the questionnaires that behaviour is good, although some said that lessons are disrupted at times by the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils.
- Leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching across the school. In the majority of lessons, teaching is satisfactory or better. However, teaching and learning are occasionally inadequate, especially when teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and pupils lose interest.
- Lessons include appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness as well as their moral and cultural understanding and the ability to work together cooperatively and sociably.
- Assessment for learning and marking are not always used effectively and at times the more able pupils are not given enough challenging tasks to enable them to engage fully in their work.
- While some parents and carers are sufficiently involved in their children’s learning, this is not always the case.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in English at Key Stage 2 so that a larger proportion of pupils reach the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 by ensuring that:
 - greater focus is placed on improving pupils' skills in the consistent use of spelling and punctuation in Years 3 to 6.
 - pupils' handwriting is improved so that their work is presented neatly and to a high standard.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that at least 80% is judged to be good or better by September 2012 by ensuring that:
 - work is well matched to pupils' abilities and challenges the most able
 - teachers talk for shorter periods of time at the beginning of lessons so that learning starts at a good pace and pupils are fully engaged with their work from the outset
 - the use of assessment for learning and marking is sharpened up so that pupils always know how to improve their work.

- Increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning by ensuring that:
 - staff actively and positively engage parents to help improve pupils' attendance, punctuality and behaviour further and help the school to go on reducing the number of exclusions.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Pupils enter the school with very low attainment on entry but they make satisfactory progress overall, and sometimes good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. Achievement is satisfactory. It is improving steadily, especially in mathematics where standards have risen over the last two years and there has been good impact of strategies such as 'Mini Maths'. Attainment in English was well below the national average at the end of Year 6 last year but pupils' work shows that it is currently in line with national expectations. Standards in reading are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve standards that are similar to their peers. However, the more able pupils are not always challenged enough or given suitable activities to extend their thinking and learning. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in learning. They benefit from lessons where specific strategies to support them are identified and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points.

During the inspection, the inspectors observed pupils making satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in lessons. Responses from parents and carers show that most agree that their children make sufficient progress at the school. Learning was best when the lesson concentrated on improving pupils' understanding as well as

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ensuring they gained knowledge and skills. In a few lessons, questioning was used well to enable pupils to give reasons for their answers. This helped pupils develop better reasoning skills and increased their problem-solving ability. However, at times, pupils were less engaged and quickly became restless after the teacher's initial input because this went on for too long. In these lessons learning was only satisfactory and occasionally inadequate.

In lessons, pupils demonstrate satisfactory literacy skills and this supports the school's commitment to improving achievement in English. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books shows that there are some weaknesses at Key Stage 2 in pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting which limit their attainment.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved over the last year due to the intensive support for staff and frequent monitoring of lessons by senior leaders. When teaching is good or better, lessons get off to a purposeful start and pupils become involved in their work quickly. However, this is not the case in all lessons, especially when teachers talk for too long and pupils become disengaged with learning. Staff make good use of electronic whiteboards to help pupils learn, and focused questioning is used to develop pupils' understanding. Lessons allow pupils to reflect upon spiritual elements; for example, in religious education, they gained an insight into different cultures of the world in Year 6 and linked learning with their studies in art and design. Pupils consider moral aspects of life, for example when considering sustainability issues and developing their social awareness when working in groups.

The planned curriculum usually identifies the key aspects of literacy and numeracy skills to be learnt across subjects. When teaching is only satisfactory or inadequate, lessons are less dynamic and lack a deepening of pupils' skills and understanding. Planning is usually matched effectively to the needs of the middle-ability group within the class but the more able pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged. The questionnaire returns indicate that parents, carers and pupils believe that teaching is mainly satisfactory. Marking is generally satisfactory, but inconsistent: in the best examples, it celebrates pupils' successes and identifies what they need to improve, with pupils responding well to their teacher's written advice.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is satisfactory. It is often good in lessons and pupils are usually polite and helpful, although some pupils lose interest and are not fully involved with their learning when lessons are not sufficiently engaging. Behaviour has been variable over time, as indicated in the questionnaire responses from parents, carers, pupils and staff. It ranges from good in some classes to inadequate in a small minority of others. The school excluded a high number of pupils last year, but this strategy has had a positive impact and been successful in bringing down the incidents of misbehaviour across the school. Attendance is below average and some pupils are persistently late. Even so, attendance is improving steadily over time.

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Pupils say they feel safe within the school and are confident that the staff do all they can to ensure their safety. The school is successful in guiding pupils who are in need of additional help, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying. They say they have received support to overcome instances of bullying when rare incidents occur. Views from parents and carers are mixed, with some saying that their children have received appropriate support but with others unhappy with the way in which incidents are handled by the school. The inspectors judge that pupils usually work and play sensibly in an environment that is safe for them.

Leadership and management

The school's aims and expectations are epitomised in its motto, 'Believe, Achieve and Succeed'. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have steered the school carefully over the last three years in a bid to drive up standards, and they have been particularly successful in mathematics. Standards have been more difficult to raise in English. Nevertheless, leaders at all levels are developing their management skills and supporting staff closely to help them become more effective practitioners. This, along with senior leaders' rigorous monitoring procedures, ensures that there is equality of opportunity for pupils and the school is closing the gap in attainment. The school has helped a number of pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable to achieve success.

The quality of teaching is improving steadily through effective professional development, performance management and the close monitoring of lessons and teachers' planning. This has had a positive impact on learning and demonstrates the school's capacity to improve further. The curriculum is organised to meet pupils' needs and prepare them for the next stage of their education. It supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through plenty of practical activities and opportunities for reflection.

All aspects of safeguarding meet the current requirements. A few parents and carers feel that the school does not do enough to ensure pupils' safety and eradicate bullying but the inspectors judge that the school is a safe environment for pupils and staff. However, some parents are not sufficiently involved with their children's learning and are difficult to engage.

The governing body provides appropriate support for leaders and managers, and holds the school to account. The senior leadership team and the governing body have a clear vision for the future of the school.

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 school converters. Secondary schools include secondary school converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special school 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.



30 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Heath Primary School, Birmingham, B38 8HU

Thank you very much for talking to us when we visited your school recently. We met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break, and saw that you get on well with each other. We also heard some of you reading during guided-reading sessions and we looked at your English and mathematics books. Your school has improved overall and we judge it to be satisfactory.

Achievement is rising: it is satisfactory at present. The school makes sure that you follow a suitable curriculum which helps prepare you for your next phase of education. It also ensures that you have opportunities to think about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of learning, especially when working together in groups and learning about different cultures. Staff look after you and keep you safe, which is why most of you who filled in the questionnaires said that you enjoy the school and feel safe. We judge behaviour as satisfactory, although a few of you do not always behave appropriately. We have asked the staff to get parents and carers more involved in your learning to help the school improve attendance, punctuality and behaviour.

We judged teaching to be satisfactory. We have asked the school to improve the quality of teaching so that those of you who find work easy have work that is challenging and that you start work quickly after the teachers have started the lessons. We have also asked the school to help you improve your spelling, punctuation and handwriting and give you plenty of help when marking your books.

The headteacher and senior leaders have identified accurately what to do to improve the school and all of the staff are determined to carry on improving it. They are supported by members of the governing body. We wish you well and hope you carry on helping the school to get even better, particularly by making sure that you come to school every day during term-time and always working hard, especially in literacy lessons.

Yours sincerely

Anna Coyle
Lead inspector

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