

# Welsh House Farm Community School and Special Needs Resources Base

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103295
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355357
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Carnaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Jay and Barbara Boey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caroline Cowan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Welsh House Farm Road Birmingham B32 2NG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons and 12 teachers and held meetings with staff, pupils and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its policies, assessments and other documents, including 52 parental questionnaires.

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

- Whether all assessment information from 2010 confirms improvements in attainment.
- If there are significant variations in achievement between different groups of pupils.
- Whether pupils' community involvement and experience is limited to the immediate school locality.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Three quarters of its pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this is very high. The school has a larger than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups; these pupils are from varied backgrounds but the largest group is from Black or Black British African backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is approximately double the national average. With a dedicated special needs resource base managed by the school, there is a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mostly with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is much larger than average. The school has a very high turnover of pupils.

**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 and improving school. Some of its work is outstanding. The headteacher's passion and commitment to all pupils is widely shared by staff. Their cohesive approach has been very successful in mitigating the difficulties posed by the very high turnover of pupils and the variety of challenges pupils bring to school. The outstanding special needs resource base provides a well of expertise to assist all pupils experiencing barriers to learning. Those who attend the base make excellent progress.

Progress for all other groups of pupils is good and they all have excellent opportunities to be fully included in every aspect of school life. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are much lower than those expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment has been close to the national average for the last two years. Given the school's context, this is impressive and represents good achievement for all groups.

Improved monitoring has ensured better quality teaching and learning, but a few inconsistencies remain due to a lack of precision in evaluating lessons. Areas for improvement are not always identified clearly and followed up rigorously. Overall, teaching quality is good so that pupils learn well. Pupils behave well and relate warmly to one another and adults. The curriculum has links between subjects to provide interesting, relevant learning experiences for all. However, there are few links with schools in different environments to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils' personal development is good, and they say they feel safe in all circumstances, whether at school, in transit to it or on the internet.

All staff make it their business to know and support each pupil to the maximum. Outstanding care, guidance and support help many pupils overcome challenging circumstances and to succeed in education. Pupils enjoy school and feel very secure. Parents and carers are also extremely positive about their children's experiences, recognising school for the haven that it is. One mother wrote she was, 'truly pleased and satisfied with Welsh Farm. I couldn't have chosen a better school, it's more than a school it's my child's second home.' Not all parents and carers recognise the importance of their children attending regularly and attendance remains average, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

The school has very good systems to ensure it appraises its effectiveness accurately, leading to plans that clearly reflect what needs to be done in future. Leaders' good use of assessment data identifies any variations in outcomes for pupils and the school is quick to take action to help to narrow the gap. Concerted actions since the previous inspection have led to numerous improvements, including in the quality of teaching and care, guidance and support, and have led to higher achievement. Based on this strong track record, the school's capacity for improvement in the future is good.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop closer links with schools in contrasting environments to promote pupils' understanding of the wider world.
- Build on good self-evaluation practice to improve the precision of lesson observations and provide constructive feedback to staff which clearly identifies how to further improve their teaching.
- Promote high expectations of attendance to all families to raise attendance from average to above average.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. They have a variety of needs and many face significant barriers to learning, particularly in their early language and literacy skills. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. This good progress continues and attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is close to the national average.

Pupils make good progress because teaching is good and the stimulating curriculum engages their interest. With the good role model of their teachers, pupils are enthusiastic learners who enjoy lessons and participate fully in activities. In the resource base, very high status is given to social training. Pupils are expected to show respect and to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Their behaviour is outstanding, a tribute to their trust in the staff. Due to the care they receive, they gain in confidence and learn rapidly. In an outstanding lesson in the special needs resource base, all staff contributed to providing a highly supportive, peaceful environment that was fully conducive to learning. The emphasis was on courtesy and respect for others. In these circumstances, pupils thrived, making very rapid progress in developing addition and subtraction skills. Progress of all groups of pupils is good, including those who start at different times of the year. This is due to the quality of support and the early and accurate identification of pupils who would benefit from additional help. This contributes to pupils' consistently good achievement.

Pupils behave well in class and are eager to learn so there are few impediments to their progress. They report very little bullying and no racism. Outside and around school they act sensibly and are considerate of others. They are very courteous to visitors. Pupils have a good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of exercise and the significance of a balanced diet. They participate enthusiastically in exercise, including physical education lessons.

Older pupils act as prefects and are trained to help younger ones to improve their vocabulary. The school council is a lively forum that has brought about some positive changes to playtime activities. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. They visit the elderly and support various charities, including the long-term sponsorship of a pupil in a Gambian school. Pupils develop satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills and good social skills which contribute to their good preparation for secondary education.

The positive ethos of the school is a good testament to pupils' keen sense of right and wrong. They work well in pairs or groups, supporting each others' learning. Pupils of different ethnicities get on well together and respect other cultures. They have produced

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good display work, for example on the Chinese Cinderella story, the Welsh dragon legend and the 'spider weaver' story from Ghana.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

The curriculum is well planned to suit the varying needs and interests of the pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are emphasised in different subjects; for example, in a Year 1 physical education lesson pupils counted the objects as they collected in the equipment. Provision to improve reading, writing, speaking and listening is very good, with small group work and with individual pupils. Good attention is paid to enhancing pupils' social skills through opportunities to work in pairs and larger groups. Older pupils learn German with staff from a neighbouring secondary school. Year 4 pupils all learn to play the clarinet and there are opportunities to learn to play other musical instruments. Teachers plan their class's curriculum by timetabling subjects to fit in with topic work. There is a variety of enrichment activities, such as visits to the locality, residential experiences and 'mad science'. However, after school sporting activities are limited at present.

Lessons are typified by a positive atmosphere and teachers' good focus on learning objectives. They are usually well planned to offer varied, interesting activities. Year 6 pupils confirmed that all their lessons were fun, even when the topic was potentially boring. Planning provides appropriate challenge and support to all, promoting excellent inclusion. To this end, capable teaching assistants are well deployed to where their talents

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can be best utilised, playing a significant part in pupils' good learning. Pupils are firmly but kindly managed and relationships in classrooms are constructive and positive. There is little off-task behaviour, which allows all pupils to get on and work productively. Occasionally lessons are a little slow paced and teaching can be repetitious. However, other lessons can be exceptional in their perfect pitching of tasks to pupils' individual needs. In the resource base staff know the pupils well and planning has a very positive impact on learning; it takes into account the need for integration with pupils of a similar age in the main school.

Regular assessment provides the school with a wealth of data and this is perceptively analysed. When pupils' progress slips, the school is quick to provide targeted support that invariably gets pupils quickly back on track. Marking is supportive and very thorough, offering sound advice, praise, and regular feedback on progress. Pupils are proud of their personal targets, developed with their teachers, which provide good guidance on what needs to be improved.

The school strongly emphasises the care, guidance and support of pupils. Staff create a pleasant learning environment so pupils want to come to school and work hard. Transition arrangements between areas of the school are carefully organised and there are strong links with the local secondary schools, some of whose staff visit to talk to pupils. Those with moderate learning difficulties are very well catered for, with individual sessions for reading recovery and sight vocabulary. Excellent tracking systems make it easy to chart improvements and plan future activities. The school works very hard to improve attendance, but the absence of a few pupils brings down the overall figure. Good induction procedures for pupils who join during the school year help them to settle quickly. Special provision is made for those who speak English as an additional language so they can access the curriculum as soon as possible.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher's powerful commitment to pupils and families galvanises the enthusiasm and ambition of staff. Leadership and management of the school are widely shared. Extensive consultation across all staff and governors developed relevant and well thought-through plans that address key areas for improvement and provide a good template for the future. Effective monitoring has identified where teaching needs improvement. Work on improving teachers' marking and organisation has been particularly effective. Monitoring of teaching has been thorough but sometimes lacks sharpness to improve practice, so some inconsistencies in classroom practice remain. Teachers are not always

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provided with precise feedback which identifies which aspects require further improvement. Excellent provision for pupils facing barriers to learning ensures outstanding equality of opportunity and no discrimination. For example, thorough continuing assessment of each individual ensures that any learning or other issues that arise are quickly acted upon by the school.

The leadership and management of the resource base are outstanding. Staff are encouraged to work as a team and to assess pupils' progress regularly. Excellent tracking systems indicate the progress of the pupils in the centre is outstanding.

The governing body brings commitment and a range of good skills to its work. Efficient management of the school's finances ensure the school provides good value for money. The governing body has improved its monitoring, gains independent views of the school's strengths and areas for development and offers robust challenge. For example, it initiated improvements in the school's child protection procedures, leading to all staff receiving relevant training. The governing body monitors safeguarding arrangements closely and ensures the school provides a very safe physical environment. Very effective monitoring and a close knowledge of pupils' personal circumstances mean that nurture for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is very good. Policies are up to date and regularly reviewed.

The school has developed very constructive links with parents and carers and works well to keep everybody fully informed, for example through the fortnightly newsletter, published in numerous languages. The school is open at the start and end of day to informal contacts and many staff provide support to parents and carers who may be experiencing difficulties. The governing body's decision to fund a family liaison worker and initiatives, such as bringing into school a local authority housing officer, have been successful in involving many parents and carers who had hitherto proved hard to engage.

Strong partnerships with local authority agencies, such as social services, are effective in promoting pupils' safety and health, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Partnerships support the full inclusion of all pupils in school life and pupils' good personal development. Effective links with local secondary schools extend the curriculum in areas like sport and modern foreign languages and assist pupils' transfer to the next stage of their education.

The school uses its deep understanding of its local context to promote community cohesion satisfactorily, both within the school and locally. Significant partnerships with local groups and agencies enable the school to function very harmoniously. The school raises funds regularly for a child in the Gambia, and all pupils follow her progress keenly, but it lacks other links with communities in contrasting localities in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children understand and speak little English and display low levels of personal development when they enter the Nursery. Good provision in both year groups makes a rapid impact. A few weeks after starting school, Nursery children are able to choose activities independently and settle down to work and play together very well. Good teaching makes the most of every opportunity to promote children's understanding and knowledge. For example, two Nursery children at the start of each day accompany the teaching assistant to check on potential risks in the outside area and report back to the class on what they need to be aware of, such as wrapping up warmly against the cold.

Teachers and teaching assistants work cohesively to provide interesting experiences in very safe surroundings. The mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities is well balanced and carefully adjusted as children settle in school and become more confident. Pleasant accommodation and adequate equipment provide varied activities and experiences for all, such as when Nursery children hunted high and low for pumpkins before producing predominantly orange paintings representing the fruit. The outdoor area is safe and extensive but not very stimulating and too spread out to allow children to flow freely from indoor to outdoor activities.

Good leadership and management ensure activities are keenly monitored and teaching is improved which, in turn, have led to children's good progress. Positive links with home and the on-site private play-school ensure a smooth transition into the Nursery for most children. Children start Year 1 with below average attainment but it is improving every year. Children develop very good learning habits and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Their achievement is good.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

All questions in the inspection survey gained at least 90% approval from parents and carers. All rated leadership and management as effective and teaching as good. A few disagreed that the school meets their children's particular needs but evidence from the inspection indicates that the school provides excellent care and possesses a close knowledge of each pupil's requirements.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Welsh House Farm Community School and Special Needs Resources Base 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	69	15	29	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	52	24	46	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	62	18	35	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	54	21	40	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	50	26	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	56	22	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	44	26	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)	25	48	25	48	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	48	20	38	4	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	50	22	42	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	50	25	48	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	56	23	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	63	17	33	2	4	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Welsh House Farm Community School and Special Needs Resources Base, Birmingham, B32 2NG**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We find that this is a good school and it cares for you exceptionally well. We were pleased to see you are so happy and congratulate you on your good behaviour. Keep it up! We were most impressed with the excellent work done in the resource base and the outstanding behaviour and progress of the pupils who go there.

Your enthusiasm and the good teaching help you to make good progress. The powerful help given to anyone having difficulty ensures that you all achieve well and your attainment by the end of Year 6 is similar to that of many pupils in other schools in the country. None of these good things could happen without the headteacher's good leadership and the strong involvement of all staff. They work very well as a team to give everyone every chance to grow, learn and develop.

The school has agreed to improve the following areas.

Staff will provide better chances for you to link with other schools in different parts of the country and the world.

Leaders are going to check up on teaching more thoroughly so that even more lessons are good.

The school will explain to families the importance of coming to school every day, to raise attendance. You can all help, by coming to school on every day that you are fit and well.

Once again, thank you for all your help. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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