

Palmers Cross Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104309
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	377059
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Bonsell
Headteacher	Carole Fenton
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2011
School address	Windermere Road Tettenhall Wolverhampton WV6 9DF
Telephone number	01902 558322
Fax number	01902 558326
Email address	palmerscrossprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Age group	5–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 March 2012
Inspection number	377059



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

Marian Harker

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anthony Kingston

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed nine teachers and 10 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school staff, including senior managers, and a group of parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, minutes of the governing body, documents relating to safeguarding and teaching records. Inspectors analysed 35 parents' and carers' questionnaires in addition to those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Palmers Cross is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The large majority of pupils are from White British families with the remainder from Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is much higher than average. The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. The resource base caters for 21 pupils with speech and communication difficulties. It is funded by the local authority and managed by the governing body. The governing body manages a before-school and after-school provision for pupils who attend the school. The school has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People and Healthy School status. The school met the government floor standards for attainment last year.

At its last inspection in February 2011, the school was given a notice to improve because it was performing less well than could be reasonably expected. Significant improvements were required in relation to safeguarding arrangements. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors monitored the school's progress in September 2011. The school was judged to be making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Palmers Cross is a satisfactory school and some aspects of its work are good. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and some make good progress. However, boys’ attainment and progress are not as strong as girls’. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although assessment information is not currently presented in a clear and easily accessible format.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. School records and inspection evidence indicate that the proportion of good or better teaching is increasing. However, the overall effectiveness of the school is not yet good because there is too much satisfactory teaching. In addition, recent improvements in teaching have not yet had time to have a full impact on pupils’ attainment, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils from the resource base make good progress due to good teaching.
- Pupils’ attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons and around the school are consistently good. Pupils report that they all get on well together and that any bullying is quickly dealt with by the headteacher. Attendance has improved dramatically since the last inspection and is now above the national average. Parents and carers are very positive about how well behaviour is managed in the school and all agree that their children are kept safe.
- The headteacher and senior staff have accurately identified the strengths and areas for development. As a result of regular training and increasing opportunities to share good practice, the quality of teaching is improving. Teachers’ performance targets are closely linked to the school improvement plan and regularly monitored by the headteacher. Some senior staff are relatively new to their roles. They are beginning to take on more responsibility for pupils’ progress, but do not have regular opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils, and particularly boys, make good or better progress so that attainment is at least in line with the national average by the end of Year 2 and above the national average by the end of Year 6 by:
 - increasing the proportion of teaching that is good or better
 - ensuring that pupils have regular planned opportunities to reflect on their learning, deepen their understanding and feed back what they have learned in lessons
 - providing clear developmental guidance for pupils through marking and target setting so that they know how to improve their work.

- Develop leadership and management expertise and sharpen monitoring and evaluation procedures by:
 - ensuring that all senior leaders monitor and evaluate performance, to fully contribute to school improvement
 - ensuring that school improvement planning identifies appropriate measureable milestones to support senior staff and governors in their monitoring and evaluation.

- Ensure that assessment information in the Early Years Foundation Stage is presented in a clear and easily accessible format so that parents and carers and all staff can easily track children's progress over time.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children settle quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress. They join the school with skills that are below those expected for their age, and are least developed in a number of key areas such as early reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is the equivalent of two terms behind the national averages in reading and writing and broadly in line in mathematics. Rates of progress accelerate in Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In the last two years, pupils in Key Stage 2 have made good progress from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. This is encouraging; however, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough to secure good progress across the school. The school has been successful in closing the attainment gap at the end of Key Stage 2. For example, all pupils' attainment in 2011 was higher than in the previous year, but boys' attainment remained lower than national figures. As a result of positive relationships with parents and carers and good partnership working with outside agencies, the school has been particularly successful in improving the

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

achievement of pupils with statements of special educational needs in the resource base. Disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs who are not in the resource base make satisfactory progress.

Pupils apply themselves well in lessons, working happily together. In Year 1, for example, pupils were thoroughly engaged in describing the character of one of the Billy Goats Gruff. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive and pupils concentrate well. Pupils report that they enjoy their lessons, particularly when the activities are interesting, such as in Year 4 where they had to decide whether it was right or wrong to open Tutankhamen's tomb. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children are making good progress. Parents typically comment, 'My child is happy, learning well and growing into a confident young person thanks to the school.'

Quality of teaching

Lessons are clearly planned using a common format and up-to-date assessment information. In the best lessons observed during the inspection, learning was clearly structured and pupils were encouraged to share what they had learned with others and to talk about their feelings. As a result, the teaching had a significant impact on building the confidence and self-esteem of the pupils. On occasion, teachers miss opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding through questioning, or do not give them time to reflect on what they have learned because the time allocated to activities is too short.

Recent curriculum developments, such as carefully structured phonics (the sounds that letters make) lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the introduction of the international primary curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2, are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school has introduced a number of curriculum initiatives to engage and promote boys' learning, but these are at an early stage of development. Teachers use modern technology with confidence to make learning more interesting. Learning intentions are routinely shared with pupils so that they are clear about what they are going to learn. Good relationships between pupils and adults make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are regularly used by the headteacher to discuss pertinent spiritual and moral issues. Support staff work confidently with small groups of pupils to engage and support them fully in their learning. Teachers engage pupils in their learning through talk partners and using mini whiteboards to write down their answers. However, teachers do not always use these activities effectively to pick up on misconceptions or to deepen pupils' understanding through questioning.

Pupils' work is regularly marked with positive comments and, in the best examples, teachers provide a short task to consolidate or extend learning. However, this good practice is not yet a consistent feature across the school. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 talk confidently about their learning targets and know how well they are progressing. However, younger pupils know that they have learning targets but are not sure what they have to do to improve their work or how well they are progressing. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children are well

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

taught. Inspection findings indicate that the quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. Teachers gather plenty of information about children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but this information is not presented in a clear and easily accessible format for parents and carers or staff.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or met with inspectors agree that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. One parent typically commented, 'Behaviour is good with the exception of a few pupils but the school do all they can to avoid disruption and work with these families.' Inspection findings agree with parents and carers that behaviour is typically good. Pupils from all groups and communities within the school are adamant that bullying is extremely rare. Almost all parents and carers agree that bullying is dealt with effectively by the school. School records over time indicate that these views are accurate. Behaviour and engagement in lessons are consistently good. The school has a clear system of rewards and sanctions, and these are well known by the pupils. Robust systems track pupils' behaviour, both good and not so good. Case study evidence indicates that the school has been successful in improving pupils' behaviour, including for those with behavioural difficulties. Pupils report that they particularly enjoy receiving rewards in assembly for good behaviour, thoughtfulness and helping others.

The school has been very successful in improving rates of attendance and punctuality since the last inspection. A very close eye is kept on the attendance of different groups of pupils and the school's 'zero tolerance' approach to holidays in term time has been particularly effective. As a result, rates of attendance are consistently above the national average. The school's strategy of opening at 8:30 in the morning for pupils has been successful. Punctuality is much improved and parents and carers report that their children feel safe going straight into their classrooms.

All pupils who responded to the questionnaire agree that they feel safe when they are in school. Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as using scissors sensibly. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a safe and welcoming environment for the pupils who attend. They enjoy a good range of interesting activities, such as biscuit decorating and outdoor games, and all get on well together.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and her senior team provide dedicated and passionate leadership which is moving the whole school community forward. Recently appointed senior leaders are attending training to further develop their roles. Teachers report that professional development training they have received to improve pupils' reading and writing has been helpful and is making a positive difference in lessons.

The school improvement plan accurately identifies areas for improvement, but these are not consistently linked to clear measurable outcomes so that senior leaders and members of the governing body can track progress over time.

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

The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about different topics in depth, make learning links between different subjects and have more planned opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactorily promoted through the curriculum, in assemblies and through off-site visits and visitors to the school.

The governing body is well-organised and supportive. Governors know the school and its community well and are knowledgeable about how well the pupils are achieving. Safeguarding arrangements have been strengthened considerably since the school was last inspected. The latest requirements for safeguarding are fully met and the governing body's safeguarding committee keeps a close eye on this aspect of the school's work to ensure that all pupils and staff are kept safe. The school is successful in ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, particularly those with specific needs, and in preventing discrimination. One parent typically commented, 'I find Palmers Cross to be very welcoming and inclusive, particularly as a parent of a child with specific difficulties.'

Improving levels of attainment and pupils' achievement, alongside an increasing proportion of good or better lessons, good leadership from the headteacher and improvements since the last inspection all contribute to the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Palmers Cross Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV6 9DF

Thank you for the warm welcome and help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you about your school and visiting your lessons. The school council did a good job in representing your views. Thank you to the pupils who completed the questionnaire. You told us that you are happy at school, that you feel safe, that bullying is extremely rare in your school and that your headteacher sorts any problems out really quickly. We could see that you get on really well together, your behaviour is good and you look after each other. We were particularly impressed by how much your attendance has improved since the school was last inspected.

We found that Palmers Cross is a satisfactory school. We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do a number of things to improve your school. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you have opportunities in lessons to think about what you have learned, to share your ideas with others and to feed back what you have learned. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you are all given information about how well you are progressing in lessons and towards your learning targets and what you can do to improve further. We have asked that school plans are written in a way that is helpful to all the staff and the governing body, so they can check how well the school is doing. And finally, we have asked the Early Years Foundation Stage staff to make sure that assessment information is all in one place and easy to understand for your parents and carers.

You can help to improve your school by continuing to work hard and keeping up your good rates of attendance. Thank you for being so kind and courteous during our visit. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker
Her Majesty's Inspector

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.**