

Withymoor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103809
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	355466
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heather Hughes
Headteacher	Gill Harper
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 26 lessons and observed 17 teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle managers, and a group of parents and carers. Inspectors spoke to three groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, key policy documents, assessment information, minutes of the governing body meetings and pupils' books. In addition, 112 responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire were received and analysed, together with questionnaire responses from staff and 101 pupils from Key Stage 2.

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

- How well teaching and the use of assessment contribute to meeting the learning needs of the full range of abilities within a class including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of strategies to promote good attendance.
- Whether the curriculum sufficiently promotes all aspects of personal development and basic skills.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. There is a specialist language unit, managed by Dudley local authority, which has eight places for pupils in Key Stage 1 with speech and language needs. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. A very small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes. Withymoor Playgroup and a parent and toddler group share the same site and are privately run by the community association. In addition, there is before- and after-school provision in the Stay and Play club which uses the community facilities but is run by its own management committee.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which has improved considerably since its last inspection. Pupils' achievement, all aspects of provision and the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage are all now good. Through her outstanding leadership, the headteacher has communicated clear, ambitious expectations to staff of what can be achieved. They have responded well, implementing carefully thought out plans which tell them exactly how they will know if they have been successful. Other senior and middle leaders and the governing body have become increasingly involved in evaluating the school's work and planning for improvement. School self-evaluation is thorough and involves key partners' views, including those of parents and carers. As a result, leaders have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's capacity to improve further is, therefore, good.

Providing good care, guidance and support is central to the work of the school. The small, speech and language unit makes good provision and its pupils are well integrated into the school community. From the very first contact, the school works hard to establish positive relationships with parents and carers. They find the school accessible, and are confident that the staff will act upon any concerns they have. A comment by one parent sums up what inspectors found, 'The teachers are approachable and helpful when I need any information about progress. The school has a nice, safe atmosphere.' Parents, carers and pupils agree overwhelmingly with the statement in the inspection questionnaire that school keeps pupils safe. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe and are able to share their knowledge and understanding of the dangers of the internet. Bullying is rare and when it does occur, staff are quick to respond. Relationships throughout the school are based on mutual respect. Pupils feel that staff listen to their concerns and would be quick to help if they were in difficulties. Many pupils take on responsibilities within school willingly and play a constructive role in making the school a better place. However, opportunities within the curriculum to take action to improve the wider community are limited. Pupils' cultural development is only satisfactory because pupils have few opportunities to engage with groups beyond the immediate school locality.

Withymoor Pre-School and the Reception staff work very well together to provide a secure foundation for further achievement. The quality of provision throughout is good so that by the end of Reception, children are showing skills and abilities beyond those expected for their age. There are still a few children who find it difficult to focus on a task without adult support, particularly when the task has not been structured well enough to promote independent learning or is not linked to the skills which children have previously learnt and need to practise.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the youngest children are consistently supported to develop their interests, concentration and perseverance by:
 - providing appropriately structured activities which children can explore independently
 - linking activities to their previous learning so they can practise their skills.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local and wider community so that their understanding and awareness of other cultures and backgrounds are enhanced.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When children enter Reception, they have the skills and abilities which are expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the school so that attainment is above average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6. Attainment has improved in English and mathematics since the last inspection. The greatest improvement has been in writing across all years. Boys and girls make good progress. The achievement of boys in English has increased because the school has successfully introduced strategies to engage them in reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those from the speech and language unit, make good progress, and some make outstanding progress by the time they reach Year 6. This is because activities are tailored to their individual needs so that they quickly acquire the basic skills necessary to learn successfully. The very few pupils at an early stage of learning English benefit greatly from the concerted support of staff and peers to develop spoken English. The quality of learning in lessons is good because pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. It is particularly strong where the pace is fast and pupils are motivated to tackle challenging and interesting tasks. This was the case during the inspection in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on area and perimeter where the quality of learning was outstanding. Excellently prepared resources captivated pupils' interest. Fast pace moved pupils through a set of increasingly challenging problems. They rose to the challenges, sustaining interest very well and made excellent progress in their learning. Occasionally, the quality of learning in lessons is satisfactory. This is the case when activities are too heavily teacher-led and pupils are not expected to solve problems or think for themselves.

Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise, and for many this is reflected in their school meal choices and healthy lunches. Many take part in physical activity outside school. School council members are leading a healthy eating initiative with pupils from all years. Many older pupils make a significant contribution to the school community as playground pals and through the school council, for example. A number of projects have enhanced facilities for pupils by providing bike pods, play areas and play equipment. Opportunities to make a contribution beyond school are increasing but are still limited and do not include communities which are very different from pupils' own. Pupils develop a good range of basic and interpersonal skills and are able to apply these skills in different subjects and situations. Along with average attendance, this provides a good platform for pupils' next steps in education. Behaviour is good, based on a shared set of values and promotes good learning in the classroom. Through the many opportunities to work and talk together pupils develop good social skills. They engage enthusiastically with

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opportunities to extend their cultural and spiritual awareness. Year 6 pupils told inspectors about the very positive project, 'Faith City'. Groups researched faiths and then presented their findings to all members of the school community including their parents and carers. Through this kind of enrichment activity, pupils develop a wide range of good personal 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	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	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	3
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?

There are many striking examples across all years where stimulating resources are created to engage and motivate pupils. Interactive whiteboards and mini laptops are used well to support learning. Planning for lessons is detailed. Teachers generally use information from assessment to inform their planning so that the needs of the range of abilities in the class are met, and teaching assistants are used effectively to help implement the plans. Teachers use a range of approaches and teaching styles to ensure that pupils are interested and challenged. Pupils work is checked and marked regularly. Progress is assessed carefully, and usually, teachers ensure targets are set for pupils to promote greater progress.

The curriculum is well-organised and offers a broad range of experiences for pupils. The planning to develop reading, writing and numeracy skills is well-established across the school. The development of information and communication technology skills is supported well by appropriate resources. Opportunities to practise these skills are well embedded in

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topic lessons. The planning of additional English and mathematics to support individuals and groups with particular needs is effective. A wide range of enrichment activities are taken up enthusiastically by a majority of pupils. A noteworthy example is the early morning 'Get Moving' activity which helps pupils to develop their concentration and coordination. There are productive partnerships which enhance the curriculum. The local performing arts college supports specialist teaching in music, dance and drama and extra-curricular sport.

The school provides a nurturing environment and works pro-actively with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive the support needed to promote good learning and well-being. Additional support is used effectively so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who might be vulnerable become more confident and independent learners. There are well-organised arrangements, involving good sharing of information within school and between schools, to ensure that pupils settle quickly into new routines and more challenging work. Attendance has improved because a successful range of strategies have been introduced which emphasise the links between good attendance and attainment and progress. Pupils respond well to a programme of rewards for good attendance. The majority of parents and carers support the school's drive to raise attendance but a few continue to take holidays during term-time. Provision in the school's specialist language unit is good. The balance between skill acquisition in the unit and mixing with peers in the school is effectively managed. The curriculum is enriched by relevant and purposeful activities which ensure that pupils acquire and consolidate the skills needed before moving to the next stage of their learning. The links with classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 provide good two-way opportunities for pupils to learn from each other.

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?

High expectations are communicated well to staff through the carefully constructed school improvement plan. Monitoring of the school's work by middle and senior leaders is conducted rigorously through a range of activities. The school promotes equal opportunities well by using assessment information effectively to identify underachievement and implement appropriate strategies to increase it. Pupils at risk of discrimination because they are in a minority group have benefited positively from proactive intervention by staff. Teachers have successfully modelled the way for other pupils, engaging support from class-mates with learning English for those at an early stage of learning the language, for example. The effectiveness of the governing body is good. Through the school improvement committee they are closely involved with other

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leaders in allocating resources to improve pupils' achievement. Through their regular visits to link departments, they hear the views of staff and pupils and familiarise themselves with the school's work. Safeguarding procedures are good. The effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures is monitored and evaluated. There is much good practice, such as carrying out risk assessments on activities so that they are available to all children regardless of their needs. Good systems ensure that the site's multiple use is safely organised. The actions taken by the school to promote community cohesion are having a positive impact on the school community. School leaders understand the context well and have plans to extend links beyond the school and local community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children move to Year 1 with skills and abilities above expectations for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The environment is welcoming and well-resourced both inside and outside. Relationships between adults and children are warm and friendly and behaviour is managed well. Effective policies and procedures ensure that children are safe and protected. Planning is thorough and involves all staff so that they know children's needs well. Activities are imaginative and encourage curiosity. They are structured to promote a balance of adult-led and child-initiated tasks. The large majority of children show appropriate levels of independence, high levels of involvement and persist on tasks for extended periods. Occasionally, a few children concentrate less because the activity is not structured well enough to promote independence. Sometimes children do not practise skills they have learned because they lack encouragement to try them out. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage changed at the beginning of 2011. The new leader has a clear understanding of the context and has evaluated its strengths and weaknesses well. The staff work well as a team and have a good allocation

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of time to support this. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive. There are good induction procedures because there are well-established links with all pre-school providers. The on-site provision, Withymoor Pre-School, provides an effective bridge to Reception. It is good provision which is well-led. The safeguarding and protection of children is prioritised and well-managed. The environment is stimulating, well-resourced and covers all areas of the curriculum. As in the Reception there is an appropriate balance of child-led and adult-led initiatives.

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

The return of inspection questionnaires from parents and carers is similar to that usually received. The overwhelming majority are happy with their child's experience of school. They are particularly positive that the school keeps their child safe. There were no overriding concerns shared with inspectors. The very few concerns which were received have been shared with the headteacher who has undertaken to include these views in the school's evaluation of its work. The school's web-site has been recently revised and is now more accessible to parents and carers. The school has indicated this will be regularly updated with curriculum information.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Withymoor 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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	52	52	46	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	54	49	44	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	35	69	62	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	38	61	54	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	35	66	59	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	32	74	66	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	30	72	64	4	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	35	64	58	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	37	66	59	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	25	75	67	7	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	29	65	58	8	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	35	63	56	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	48	56	50	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	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 Withymoor Primary School, Brierley Hill, DY5 2BH

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome on our recent visit, and for sharing your views about the school in discussions and through questionnaires. These have been very helpful. Now I would like to share with you what we have found out.

Your school provides you with a good standard of education.

You make good progress in your work and reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. Your attainment in both these areas has improved and particularly in writing.

You enjoy lessons, particularly when you are active, using computers and making things. We saw many of you respond well to challenges from your teachers and enjoy solving problems.

You have a good understanding of how to keep safe, and how to use the internet safely.

You work together well in class and behave well around school and in classrooms. This helps you to make good progress in your learning.

Your attendance has also improved and for most is where it should be or better.

The governing body, headteacher and staff care for you very well. This helps to make you feel safe when you are in school.

We have asked the school to do two things to make it even better:

- to make sure that the youngest children have activities which encourage them to work independently and opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt.
- to give all of you more opportunities to contribute to your local community and those beyond so that you learn more about different people and their culture.

We hope that you will do your best to help your headteacher and the staff to put these plans in place by working hard and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook
Lead Inspector

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