

Old Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103952
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355496
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Jenny Batelen

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	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pauline Riley
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Fenby
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons and 8 teaching staff. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke to parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from staff, pupils and 54 parents and carers.

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

- the progress of pupils throughout the school, particularly in English and mathematics
- the consistency of teaching and learning across the school and how this contributes to the achievement of the pupils
- how leaders and managers in the school enable staff and pupils to do their best, especially since the arrival of a new headteacher.

Information about the school

Old Hill is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion known to be entitled to free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average, but rising. The breakfast club is managed by the governing body. The school has achieved Healthy Schools Status. The new headteacher joined the school at the beginning of the new school year.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Old Hill is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. Pupils behave well around school, are confident and welcoming to visitors and speak of how much they enjoy school, especially the opportunities for physical development and using the information communication technology (ICT) suite. Parents and carers are positive about how their children settle and feel safe, reflected in such comments as, 'Staff have been welcoming and helpful in helping my children to feel happy, secure and involved.'

Leaders and managers are highly focused on raising achievement. The new headteacher has galvanised staff and governors with a clear mandate for developing the school. Recent school self-evaluation is accurate and, in a very short time, the headteacher has gained a clear and accurate picture of the school. This, coupled with the rising standards in mathematics and some improvement in reading, means that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Children enter school with skill levels below and well below those expected, particularly in literacy. Progress for pupils is satisfactory. They make expected progress in mathematics and reading, but assessment throughout the school is not yet moderated and, as a result, there are variations in its accuracy, particularly in writing. Tracking of every pupil is now in place, with clear strategies to ensure that each individual is helped to achieve their best. Some pupils' progress is not helped by poor attendance. There have however been improvements in attendance because of good monitoring, the introduction of a weekly class attendance award and the appointment of a Parent Support Advisor, but still too many parents and carers do not appreciate the importance of prompt and regular attendance at school for their children. There are not yet enough opportunities for parents and carers to fully engage in the life of the school.

Children have a secure start to school because of good induction procedures. Teaching is satisfactory. Where it is good, pupils are actively involved and engaged with the task, use previous learning to support their current work and are able to assess how well they have done and what they must do to improve. Where teaching is satisfactory teachers work hard, but do not ensure that their pupils work hard throughout the lesson as too much time is spent listening to their teacher and there is not always enough challenge in the tasks. Often, the subject matter of the lesson does not keep the boys' interest, particularly in English lessons. Marking, although thorough, does not consistently help pupils understand how they can improve their work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by improving the consistency of teaching and learning so that it is good throughout the school by:

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- consistently using accurate assessment to ensure all pupils are challenged at the appropriate level
- ensuring that the subject matter fully engages boys, particularly in English
- introducing a marking policy that will help pupils improve their work.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels promote pupils' high quality learning by:
 - undertaking rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning
 - providing clear direction to teachers on how to improve their practice.
- Involve parents and carers more in their children's learning by:
 - encouraging prompt and regular attendance
 - providing opportunities for parents and carers to engage with and understand how to support their children in school.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and is improving strongly. At the end of Key Stage 2 overall attainment is still below national averages, but is improving, particularly in mathematics which is now closer in line with the national figure. Most groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make similar progress. Pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals make better progress than their peers, because of careful monitoring. In some classes girls make better progress than boys, particularly in English. Pupils enjoy most of their lessons, particularly mathematics, and as a result persevere at their tasks and respond well to challenges. However, sometimes they are not fully involved, lose concentration and, for a small minority of pupils, their behaviour then becomes an obstacle to their learning.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They have a range of safety training and are particularly confident about e-safety. They know that adults in school will help them and feel that behaviour is good with no bullying. The Healthy School status reflects the pupils' good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Healthier snacks have been introduced in the breakfast club, which the pupils appreciate. The school council has led improvements to the school playground, which now includes an all-weather football/basketball pitch. The school is a strong part of the local community and participates in local events, such as the Sandwell Spring Clean. Pupils develop business skills through competitions, moneymaking opportunities, fundraising for charities and also for residential trips. Pupils work well together and make good use of information communication technology across a range of subjects. Most pupils understand the importance of good attendance and speak with enthusiasm of the weekly attendance award. As a result they are satisfactorily prepared for their future education. There are some opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and on the wider world and to experience cultural events and activities, but these are not yet a fully established and routine part of school life. Similarly, pupils' development of personal and emotional skills, through such activities as circle time, is inconsistent across the school.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Where teaching is good, activities are planned that give appropriate challenge, especially to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Questioning enables pupils to think about their work and solve problems. Thematic work means that pupils are able to make connections across the subject areas, such as in the 'Stranded' theme in Year 6 where the history of boats links with a sailing trip around the world and a debate on the benefits or not of such a trip. However, where assessment is not consistent and accurate, planning focuses on the activities rather than the outcomes for pupils and links across the curriculum are not made. Focused support for teaching and learning is improving teaching skills across the school.

There are many enrichment opportunities for pupils, particularly in sport and some music, but the school does not yet enable the pupils to participate in a full range of cultural and artistic opportunities.

Pastoral support for pupils is good. Support for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is established and contributes to their development, especially in improving their behaviour. Other adults in the classrooms make a valuable contribution to the learning and progress of all pupils, particularly when supporting those with particular learning and/or behavioural needs. The school works with other agencies,

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although this is not sufficiently developed to ensure that discussion is shared amongst all relevant professionals.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff are empowered to carry out their roles and responsibilities as part of a team. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been limited and at times not accurate, but a more rigorous plan is in place; weaknesses in teaching and learning are being highlighted and relevant support put in place.

Governors have a good understanding of their role in challenging the school, but have previously relied too much on information given by the headteacher to be able to provide better than satisfactory challenge on the achievement of the pupils and in monitoring provision. Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. Safeguarding is regularly reviewed by members of the governing body with appropriate experience, and they have recently implemented a new on-site security system.

The school has precise information about the different groups of pupils and measures the performance of each group, such as attendance statistics, in detail. There is a good understanding, particularly by governors, of the context of the school and this leads to good cohesion within the school and the local community. There are currently fewer opportunities to develop the pupils' understanding of the national and international communities.

The school works closely with the local cluster of schools to extend the opportunities for pupils, especially in sport. The views of parents, carers and pupils are sought on a regular basis and there are some strategies in place to help parents support their children's learning, but these are not always well supported.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery with skill levels that are below those expected for their age and sometimes well below. They make satisfactory progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning and enter Key Stage 1 with below average and sometimes well below average attainment, particularly in literacy skills, calculating and their understanding of shape, space and measures.

Parents and carers are made to feel welcome and children settle quickly. 'My daughter just started here and she wants to come every day as she loves school. I am happy...', is a representative comment from a parent. The wide range of activities, both adult-led and child-initiated, in the Nursery is not so apparent in the Reception class. There is a well-equipped outside area, but it is not possible for this to be used in all weathers and Reception children cannot access it freely. Ongoing assessments help staff plan for further learning and respond to children's interests, and there is a focus on ensuring that the majority of these are from child-initiated activities. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. There are clear plans in place for developments, including greater use of the outside area, in order to improve outcomes for all children.

Children work and play well together. They enjoy their learning and are keen to talk to adults about their play with shapes as part of the whole school Numeracy week. Drinking water is freely available and children are encouraged to eat healthily and are given plenty of opportunities for physical activities both inside and outside. Children are kept safe and helped to understand how to keep themselves safe. The transition to Year 1 is well planned to give children confidence about this move.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of inspection questionnaires returned is similar to that found in other inspection of primary schools. Parents and carers are supportive of the school and their responses mainly positive. A few comments identified areas of concern, such as the way behaviour is managed and the school taking note of parent and carer concerns. Inspection evidence suggests that the school has strategies to ensure the satisfactory behaviour of all pupils and that these have recently been strengthened. Parents and carers have good opportunities to speak to staff and express their views but the school acknowledges that more opportunities to involve parents in the life of the school are needed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Old Hill 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	57	22	41	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	56	22	41	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	56	22	41	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	44	24	44	4	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	46	27	50	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	47	22	42	4	8	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	46	27	50	1	2	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)	17	31	30	56	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	39	28	52	3	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	43	23	43	4	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	42	28	53	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	21	39	28	52	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	63	17	31	1	2	1	2

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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Hill Primary School, Cradley Heath, B64 6DR

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned questionnaires about your school. We enjoyed seeing your lessons and talking to you. Your school is satisfactory, but there are some good things about it.

You behave well around school, look after each other and say how much you enjoy school and the sporting activities you take part in.

All the adults in the school care a lot about you and make sure that you are safe and well supported.

You know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.

We have asked your school to do certain things to make it better and help you to make good progress. These are:

- to expect higher standards from you in all subjects by giving you work that is suited to what you can do, interests all of you and marking your work to show how you can do better
- for all the leaders in the school to make sure they know how well you are doing and quickly make any improvements that are necessary
- to involve your parents and carers more in what you do, especially in making sure that you come to school regularly and punctually.

You can help by making sure you know the learning objective for each lesson and checking for yourself whether your work is good enough to achieve the objective. In particular, you can make a tremendous difference by being in school everyday, unless you are ill.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen
Lead inspector

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