

Bhylls Acre Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124139
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359590
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Cox
Headteacher	John Smith
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with leaders and staff; the chair of the governing body; pupils, both formally and informally; and with some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at various documentation including the school improvement plan; policies and procedures, particularly those concerned with safeguarding; the minutes of the governing body meetings; and the school's tracking data that shows the progress that pupils are making. Ninety-nine questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by pupils in Years 3 to 6 and staff.

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

- Whether the good progress in Years 3 to 6, suggested by data, is consistent through each year group and across the range of subjects.
- Whether provision for the youngest children is good, therefore resulting in good progress for these children, or is this provision satisfactory, as suggested by the school.
- Whether pupils' attainment and progress in writing is improving in Years 3 to 6 as well as data suggests they are in Years 1 and 2.

Information about the school

The large majority of pupils at this average sized primary school are of White British heritage. The rest represent a range of backgrounds, though just over a third of these are Asian or Asian British (Indian). Although some speak English as an additional language, none of these is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Seedlings, a mother and toddler group, uses the school premises, but is managed independently and is inspected separately.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Considerable strides have been made since it was judged satisfactory less than three years ago. One of its key strengths is the support and care for individual pupils, particularly those who experience difficulties, whether academic or social. This is widely recognised by parents and carers, who say such things as, 'Every aspect of our children's well-being has been considered. The care for our children has been outstanding.' These good levels of care result in pupils feeling exceptionally safe. The school is an extremely harmonious community; the wide range of heritages represented are celebrated and therefore all get on very well together.

Further strengths are the partnership with parents and carers and the effectiveness of other partnerships in promoting pupils' learning and well-being. The responses to the questionnaire for parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive and those parents and carers spoken to were universally complimentary about their involvement in the school and the way they are listened to. Several improvements have been made as a result of consultation with parents and carers, for instance the extensive covered area on the playground for themselves and their children to use when the weather is inclement or very sunny. Other partnerships are used extremely well to provide additional expertise, for instance to support potentially vulnerable pupils. There are also a number of links to enhance pupils' learning, such as those with secondary schools, which supply specialist teaching in the arts and sport.

Pupils' progress is improving well and is now good throughout the school. This is because the quality of teaching is consistently good; all teaching observed was good or better. Progress is not quite so good in writing and mathematics as it is in reading. One of the reasons for this is that teachers do not always give pupils precise guidance on how they can improve their work and then use these next steps when they feed back to pupils on the success of their learning. These next steps are not routinely shared with parents and carers to involve them more in their children's learning.

Pupils' attainment has also improved quite markedly and is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although the school is closing the gap in attainment between reading and writing in Years 1 and 2, this gap is larger in Years 3 to 6. Although there are good programmes to develop pupils' spelling in lower year groups, these are not so well structured for older pupils. A good start has been made at using other subjects to practise writing skills, but this has not had a significant impact as it is not yet sufficiently widely used. Opportunities are also missed to widen pupils' vocabulary and add relevance to their writing by planning speaking and listening activities, such as role play, before writing activities.

The headteacher is highly effective in setting an ambitious vision for the school and this vision is shared very well by all staff and governors. One of the key reasons for the

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improvements noted in recent years is the rigour of monitoring and self-evaluation. On their questionnaires, all staff said that they are fully involved in this process, as are governors. This has resulted in clear plans for improvement and the school is well-placed to continue on the upward path.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - setting precise targets for pupils' next steps in learning that accurately match each pupils' abilities and needs
 - ensuring that teachers use these next steps when they are feeding back to pupils on the success of their learning
 - sharing these next steps consistently with pupils and their parents and carers.
 - Improve pupils' attainment in writing so that it more closely matches that in reading, particularly in Years 3 to 6, by:
 - putting in place a structured programme to improve pupils' spelling
 - ensuring that a wider range of opportunities is provided for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects
 - providing more opportunities for pupils of all ages to engage in role play and other speaking and listening activities before writing, to give their writing relevance and increase their vocabulary.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Lessons are typified by enthusiasm and enjoyment. In their questionnaires, all pupils said that they learn a lot in lessons. This is because lessons are usually lively and interesting and pupils are engaged well in their learning. For instance, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were full of excitement as they played games in which they were practising their multiplication and division skills. Those of all abilities were engaged at their level and fun was had by all. Similarly in an English lesson, pupils were thoroughly involved in their learning because of the opportunities for learning in a variety of ways. For example, paired and group discussions were used very well to enable pupils to develop their thinking and the vocabulary they planned to use in their writing.

Any difference in the performance between groups has been eliminated. The school has worked hard to ensure that all perform equally well and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, speak English as an additional language, and those of all ethnic heritages make equally good progress.

Pupils are developing into mature and sensible young people, who behave well and have a keen sense of their place in society and their associated responsibilities. They have extremely good knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, but do not always carry this through in action, by making good choices in what they eat for instance. The wide range of sporting activities is very popular and pupils take plenty of exercise. Pupils make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the school community, taking on responsibilities willingly for example. They are involved well in the local community,

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though their awareness of and involvement in the wider community are more limited. Thus, their knowledge of the range of cultures represented in the United Kingdom and further afield is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

There are a number of consistently good features in teaching. Teachers' planning sets a clear agenda for learning in lessons. Other adults are used very well to support learning. Although they often support those who need extra help, they are sometimes used very well to provide extra levels of challenge for more able pupils. Relationships are very good and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons, considerably enhanced by pupils' very good behaviour.

Teachers use their assessments very well to keep track of the progress that pupils are making. They are therefore able to identify those in danger of falling behind at an early stage. Effective strategies are then put in place to ensure that they catch up quickly. Although a start has been made at setting pupils targets for their next steps in learning, these are not yet sufficiently specific to help pupils understand how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.

The curriculum is good, with a particular strength in the range of extra-curricular activities. There is a wide range of clubs and activities, residential trips for Years 3 and 6 and a good

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variety of visitors into school and trips to places of interest, which add relevance to pupils' learning. The curriculum for art and for physical education is particularly good, largely because of specialist teaching, and results in high standards in these subjects.

Pupils and their circumstances are extremely well known by all adults. There is high quality pastoral care and all is done to ensure that barriers to learning are eliminated so that all can do as well as possible. However, some procedures and policies are not totally rigorously applied, for instance those relating to the reporting of incidents. The school is kept extremely safe and clean, as exemplified in the recent local authority award of 'loo of the year' in recognition of the hard work and commitment of the cleaning staff in ensuring exceptional cleaning standards.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

One of the key reasons for the progress that the school has made in the recent past is the enthusiasm and vision of the headteacher. In this he has been very ably supported by the senior leadership team and indeed all staff. As a parent put it, 'Staff have a strong feeling of togetherness.' The governors also offer good support and are active in finding out for themselves the strengths and areas for development of the school so that they are in a good position to challenge the school.

The school is an extremely cohesive community and there is a very good knowledge of the local community and its needs. However, because a careful analysis has been carried out, it is recognised that the promotion of cohesion of the wider community is limited. Links have been established with a school in a contrasting area in this country and there are tentative links with a school in another country, but these are in their very early stages of planning. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work and pupils and staff feel very comfortable that all are equally valued. However, insufficient work has been done to ensure that pupils are well-equipped to tackle stereotypical views.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and there is very regular training for staff and governors to ensure that procedures are up-to-date. All requirements are met and there is a good programme to ensure that best practice is sought.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's attainment on entry to the school is below that expected for their age. They make good progress during their time in the Reception class and join Year 1 with average attainment. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children respond well to the expectations of adults and they are enthusiastic, well-motivated learners. They keenly explore their learning environment, as when a child found a frozen leaf, which resulted in good opportunities for shared learning.

The adults in the Reception class have a good working knowledge of the learning and welfare requirements for children of this age. They have created a bright, vibrant learning environment which is well-resourced both indoors and outdoors. Planning for learning is thorough and is based on careful observations of what children have already achieved. Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding; the staff actively engage parents to seek their views and listen to their knowledge of their children. As one parent said, 'We have all been made to feel like part of the school family.'

The leader is enthusiastic and well able to identify strengths and areas for improvement. She makes good use of a daily review to extend and develop planning. Children's progress is monitored carefully and clear actions for improvement noted. The staff have worked hard to develop links with the many pre-school settings from which the children come to ensure their smooth transition into school.

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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

There was a well above average response to the questionnaire for parents and carers and this was overwhelmingly positive. No significant concerns were raised by parents and they were totally positive about their children's enjoyment of school and the way they are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Several added comments to their questionnaires, such as 'I have been impressed with the balance between high expectations and having fun.' and 'There is a real sense of community and all staff are approachable and obviously care for the children they teach. The children show respect and they are given responsibilities which makes them grow into mature caring young adults.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bhylls Acre 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 197 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	70	30	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	70	29	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	48	46	46	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	54	42	42	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	58	41	41	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	52	45	45	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	49	50	51	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)	41	41	50	51	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	49	45	45	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	43	52	53	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	41	51	52	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	67	68	31	31	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	69	30	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



Friday 12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bhylls Acre Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV3 8DZ

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing how hard you work, and listening to you tell us all about your school. We are not surprised that you enjoy school so much as it has improved greatly in recent years and is a good school.

These are the best things we found about your school.

You feel extremely safe in school because all adults look after you really well. The school works exceptionally closely with your parents and carers so that they can be involved in the school and help in your learning. There are outstanding partnerships with other schools and organisations which enable you to have expert teaching in the arts and sport for example. You make good progress because you are being taught well and you reach above average standards by the time you leave. Your teachers plan a wide range of interesting things for you to learn and there is an outstanding variety of after school activities. Your headteacher, staff and governors have good plans to make your school even better.

These are the things we have suggested need improving.

You could be making even faster progress in writing and mathematics if the targets that you are set were matched really well to what you already know. Your teachers could then refer to these when they mark your work and you would have a better idea of how you are doing and how you could improve. We have also suggested that you should share these targets with your parents so that they also know how well you are doing. Your standards in writing are not quite as good as in reading because some of you need to work hard at improving your spelling and you need more opportunities to practise your writing skills in other subjects. It will also help if you do some speaking work before writing.

I am sure you will continue to work hard and you can help by asking your teachers what you need to do to improve. Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie

Lead inspector

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