

# Acocks Green Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134280
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	381662
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Speakman

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>	466
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Clare Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julia Dodson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Westley Road Acocks Green Birmingham B27 7UQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 21 lessons and observed 19 teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, a representative of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including monitoring, evaluation and assessment records, policy documents, the school improvement plan, teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work. A wide range of documents and records was scrutinised in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors took into account the results of questionnaires returned by 87 parents and carers, 100 pupils and 38 members of staff.

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

- What are the strategies implemented by the school to enable the high and growing proportion of pupils with limited English language skills to engage with learning and make good progress?
- How well do pupils use their skills in reading, speaking and listening, numeracy and using computers to enrich their work in other subjects?
- How well developed are assessment procedures to track pupils' progress and how well do pupils contribute through self- and peer-assessment?
- What initiatives implemented by school leaders have led to the improvement since the previous inspection?

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average, two-form entry, primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There is a high number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a much higher proportion than usual speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools, and the proportion with statements of special educational needs is about average. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the ICT Mark, National Healthy Schools status, the Active Mark and Arts Mark Gold.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Pupils make exceptional progress in this outstanding school. 'My child and the children I care for are extremely happy and proud to be at Acocks Green School. It is a wonderful community that prides itself on achieving and aiming high.' These words from one parent and carer sum up what the inspectors found. Pupils achieve high academic standards and their personal development is outstanding.

The school has made remarkable progress since the previous inspection. All key areas of provision and outcomes show significant improvement. Outcomes are outstanding as a result of an excellent quality of education and high levels of care, guidance and support. The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teaching in half of the lessons observed was outstanding and in the great majority of other lessons was good. The curriculum is of a high quality and supports the excellent progress that all groups of pupils make. As a result of excellent care, guidance and support, pupils are confident learners, they say that they feel exceptionally safe in school and enjoy being there. Outstanding levels of leadership and management have brought about this notable improvement, and ensure that the school has an excellent capacity to improve even further.

Although attendance has improved over recent years, due to robust monitoring and determined action by the governing body and school staff, it remains stubbornly satisfactory. Senior leaders monitor the academic progress and personal development of individual pupils and identified groups with rigour. Staff feel intuitively that long or frequent absence from school has a detrimental impact on pupils' learning, but as yet they do not have data-based evidence to confirm this view. They do not yet monitor the progress of poor attendees as a specific group.

The school is highly thought of in the local community. Pupils participate in local carnivals and engage with the community at times of religious festivals. However, there are limited links with local industry and businesses through which pupils' experiences of, and involvement in, the outside community might support learning. The school is working to extend its global links to provide pupils with more opportunities to learn about other cultures through first-hand experiences.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with an outstanding start to their education and school life. Children are very well prepared to move into Year 1 with well above average attainment across all areas of learning. This profile of improving attainment has become well established over the last three years. Children make

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outstanding progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes.

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

- Improve attendance to at least 95% by:
  - carefully evaluating the impact of frequent and long absences from school on the academic achievement of these pupils
  - sharing these findings with the relevant parents and carers.
- Extend the school's international links and those with business and industry to:
  - enhance pupils' contribution to the wider community and their awareness of other cultures
  - increase the effectiveness that local partnerships have on their learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children join the Nursery and the Reception classes with attainment that is low in comparison with that typical for children of this age. They make outstanding progress at all stages of the school and leave at the end of Year 6 with high levels of attainment. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, relish challenge and set about solving challenging problems with excitement. Year 5 pupils worked rapidly and with high levels of concentration to solve a problem which involved accurate measurement of angles. They made excellent progress in developing problem-solving strategies that used a number of higher level mathematical skills. Some worked collaboratively whilst others chose to complete the task individually. Pupils are able to use a range of different learning styles successfully, including making good use of computers. They respond very well to the opportunities provided for them to engage in conversation. In Year 2 literacy lessons, pupils thoroughly enjoyed getting into role as the 'fat lazy farmer' and the 'overworked duck', answering questions from their classmates. Pupils readily engage in discussions with 'talking partners' to discuss possible answers to teachers' questions. These activities help pupils who speak English as an additional language to engage in learning and give those with special educational needs and/or disabilities confidence, whilst successfully extending the learning of more-able pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants support these groups extremely well. The teacher and teaching assistant of a group of these pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson both showed a deep understanding of their needs and their limitations, providing them with exactly the right level of challenge. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are soon helped to master English through the many opportunities to communicate with their peers. More-able pupils are challenged through tasks that are matched well to their capabilities and teachers' high expectations of them.

Pupils say, and parents and carers confirm, that pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They

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feel extremely safe and comfortable at all times because of the outstanding behaviour and high quality relationships. Pupils speak with knowledge and understanding about eating a healthy diet and talk about how they enjoy school meals and choose healthy options. Pupils engage in a good amount of physical exercise during lessons and uptake of the extra-curricular opportunities related to physical activity is high. Some pupils make a significant contribution to school life. Year 5 have the opportunity for peer tutoring with Year 2 and peer mentors support playground behaviour well. The school council makes a significant contribution to school life. Older pupils work with younger ones in the 'Forest School' activities but opportunities for pupils to engage widely with the local community are more limited. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their excellent moral development is reflected in the way that they moderate their own behaviour. Pupils also have very well-developed social skills but their spiritual and cultural awareness is less advanced.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>2</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>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is so successful because it is effective in engaging pupils as active participants in the learning process. Teachers use a range of learning styles which match the activities and pupils' preferences well. Investigation, problem solving and the use of computers all engage pupils exceptionally well. Throughout lessons, teachers fully explain and refer to learning objectives and the measures by which success is assessed. Consequently, pupils know what they are trying to achieve, how well they are progressing towards their targets and are able to engage in self-

<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

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assessment to good effect. Marking of pupils work is very good. It is thorough, points out what pupils do well and what can be improved. Comments are routinely followed up by pupils. Teachers are skilful in using questioning to assess understanding, extend pupils’ reasoning skills and deepen their understanding. Teaching assistants work exceptionally well with individuals and groups to develop their skills and give them confidence to succeed.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. It is extremely successful in meeting pupils’ varied needs, including those who have particular interests and talents as well as those who have specific learning difficulties. Learning has become more enjoyable as a result of recent initiatives to make the curriculum interesting and creative. A strong emphasis is placed on developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, which are learned and consolidated across other subjects. There is an excellent programme of personal, health and social education which is augmented by the popular Forest Schools project. Older pupils learn French and correspond with pupils at a French school. Pupils say that one of the reasons they enjoy school is because of the wide range of after-school experiences available to them. In sport, pupils compete successfully against local schools. The curriculum is further enriched by visiting experts and a wide variety of themed days dedicated to such topics as science, mathematics in art, literacy and the creative arts.

The school shows outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils. Transition arrangements at all levels make the changes from one stage to another extremely smooth. The ethos of the school is firmly rooted in care and respect for all. This is particularly effective in supporting pupils who find themselves facing challenging circumstances.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding and have been instrumental in the notable improvements seen in the school. Senior leaders rigorously monitor standards and the quality of provision. Using this evaluation, they strongly support all staff in developing their own professional skills, contributing to the outstanding overall effectiveness of this school. Senior and middle managers, year and subject heads all have clearly defined roles within the monitoring process. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their pupils through regular progress reviews. Communication between different levels of leadership and

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management is highly effective. Monitoring and evaluation of school performance clearly defines areas in which the school requires development and this accurately informs school improvement planning.

Governors’ effectiveness in guiding the school and holding it to account for its performance is good. There are a few new members of the governing body and they bring with them a good range of relevant expertise to support this work. Most governors are fully involved in the life of the school: they are skilled in monitoring and evaluating performance and in setting challenging targets, such as through performance management. The Chair of the Governing Body has a very clear idea of how she wishes to move the governing body forwards. The next steps are to give the committees greater powers. It is envisaged that this will release more time in full governing body meetings to enable more strategic discussion.

Safeguarding is outstanding. Well-established strong partnerships support pupils’ learning and well-being. These are particularly effective in helping the school support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. High quality safeguarding policies, with appropriate governor involvement, guide the work of the school. Staff are regularly trained in child protection matters and are exceptionally vigilant. The school’s promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding. The school monitors the progress of pupils very carefully to identify and act upon any underachievement so that all have the same chance of success. There are excellent procedures to help pupils with additional learning and social needs. Strong support has ensured that pupils whose first language is not English progress as well as their peers. Pupils’ views are taken into account: the school elicits their views to ensure that they are learning in an environment that meets their needs.

The school’s promotion of community cohesion is good. Staff have audited and evaluated its contribution to cohesion and are clear about what more needs to be done to develop this aspect of their work. The school is highly cohesive and pupils celebrate the various cultures to be found in the vicinity. Local people are invited to some school events and pupils take part in activities in the community. Older pupils correspond with children at a French school but wider international links are yet to be developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>



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<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

All welfare requirements are fully met and children feel safe, comfortable, relaxed, and happy to leave their parents and carers, coming into school independently. The learning environment is extremely well resourced, both indoors and outside. Adults carefully timetable the use of the outside space, the hall and learning areas to best effect and ensure that all areas of the curriculum are very well provided for. The activities available to children are wide ranging and highly engaging. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed learning about shapes through baking cookies, painting and activities in which they searched for different shapes in every-day objects and the school building, compared their findings to given shapes. 'I'm very good at finding shapes.' remarked one child, displaying high levels of confidence in learning. The computer program selected to support this learning was well chosen to accelerate learning and was effective once children had become familiar with it. This arrangement is typical of the outstanding teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage where teachers and teaching assistants seize every opportunity to maximise learning across the areas of learning in every activity. Planning is thorough and makes excellent use of assessment information gathered by all adults in their on-going observations of each child's learning.

Behaviour is exemplary. Children respond extremely well to each other and enjoy highly positive relationships. They develop high levels of self-esteem because adults frequently celebrate their success. Consequently, children are confident in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants constantly challenge children and keep them fully engaged in learning. They robustly monitor those activities children initiate for themselves, to ensure a balanced experience, and to keep learning tightly focused on the intended outcomes.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. There is a clear view of what initiatives have had an impact, such as dealing with limited English language skills on entry. Children are immersed in a language rich environment so they soon pick up enough English to access learning confidently. Self-evaluation is robust and is highly analytical through the use of progress tracking data. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored and supported rigorously. Highly effective professional development has enabled all staff to teach to a very high level of competence.

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

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<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

About a fifth of parents and carers sent in questionnaires: a response that is lower than that usually found. Those responding have very positive views of the school and there was strong agreement for all statements in the questionnaire. A few written comments outlined a small number of concerns, particularly relating to lack of challenge for pupils in the middle attainment groups and the way the school deals with any pupil presenting challenging behaviour. Inspectors looked carefully at these issues by considering pupils’ achievement, progress and provision in lessons, lesson planning and the way adults deal with any behavioural issues in school. Inspectors found these to be areas of strength, as all groups of pupils are fully challenged and reach their potential. Behaviour in school is excellent as a result of adults dealing fairly and effectively with any issues, complimenting and rewarding those pupils who cooperate fully.

Some parents and carers were full of praise over the way in which the school communicates with them, particularly using ‘Twitter’. One parent wrote, ‘Very impressed with the way the school uses ICT to make us feel part of the community and keep us up to date with what our children are doing. Positive praising (for example, Super Star assemblies) is very good too.’

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Acocks Green 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 466 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	61	30	34	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	66	30	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	50	57	32	37	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	51	40	46	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	57	35	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	40	46	43	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	49	42	48	0	0	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)	35	40	44	51	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	36	41	43	49	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	38	49	56	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	32	52	60	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	47	44	51	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	45	52	40	46	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> <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.**



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Acocks Green Primary School, Birmingham, B27 7UQ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you at different times throughout the two days and you are real ambassadors for your school. Your views were really helpful and it was clear that you are very proud of being part of Acocks Green Primary School. Staff are justifiably proud of you. You will be pleased to know that you go to an outstanding school, and you can be proud of the part you have played in achieving this high rating.

You all make excellent progress at all stages of the school, whatever your backgrounds and skills. Standards in your school work by Year 6 are higher than in most other schools. These high standards have helped the school to receive important awards that recognise its excellent work. As well as high standards in your class work, your personal qualities are outstanding. You approach school life in a sensible and mature way, helping each other wherever possible. You enjoy school a great deal and behave exceptionally well. The school is a very safe and pleasant place for you to learn.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. This has helped all adults working in your school to develop the ways in which they work so that all of you are given tasks that move you on at a very quick pace. You play your part by taking on challenges with excitement and enthusiasm. This means that there has been a great improvement since your school was last inspected. There are still things to do though. We have asked your teachers to look carefully at how long and frequent absence from school affects the progress of those of you who do not attend regularly enough, and to share these findings with your parents and carers. Hopefully, this will improve attendance. We have also asked them to set up business links to enrich your learning opportunities and to extend international links to improve your knowledge and understanding of how people live in communities different from your own.

Congratulations on helping your school to become outstanding. Your headteacher is aware that hard work will be needed to help it stay this way. We are confident that you will do all you can to help, particularly by keeping your love of school high.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman,  
Lead inspector

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