

Dorrington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103195
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355337
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	610
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorraine Gumbs
Headteacher	Loretta Barratt
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Thirty eight lessons or part lessons were observed and 22 teachers were seen. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment records, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. There were informal conversations with parents. The inspectors analysed 137 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others by pupils and staff.

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

- Teachers' use of assessment to plan lessons and match tasks to pupils' needs.
- Improvements to provision and pupils' performance in science.
- The effectiveness of action to improve attendance.
- Provision and progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds with Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean being the largest groups. A high proportion of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average. Their needs arise mainly from the areas of moderate learning difficulties, behavioural emotional and/or social difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is a little higher than is normally found. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than the usual joining and starting points is above average. There are 78 part-time children in the Nursery and 87 in Reception. Before and after school care are managed by a private company in partnership with the school. These areas are inspected separately.

The school experienced numerous changes in leadership and a high turnover of staff in recent years. During this period of change and instability, a significant number of pupils left the school. The current headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher in November 2007 and as the substantive headteacher in March 2008. There is now a more settled staff and pupil numbers are increasing.

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

Highly effective leadership and strong teamwork among a more settled staff has led to considerable improvements to this school since the last inspection. Dorrington Primary is now a good school. There are some outstanding elements to its work. Equality of opportunities is promoted extremely well in this inclusive community and the school has established outstanding partnerships with other organisations to enhance the curriculum and promote pupils' learning. Excellent use of external expertise has enhanced the school's drive for improvement. Pupils achieve well because of good assessment, effective teaching and an interesting curriculum. Care guidance and support contribute well to pupils' personal development.

Partnerships with parents and carers are very strong. Parents and carers recognise the school's journey of improvement. Their comments include, 'The headteacher has made all the difference', 'Dorrington is like a new school. The transformation has been amazing', 'The school has come a long way' and 'Inspirational headteacher'.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. More able pupils leaving the school, before the usual time in the recent past, had an adverse impact on attainment. By the end of Year 6 attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Positive action has been taken to improve provision in science and to arrest the recent dip in attainment. Teachers establish clear expectations and good relationships with their pupils. Lessons are well focused so pupils know what they are to learn. Assessment is used well to plan lessons and match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. Well targeted guidance and support contributes to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities. All groups of pupils are usually challenged well in their learning. Occasionally, pupils' progress in lessons is only satisfactory because teacher expectations and the pace of learning are not always high enough. Pupils' acquisition and application of more advanced skills such as independent study and research are less well developed but the school is tackling these areas. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities

Pupils are courteous, friendly and supportive. They relate well to others and show an appreciation and a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. Behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils feel safe at school and adopt healthy lifestyles. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community. Attendance levels, which are now average, have improved because of the positive action taken by the school. Pupils are well prepared for the future.

An experienced and enthusiastic headteacher provides vision and inspirational leadership. Teamwork among the staff and the commitment to continuous improvement are clearly evident. Key leaders are fully involved in the monitoring and development of their areas of

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responsibility. Self-evaluation is accurate and the findings are used well to inform improvement planning. Effective action is taken to bring about improvements where needed. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Since the last inspection, the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' progress, teaching, the curriculum and care, guidance and support have all improved from satisfactory to good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve elements of teaching by ensuring that in all lessons:
 - expectations of learning are consistently high
 - learning proceeds at a brisk pace.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to acquire and apply more advanced skills such as research and independent study.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. A significant proportion of children enter with limited language skills. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 at an early stage of learning English make good progress in acquiring the language.

Most pupils thoroughly enjoy their experiences at school and show very positive attitudes to learning. National test results, school assessments, pupils' work and the lessons seen indicate that attainment is average by the end of Year 6. Attainment in science fell to below average in 2009 but effective action has been taken to rectify the situation. Most groups of pupils make good progress, including the more able. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher than expected levels is steadily increasing.

Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because of the regular opportunities they have to discuss their learning in pairs and small groups. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils described the appearance and behaviour of characters from Shirley Hughes' book 'Dogger' well. They acquired and used interesting vocabulary in their descriptions. Pupils enjoyed reading the wide range of books available and benefitted from the focused approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils make good progress in writing and write for a range of purposes. In a high quality Year 6 lesson, pupils planned and wrote exciting detective stories. After being inspired and motivated by the teacher, they planned the beginning, described the puzzle, identified characters and suspects before solving the case. Pupils wrote imaginatively and used the new vocabulary gained such as 'alibis', 'suspicious' and 'inquisitive'. More able pupils structured simple and complex sentences into paragraphs. They used imaginative vocabulary and their spelling and punctuation were usually accurate.

Pupils make good progress in mathematics because of interesting practical activities that are well matched to their abilities and needs. They use and apply numeracy skills successfully to solve a range of problems.

In Year 6 lessons, pupils showed a good knowledge and understanding of chemical and physical changes. They made predictions and decided how to make their tests fair. Pupils worked well together as they measured materials, observed and recorded their findings accurately.

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Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. Their skills in working with others are well developed. Pupils choose healthy foods and participate enthusiastically in a range of physical exercise. They feel well cared for at school and are confident that there are always trusted adults they can turn to if they are upset, worried or need help. Pupils take on additional responsibilities such as serving on the school council, protecting and enhancing the local environment and running the school bank. They support those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for a range of appeals and charities. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives and education. Their personal and social skills are well developed and they make good progress in acquiring and applying literacy and numeracy skills.

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	3
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	2
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	3
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?

Teaching promotes enjoyment and good learning for pupils. Across the school, there are examples of outstanding practice. Teachers effectively share the purpose of lessons with the class, so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Clear indicators or success criteria are provided to guide learning and pupils use these well to assess their own progress. Interactive whiteboards are used well to illustrate key teaching points. Explanations, demonstrations and clear instructions promote learning well. Teachers provide pupils with imaginative tasks and good opportunities to solve problems in groups.

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Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding. They are challenged well and their interest is sustained because activities are well tailored to their abilities.

The curriculum promotes good academic progress for pupils and contributes well to their personal development. Provision for English and mathematics is good. Increasing the time allocated for science and extending the range of investigative work has improved pupils' attainment in this subject after a slight decline. Good links between subjects, which add meaning and relevance to learning, have been developed. The school is working on extending pupils' skills of independent study. The teaching of Spanish contributes well to pupils' language and cultural development. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the good opportunities to enrich learning, such as attending cricket, dance, film, football, mathematics and golf clubs. Good attention is given to the performing arts. A residential visit for Year 5 provides interesting outdoor activities and helps to build team and social skills.

Staff relationships with pupils and parents are of a high quality. The well-organised, safe and secure environment provided is recognised by pupils, parents and carers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully assessed. Effective programmes and support are provided by well trained teaching assistants, which impacts positively on learning and progress. Clear expectations by staff and consistently implemented procedures lead to positive behaviour. Positive steps have been taken to improve pupils' attendance. In partnership with other agencies, the school is successful in supporting pupils and their families needing additional help.

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?

The headteacher has brought considerable experience to the school and has successfully steered the improvements needed with staff and governors. Under her leadership, assistant headteachers, subject leaders and key stage leaders have been developed and empowered. Roles and responsibilities are effectively distributed. All leaders share the same vision and commitment to improvement by promoting high quality provision and positive outcomes for pupils.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on staff training and improving assessment and teaching. Senior staff are fully involved in the monitoring and development of teaching and this has led to greater consistency in practice. External expertise has made a considerable impact on improving assessment and the training of special educational needs assistants.

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Governors make a valuable contribution to the school's effectiveness and the improvements. They are supportive and provide constructive challenge in order to hold the school to account. Leaders and governors have been particularly effective in recruiting high quality staff. Good emphasis is placed on safeguarding. Policies and practice to protect and safeguard children are of a good quality. The school's well developed quality assurance and risk assessment systems are effectively monitored and evaluated and have resulted in clear improvements. All staff are well trained in this area and safe practices are promoted well through the curriculum.

Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well and the staff strive to ensure that all groups of pupils do as well as they can. All groups of pupils from different backgrounds and cultures thrive in the school's harmonious community and this is a clear strength at Dorrington. The school has developed a good understanding of the changing community it serves and promotes community cohesion well. There are very productive partnerships with local schools where good practice is consistently shared. Pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of wider global communities through a developing partnership with schools in Barcelona.

A very positive partnership has been formed with parents and carers and the school strives to meet and exceed their needs. There are numerous classes and workshops provided to help parents to support their children's learning. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the improvements made.

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	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	1
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

Effective leadership and good planning has brought about good improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Successful induction arrangements and the very effective partnership with parents and carers help children to settle quickly. They

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make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the positive relationships between adults and children and the good attention to care and welfare. Children feel safe and secure and grow in confidence. Behaviour and relationships are positive.

Assessment information is used well to plan teaching and learning. An interesting range of learning activities is provided in and out of the classroom. Children thoroughly enjoy learning and make good progress. Children are well taught and there is an effective blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. They have good opportunities to explore, be creative and to work independently. Adults successfully integrate language into many activities so that children make good progress in speaking and listening. The teaching of letters and sounds is effective and children make good gains in acquiring and practising early writing skills. Children's transition from Reception to Year 1 is smooth and seamless.

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

Nearly a quarter of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Almost all parents and carers who returned them are happy with their child's experience at the school. They are pleased with their child's sense of enjoyment, safety in school, the quality of teaching, information about their child's progress, leadership and management and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The inspection team supports these positive views. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about the school taking account of their suggestions and concerns and the help the school gives in helping parents to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that school leaders and governors are highly effective in meeting the needs of parents, carers and the local community. The school has made considerable improvements in building its partnerships with its parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dorrington 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 610 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	52	66	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	50	65	47	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	41	74	54	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	34	79	58	6	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	48	35	82	60	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	32	81	59	9	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	34	83	61	6	4	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)	39	28	83	61	6	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	31	79	58	7	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	34	79	58	6	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	29	79	58	10	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	37	77	56	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	40	78	57	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.



23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dorrington Primary School, Perry Barr, B42 1QR

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. There have been good improvements to your school recently. It is now a good school. There are some outstanding features.

These are the school's main strengths:

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school is a very pleasant place to learn in, where all pupils have equal chances to do as well as they can.

You thoroughly enjoy the activities provided.

You are making good progress because of the good teaching.

A good range of learning activities is provided including clubs and visits.

You get on well with each other and your behaviour is good.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.

You feel safe at school because teachers and other adults take care of you and provide good guidance and support.

You make positive contributions to the school and to the local community.

There are excellent partnerships with parents and other organisations.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed by your headteacher and she receives strong support from other senior staff.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do two things to improve the school:

We have asked the teachers to expect more from you and ensure that the lesson moves on at a good pace. You can help by continuing to do your best.

Teachers should provide more opportunities for you to learn and practise advanced skills such as research and independent study.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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