

Starbank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103258
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376863
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2012
Lead inspector	Raymond Lau

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	890
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynne Gittings
Headteacher	Gerry Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Raymond Lau Additional Inspector

Steven Cartlidge Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland Additional Inspector

Graham Stephens Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team sampled 34 lessons, observing 29 teachers. Ten lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The team also conducted a series of brief observations of learning in classrooms and around the school. Meetings were held with groups of parents and carers, pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, records and analyses of pupils' behaviour, the tracking of pupils' progress and examples of pupils' work. They looked at the school's attendance figures and monitoring information. They also analysed questionnaire responses from staff, pupils, and 240 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from backgrounds other than White British. The largest groups represented in the school population are of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Black African heritage and many speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high, as are proportions of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs with a variety of specific needs. The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has ten part-time classes of Nursery split equally between the morning and afternoon sessions. From September 2010, it increased its provision with an additional 90 children to six classes, which are currently reception classes and Year 1. The school operates on split sites, with Years 4 to 6 hosted on a site 300 metres away from the main site. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding and highly inclusive school that places pupils’ learning and welfare at the heart of its operation. The school works exceptionally well with the community, supporting families and enabling their children to succeed. One pupil summed it up like this: ‘Starbank is fantastic! We all work hard together. Teachers really push you to achieve the best you can do.’
- Achievement is outstanding. From often well below the expected starting points, pupils of all abilities make consistently good, and often excellent, gains as they progress through the school. By the end of Year 6 attainment is above average in English and mathematics. Pupils’ progress over time is outstanding and is especially strong in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well and relationships are excellent. They routinely plan challenging activities which cater to the needs of most learners extraordinarily well. However, just very occasionally, the pace of lessons or the levels of challenge are insufficient to bring out the very best from all pupils.
- Pupils’ behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons are exemplary. A strong climate for learning permeates the school. Pupils’ are highly motivated and demonstrate a hunger for learning. They demonstrate excellent understanding of safety and make valuable contributions to the life of the school. They are polite, and friendly to teachers and each other. Pupils’ attendance is average and continues to rise.
- The inspirational headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with the governing body, provide outstanding leadership, in driving improvements and raising standards at a rapid pace. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are highly effective. The curriculum is very closely matched to pupils’ needs and promotes pupil’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2014, consolidate teaching, learning and achievement at the outstanding level by:
 - ensuring that a brisk pace and the pitch of activities in all lessons challenge pupils sufficiently to promote rapid gains in learning
 - ensuring pupils' attendance is above the national average

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement over time is exceptional because throughout school, progress is never less than good and accelerates to outstanding in Key Stage 2. This view is supported by the parents and carers, and by pupils. Children enter the nursery with knowledge and skills which are often well below national expectations, particularly in relation to communication and language. Through Nursery and Reception, these and other skills are developed effectively through a wide range of activities that build children's confidence and competence in the use of English. Children rapidly develop positive attitudes, learning and playing together in harmony. As a result of effective teaching in all areas of learning children make good progress from their starting points to leave Reception attaining standards just below expectations for this age.

Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and adds to pupils' on-going achievement. By the end of Year 2, attainment is broadly average in mathematics and reading. Standards in writing are slightly lower but, here too, pupils make good gains. As a result of a systematic approach to teaching about letters and the sounds they make, that begins in Nursery and Reception and continues in Key Stage 1, attainment in reading and writing is improving rapidly. For example, in a literacy lesson about alliteration in Year 1, pupils made exceptional progress and one pupil created, 'a wicked and wild wizard.'

Pupils achieve exceptionally well throughout Key Stage 2. Progress accelerates rapidly in Years 4 to 6 because of outstanding teaching. Attainment in English and mathematics in Year 6 has risen quickly in recent years and was above average in the 2011 national tests. Evidence from the inspection, indicates current attainment is at this level. Standards in both reading and writing are above average by the time that pupils leave the school. In 2011, pupils' progress was exceptional, placing the school in the top rank of schools nationally. In a Year 4 lesson based on the purpose of advertising, the theme of 'The Apprentice' and imaginative teaching promoted a fun approach to learning. Pupils used sophisticated vocabulary in their work and made exceptional progress.

The minority ethnic groups of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve exceptionally

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well because highly effective teaching across the subjects facilitate rapid progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of very well-targeted and personalised intervention work that closely meets their individual needs. There are no significant differences in the performance of girls, boys or pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. All regularly do significantly better than similar pupils nationally.

Quality of teaching

Almost all pupils, parents and carers agree that teaching is effective. The inspection team supports this view. The most effective lessons are characterised by teachers' excellent subject knowledge and planning that fully meets the needs of all learners. There are opportunities for independent and group work, which stimulate pupils' interest and challenge them. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher matched the work skilfully to the differing abilities of all learners studying perimeters solving complex problems. As a result, pupils' progress is outstanding. The highly committed support staff provides an invaluable contribution in accelerating the achievement of pupils. They do this through effectively targeting questions to aid pupils thinking and in adapting the work when supporting, those of lower ability, disabled pupils and those with special education needs.

The development of literacy is strongly evident across the curriculum. Activities provide opportunities for pupils to develop strong social and communication skills effectively and build confidence. For example, a Year 6 English lesson used excellent activities and highly effective role play to develop skills in writing a detailed diary entry. Consequently, pupils effectively create meaning and interest in their writing. In a very small minority of lessons across the school, teachers' long explanations slowed the pace of learning or the work did not match the needs of all learners, especially the more able, whose work was not sufficiently demanding to maximise progress in the short term.

Teachers' use of assessment is highly effective. Marking is consistent across the school and is of high quality. There is an effective dialogue between the teacher and the pupil during lessons and after written feedback. Pupils clearly know their targets and frequently review them to evaluate what they need to do next. This activity built systematically on their prior knowledge and added to their achievement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' have exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning. Parents and carers are very positive in their views about behaviour and safety, although a few pupils in the questionnaire expressed concerns about behaviour around the school. The inspection team concluded that the behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding and this is confirmed by school records and from discussions with groups of learners. Highly effective rewards and behaviour management systems are established. Pupils' attendance is convincingly rising over time to broadly average. These improvements are being sustained and there are extensive strategies that are positively influencing

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pupils' attendance.

All pupils feel very safe in the school. They have excellent understanding of unsafe situations and know how to keep others and themselves safe, particularly in respect of road and water safety. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and of types of discrimination. Pupils stated that bullying was very rare. They felt that it was dealt with swiftly and effectively, initially by anti-bullying ambassadors and then, if necessary, by teachers.

Pupils make an exceptionally strong contribution to a positive learning ethos. They exhibit mature attitudes to learning and outstanding social skills. Pupils hold various responsibilities which promote their confidence and self-esteem and add to the smooth running of the school. There are also opportunities for them to work with pupils from a local special school, including attending a residential trip. The pupils raise substantial amounts of money for national charities.

Leadership and management

The highly strategic work of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has empowered the senior and extended leadership teams. This has accelerated school improvement, especially in relation to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. The management of teaching is outstanding. A very rigorous monitoring system enables middle ranking leaders to be both independent and extremely effective in supporting and challenging colleagues to aspire to the highest possible standards. The governing body is highly supportive and very challenging in holding the school to account. The school provides an extensive range of professional development in support of staff tackling these and other aspects of the school's work.

The governing body and the school promote truly inspirational partnerships with parents and carers. Initiatives and collaborative work in this area are exceptional. The family outreach officers are highly dedicated and make a significant difference in promoting very constructive links with families and in raising the aspirations, self-esteem and confidence of the parents and carers themselves. Initiatives such as 'Dads Day' and English language classes have brought many more parents and carers into the life of the school. Communications between the home and the school have improved, with one positive outcome being a sustained rise in pupils' attendance over time. The arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements; there are robust procedures for vetting all staff and visitors to the school.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs extremely well by providing a very wide range of highly positive experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning. It enables almost all pupils to attain good standards of literacy and numeracy. It also promotes their exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the Rocket Radio Station is accessible to all pupils, enabling them to make 'professional' recordings for podcasting to the school. This reinforces literacy and develops their

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communication technology and social skills. Similarly, the school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to learn a wide range of musical instruments. This is reflected in pupils' enthusiastic attitudes to playing the violin and cello together. Pupils' high quality art work is displayed proudly across the school.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is an exceptionally strong feature of the school. Pupils of all abilities and from all social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds thrive and succeed, and there is no discrimination. The school functions as an inclusive and harmonious society. The sustained outstanding achievement, the exceptional progress of pupils and very high quality of teaching demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity to improve further.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Starbank Primary School, Birmingham, B10 9LR

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you. These are our findings about your school.

- You go to an outstanding school that is exceptionally well led and managed, where achievement and teaching are both outstanding.
- Whilst some of you expressed concerns in the questionnaire regarding behaviour around the school, we have judged your behaviour and awareness of safety to be outstanding overall.
- All of you feel safe, and were able to say very clearly how to keep safe. In the questionnaire that some of you completed, almost all of you said you like attending school; this is shown by your improving levels of attendance.
- You make an exceptional contribution to the school and to the community, including raising large amounts of money for charities. You have an active school council and have lots of leadership responsibilities, such as anti-bullying ambassadors.
- The curriculum is enriched with lots of memorable activities. You proudly showed us, and talked about, the displays of your work. We visited your 'Rocket Radio Station' and saw how exceptionally well this works to help you develop your literacy, communication and technology skills.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to make improvements to your school by:

- improving the achievement by making sure the work is always challenging and you learn at a brisk pace.

You can help by continuing to work hard, doing your very best and increasing your attendance at school. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Lau
Lead inspector

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