

Widney Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104054
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	355513
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Hinds

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Rogers
Headteacher	Kathryn Unsworth
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed seven teachers, while visiting 16 lessons. Five of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documentation, monitoring and assessment information, plans for improvement, important policies and pupils' work. The inspection team also looked at 94 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- It considered the learning and progress of more able pupils in writing and in mathematics.
- It examined how independent pupils are as learners, including pupils in the resourced base provision.
- It assessed how effective the curriculum is in providing relevant and motivating opportunities for pupils to write.
- It explored how well leaders, at all levels, monitor and evaluate the impact of improvement work.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The majority of pupils are White British, whilst a small minority are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with a below average proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above. Most pupils with a statement of special educational needs have specific learning difficulties. These pupils are supported by a specifically resourced provision for special educational needs that is managed by the school. The school has a number of awards including Healthy School status and Activemark.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils feel safe, secure and are well cared for, because the school is a welcoming and harmonious community. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and take their responsibilities to help around school seriously. Pupils enjoy school, reflected in their high attendance. Pupils behave well and enthusiastically engage in all the opportunities the school offers. Parents and carers are supportive, and are pleased with almost all aspects of the school. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'The family atmosphere is lovely and every child is made to feel special.'

The school has been successful in improving pupils' progress in mathematics. Achievement in this subject, as well as in reading, is satisfactory. This upward trend, illustrates the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' progress in writing, and progress for more able pupils, while broadly satisfactory, is more variable. Older pupils often make good progress due to very effective teaching, in both literacy and mathematics. The school has worked hard to secure more effective provision, for example the recent setting for ability in mathematics, across Year 4 and 5 enables teachers to ensure that work is accurately matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, and those pupils who attend the resourced base provision often make good progress. This is because the resourced base is well led and managed, with specialist staff and other professionals who support pupils' learning and personal development well.

While there were some good or better lessons observed, teaching is satisfactory, which means pupils make satisfactory progress across the key stage. The profile of teaching is improving due to the implementation of improvement strategies, such as coaching and paired observations, and the identification of learning outcomes and how pupils can assess the extent of their success. However, there are too many strategies designed to help pupils understand how well they are learning, leading to some confusion, and this is compounded by inconsistencies in how well these are applied in lessons. This limits their impact on pupils' progress and learning. Teachers do not always use their accurate assessments to ensure that activities are matched to pupils' abilities, resulting in slower progress. Opportunities for collaborative learning and independent research are often missed, which limits some pupils' engagement in their learning.

Senior leaders have brought about several improvements following an honest and sound self-evaluation of the school's performance, and staff have enthusiastically taken on board these new initiatives. Assessment procedures are accurate but information is not always analysed in sufficient depth to track pupils' progress over time or to set challenging targets. Both the governing body and middle leaders have started to monitor the work of the school. However, their roles are underdeveloped as they are not sufficiently involved in analysing the impact of actions on pupil outcomes and how the school performs

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compared to others. When writing strategic plans, the links between priorities are not clear enough and it is not always apparent how the school will know when it has achieved its priorities, because it is difficult to measure progress towards them.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' achievement particularly in writing and for more able pupils by:
- setting clear and specific targets to identify what pupils must improve to make increased progress in lessons
 - improving the use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged and that work is matched to all pupils' capabilities
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and independently, and to research their work, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
- improving the system for tracking pupils' progress and attainment, so that rates of progress made by different groups each year and across the key stage are precisely recorded in order to set challenging targets to accelerate progress
 - tightening up improvement planning, so that there are clear links between identified priorities and measurable success criteria based on pupil outcomes
 - improving governance in their monitoring and evaluation role so that they can hold the school to account more
 - involving middle leaders in target setting and the analysis of performance data in order to bring about more rapid improvements in teaching and increase the impact of curriculum initiatives.

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

Pupils often enter Year 3 with skills above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 mathematics and reading are above average, with writing being average. Pupils' learning in lessons is satisfactory overall and good in Years 5 and 6. In these lessons work is stimulating and challenging. Teachers ask questions to continually assess pupils' current understanding, to pitch the work at a challenging level, and provide opportunities for pupils to work together, building up skills systematically. For example, in one lesson observed, the teacher provided a motivating video clip of a barrier reef, following this up with searching questions, to gain an appreciation of their understanding. This in turn created great curiosity and pupils spontaneously began to ask their own probing questions. However, this is not achieved consistently in lessons across the school, which is affecting pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, despite there being more opportunities to write for a purpose.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils in the resourced base provision, make similar progress to their peers in all subjects because individual specialised provision is well-targeted to develop basic skills and to raise their self-esteem

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and confidence. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and are keen to take part in the many extra-curricular sports and activity clubs. Pupils say they are confident that their teachers listen to any concerns they raise and take appropriate action. For example, pupils appreciate the 'peg bag' system where they post any worries and ideas they may have. Pupils contribute well to the school and beyond. For example, school councillors are actively involved in decision making, from helping to revise the behaviour policy, to setting up the 'snack attack', healthy tuck shop. Pupils relish helping others and have raised significant amounts of funds for many charities.

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	2
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	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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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?

Senior leaders have introduced a number of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and they have been successful in ensuring that teachers provide quality feedback in their marking. Target-setting is more variable, however. Teaching, although satisfactory, is improving. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 lesson, pupils were using their mathematical and literacy skills in a variety of practical and written tasks; they were working independently and cooperatively in groups; pupils were suitably challenged because the activities were well matched to all abilities. In satisfactory lessons, not all pupils understand what they are expected to learn, because they become confused by too many targets and/or steps to success. Although there are two ICT suites which are well

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used by the pupils, there are missed opportunities for pupils to research their work using ICT within lessons.

The curriculum is enriched well through a good range of extra-curricular activities. However, although the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to write creatively, often using the outdoor area for drama, these activities and the use of the 'Forest school' in Year 3 are underdeveloped. The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. There are strong links with outside agencies, whose expertise is well used to target support, especially for those pupils who are potentially vulnerable. Pupils' needs are quickly assessed and their individual learning plans enable them to make satisfactory progress towards their targets. This good provision has a significant impact on pupils' emotional well-being and confidence, enabling them to be fully included in all aspects of school life.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team is well motivated to seek further improvement, and has created a whole school commitment to improve pupil outcomes. Staff morale is high, which ensures that recent successes continue to be built upon. Improvement strategies are focused on the right priorities, but some are not at an effective stage of development. Although there are accurate assessments, these are not precise enough to monitor exactly what progress pupils make, in order to set more challenging targets. Improvement planning does not make explicit links between priorities for improvement and the impact on pupils' achievement, making progress difficult to measure. Similarly, middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in target setting, and using assessment data to measure impact.

There are highly positive relationships with the majority of parents and carers and communication is much improved. Partnerships are strong, where several linked specialist colleges enhance provision, for example through sporting activities, and workshops for gifted and talented pupils. Governance is satisfactory and the governing body engages constructively with parents and carers and staff. Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding procedures. However, despite being involved in some aspects of monitoring, governors do not systematically evaluate the school's performance or compare this to national norms, and as a consequence do not hold senior leaders sufficiently to account. Community cohesion is good at a local level, with developing links globally, but work at a national level is at an early stage of promotion. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily. However, more able pupils are not always challenged enough.

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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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers was above average. Parents and carers commend the provision and feel well informed. All of those who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children's experience of school is a happy one. The inspection findings endorse most of their views. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour. The inspection finds that current systems to encourage and support good behaviour are effective and the school works hard to cater for individual needs. Although most parents believe that their child is making enough progress, inspectors find that progress in writing and for more able pupils, is not as good as it could be.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Widney Junior 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	54	42	45	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	60	38	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	40	49	52	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	51	40	43	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	47	46	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	46	46	49	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	39	50	53	6	6	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)	38	40	50	53	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	44	49	52	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	41	45	48	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	30	58	62	4	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	43	46	46	49	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	49	45	48	3	3	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Widney Junior School, Solihull, B91 3LQ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school and for telling us your views. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do. In your questionnaires, you say you enjoy school; that adults are interested in your views; but sometimes the behaviour of a few lets the school down. Your teachers are working hard to ensure that this doesn't happen. The inspectors judge your school to be satisfactory. Here are some of the things it does well.

Your attendance is outstanding.

Your behaviour is good.

Your understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle is good.

You get involved in helping around the school and in the wider community.

Adults make sure you are safe in and around school.

Miss Unsworth, the staff and governors are finding ways to help you do better

We have asked your school to do the following things to improve.

Ensure that all the good ways of showing you how to improve your learning are made clearer so that you know what you need to do to be successful.

Make sure that all your teachers match work to your abilities so that you make good or better progress.

Provide more opportunities for you to work together, and to explore and find things out for yourselves, including using computers more.

Use a better method of tracking your progress, so that you can have challenging targets to reach and use this to plan for school improvement.

Ensure that all leaders, including the governing body, are more involved in checking how well the school is doing compared to similar schools.

All of you can help your school improve further by continuing to have excellent attendance and trying your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Lead inspector

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