

Story Wood School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103213
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376848
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Jenny Batelen

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sam Miller
Headteacher	Jo Jones
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
School address	Hastings Road Birmingham B23 5AJ
Telephone number	0121 4643863
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Email address	enquiry@storywood.bham.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	EY277228 Little Story Wood
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	60
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	9 December 2008

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	26–27 September 2011
Inspection number	376848

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons and nine teaching staff. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. They also analysed questionnaires from staff, pupils and 92 parents and carers.

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

- Inspectors looked at the consistency of teaching throughout the school, and how this is being further improved in order to continue to raise standards.
- They explored how effectively the Early Years Foundation Stage (including Little Story Wood) contributes to good outcomes for all the children.
- Inspectors considered how the school communicates with parents and carers and engages them in the life of the school.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving the local area of Kingstanding in north-east Birmingham. While the majority of pupils are from a White British background, a high percentage of pupils are from a wide range of other ethnic heritages, including those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and these include a range of moderate learning needs. The proportion of pupils with statements of educational need is higher than average and includes physical disabilities and pupils with specific learning difficulties. The governors also manage a breakfast club. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status, the Every Child Matters Bronze Award and Bike-It Bronze Award. The school has changed its name this term from Perry Common Junior and Infant School and is now known as Story Wood School and Children's Centre.

The school site is used by the Story Wood Children's Centre and the Little Story Wood Nursery, both of which are managed by the governing body. Little Story Wood was inspected as part of the school inspection. The children's centre was inspected separately, but at the same time as the school and findings are published in a separate report.

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

Story Wood Primary is a good school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are polite and welcoming. They behave well in lessons and around the school and, as one pupil said, 'We always get along with each other'. They feel safe and know that the systems in place mean that no strangers will be in school. Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe and speak of how much their children enjoy school. 'He loves school, he has made so much progress, he loves to read, write and do his maths' is representative of the many positive comments.

Thorough induction procedures ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a happy and confident start to school. When pupils leave the school, attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. This represents an improvement and attainment has risen, particularly in the last three years. The school has rigorous plans to raise attainment further. Progress for most pupils is good. Progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also good with some evidence of outstanding progress. This is because of the careful tracking of each pupil's progress and targeted interventions put in place to support their particular learning needs.

The majority of teaching and learning across the school is good, but the school recognises the need to ensure that there is greater consistency in all year groups. In some lessons, there is not enough challenge in the tasks set, especially when pupils work independently. As a result, progress is not always as good as it could be. Pupils are clear about what they are meant to learn in each lesson and know what is expected of them in their tasks. Other adults are mostly well deployed and so ensure that good support is given, especially to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils know their targets and know what they must do to meet them. Their targets are not yet shared with parents and carers who are, therefore, unable to support their children to meet them when engaged in home learning activities. Regular use of the information and communication technology suite ensures that pupils are developing good skills which they use across the curriculum.

The headteacher, leadership team and governing body have a clear vision and commitment to improving the school. The recent initiative to increase attendance has had a significant impact so that this is now above the national average. The school recognises that there is still more work to be done in order to involve parents and carers in the life of the school and in their children's learning. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning has led to improved teaching, although, at the moment,

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monitoring is led by senior staff rather than ensuring that teaching staff are involved in evaluating their own and each other's practice. There are clear, accurate priorities for improvement identified, through the thorough evaluation of the school's work. This is rightly focused on raising attainment and there is a realistic view of the strengths and the challenges ahead. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - enabling pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning and develop their independent learning skills
 - providing suitable challenge for all pupils, especially when working away from the teacher
 - ensuring teachers rigorously evaluate their own practice in order to provide sustained high quality teaching.

- Encourage parents and carers to be more involved in their children's learning by:
 - sharing pupils' learning targets with parents and carers
 - finding ways to give parents and carers information that will enable them to be able to support home learning activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' achievement is good. They start school with skill levels that are generally well below those expected for their age. Careful planning and targeted intervention ensure that a very large majority of pupils make good progress and some groups make outstanding progress. This was demonstrated in an English lesson when pupils enjoyed the stimulus of a picture and working in pairs to provide imaginative vocabulary, such as 'spectacular', 'eccentric' and 'vibrant' to describe a futuristic setting. The ensuing discussion on writing skills enabled pupils to use their ideas and make good progress in their writing task. Pupils talk about how their work has improved because of the support given by their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in class and sometimes individually so that they make good and at times outstanding progress. Pupils identified with particular talents make outstanding progress as they are encouraged to use their skills and sometimes challenged to 'think outside the box'. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported through individual work and careful planning which enables them to make satisfactory progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Pupils' improved attendance and punctuality makes a strong contribution to the overall good progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They have no concerns about bullying, play well together and are confident that adults in school will help them to sort out any worries or concerns. Being awarded National Healthy

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Schools status is an acknowledgement of pupils’ good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They maintain a healthy diet in school and have the opportunity to participate in a range of physical activities including early morning ‘wake ‘n shake’. Pupils are able to cycle to school as recognised in the ‘Bike It’ Award.

Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school. The democratically elected school council was involved in the decision-making about the new school uniform and the logo. Play leaders in Key Stage 2 help to ensure safe and happy playtimes. Water bottle monitors ensure that all children have access to clean, fresh water each day. The contribution to the wider community is strong as pupils participate in a range of community activities, including working with the police to improve the local area. The ‘Every Child Matters’ bronze award recognises the work of the school in developing good outcomes for its pupils.

Pupils reflect on their learning and also on issues that affect their lives and that of the worldwide community. In assemblies, they join in the celebration of festivals of the different religions represented in the school. They develop good cultural understanding with visits to museums, theatres, concert halls and visitors that share their interests and skills, such as the artist who worked with pupils to design the new school logo.

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	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
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and offer full support to all pupils, including those who may be falling behind. Good lesson planning, based on

¹ 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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regular assessments, ensures that pupils are able to learn and make good, and sometimes excellent, progress. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of good resources, including information and communication technology. Clear learning objectives shared at the beginning of the lesson and displayed in books ensure that pupils know what is required of them. Qualified teaching assistants give strong support to individuals and groups of pupils. All adults use skilful questioning in order to move pupils on in their learning. Marking is clear about how successful pupils have been in meeting the lesson objective and often provides opportunities to improve the work further. There are strong cross-curricular links made in many lessons.

Pastoral care is a priority of the school. The inclusion manager works closely with the learning mentor to ensure that families are well supported and good use is made of outside agencies for the benefit of all pupils. Careful arrangements are in place for transition at all stages in the school, including moving on to secondary schools. There are many areas on the school site that allow for extra support for groups and individuals. The breakfast club is a valued resource for some pupils and their parents and carers.

Pupils speak with enthusiasm of the many memorable experiences the curriculum provides, including inclusion week, book week and making kites in science week. Visits to the Space Centre and the Staffordshire Hoard enrich their understanding of themes being studied. The curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of all pupils through planning and appropriate staffing levels when necessary. The school makes good use of its grounds; particularly the Story Wood and pupils enjoy the assemblies and other activities that take place there.

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?

The headteacher is committed to enabling all pupils to be able to achieve well. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. They communicate high expectations to all staff about the importance of school improvement. Targets set are suitably challenging and the school is gradually improving achievement for all pupils. Extensive monitoring of planning, pupils' books and of teaching are effective in raising the quality of teaching and learning. However, all teachers are not yet involved in monitoring their own and each other's practice in the classroom in order to ensure consistently high quality teaching.

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The governing body is effective in helping to shape the direction of the school. Its members are fully involved in school self-evaluation, the setting of targets and they provide strong challenge to senior leaders. There are good relationships between the governing body and the staff. The governing body has made conspicuous efforts to engage with parents and carers and these have been most effective when one-to-one contact is made. Informative newsletters keep parents and carers up to date with school news, but not all take up the opportunities available to be involved in the life of the school.

Good practice is adopted across all areas of safeguarding, which is well managed by senior members of the school. There is high quality training in place for all staff to ensure the safety of pupils. The system of door fobs, allowing access to school buildings only by staff and approved visitors is appreciated and understood by all pupils.

The tracking arrangements in place mean that the school is able to work towards ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school is well aware of any groups and individuals not making as much progress as their peers and has strategies in place to ensure the gaps continue to close. Strong partnerships, such as volunteer readers, outside agencies, links with the local church and community police officers, and also the children’s centre, give further support to improving outcomes for all pupils. The use of Story Wood as a Forest School used by other schools has improved the environment for learning.

The school has a good understanding of its religious, social and ethnic context and makes a strong contribution to the local community. It is reaching out to other communities, for instance, through the link with a sponsored child in Bangladesh. The school is a strong cohesive community, but, as yet, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the similarities and differences between where they live and other parts of the United Kingdom.

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	3
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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children are safe and happy and make good progress. Developing strong links with the children’s centre and home visits mean that children settle quickly into new routines. Parents and carers value the links that are made early on and the supportive induction process that ensures all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are able to settle quickly. Children work and play well together; they share resources and enjoy their activities. Children in Little Story Wood are very well supported. Sitting and playing in the water provided great fun for a small group in the secure baby room, while a new baby was gently cared for on his first visit. The older children enjoy ‘cooking breakfast’ or making a story with actions outside. Nursery children are able to settle into new routines and quickly learn to help tidy away at the end of a session. Reception children enjoyed learning to add one more as they sang and acted out with masks a song about elephants being joined by one more each time. They made an elephant shape with their hands to further reinforce their understanding of the concept. Most activities for the children in Reception class then related to this learning, although this was not apparent in the spacious outside area.

Teaching is good throughout the unit and adults understand the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage well. There is a range of adult-led and child-initiated tasks and good questioning helps to develop children’s thinking as they play. Thorough and ongoing assessment informs future planning. As a result, children make good progress and enter Key Stage 1 ready for their next steps in learning. ‘Learning journals’ provide a record of children’s progress with samples of work, notes and photographs. The assessment record is explained for parents and carers, but there is not yet sufficient opportunity for parents and carers to contribute to the learning journal.

The childcare provision in Little Story Wood complies with all requirements for registration. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has successfully united the school with Little Story Wood and staff work extremely well together to ensure the best outcomes for children. Learning to be healthy is a priority with healthy snacks and drinks and plenty of exercise. Children participate in the life of the school, including children from Little Story Wood having lunch in the school dining hall. Children are awarded house points for good work as in the main school. They are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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

Parents and carers are mostly supportive of the school. The large majority of responses were positive. Parents and carers particularly comment on how their children enjoy school. A very small minority of parents and carers feel that their concerns and suggestions are not listened to and that they are not helped to support their children’s learning and understand the progress they are making. Inspectors found that the school works hard to listen and respond to parents and carers and to involve them in the life of the school, but that there could be increased opportunities to develop the relationship.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Story Wood 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	65	31	34	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	73	79	19	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	54	59	32	35	3	3	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	50	37	40	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	62	35	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	50	54	35	38	7	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	54	39	42	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)	46	50	40	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	54	41	45	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	51	37	40	4	4	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	41	46	50	4	4	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	57	62	32	35	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	60	65	30	33	2	2	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).

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"> ■ 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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Story Wood Primary School, Birmingham, B23 5AJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned questionnaires about your school. We enjoyed joining in your lessons and 'wake 'n shake', talking to you and exploring the Story Wood. Yours is a good school and, as a result, you make good progress in your learning. There are many good things about your school.

- You behave well and you help each other. Thank you for being keen to tell us how much you enjoy school and to talk about the work you were doing.
- You come to school much more regularly now and this helps you to make even more progress.
- You listen carefully to your teachers and work hard in your lessons.
- All the adults in the school care a lot about you and make sure that you are very safe and well supported.
- The adults who manage and run your school work hard to make sure you have the best opportunities to achieve well.

There are four things we have asked the school to do to make it even better. These are:

- to improve the standards you reach in English and mathematics by making sure that your teachers give you work that will challenge you all and make you think
- to help you to be able to be clear about how well you are doing, especially when you are working without an adult
- for your teachers to think about how they can make your lessons even more exciting
- to help your parents and carers to be able to help you more at home

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and being very sure you know exactly what your teacher wants you to do.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen
Lead inspector

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