

Wychall Primary School

Middle Field Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 3EH

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From very low starting points, pupils make good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good-quality support they receive.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they make good progress because they are taught well.
- The headteacher is an effective leader. She has managed the school successfully during a period of transition, ensuring that standards and teaching have continued to improve.
- Teaching is typically good, with some outstanding practice.
- Pupils enjoy a wide variety of exciting visits, residential stays and visitors to school throughout the year.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well, and enjoy their learning. They also have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying.
- The high number of pupils who join during the school year quickly settle in and make good progress.
- Governors support and hold leaders to account effectively for the performance of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure all pupils make rapid and sustained progress across all year groups.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is not as rapid as in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading.
- Pupils' attendance, although improving, is at the national average.
- Many subject leaders are new to their roles and are not yet having a sustained effect on school improvement.
- Teachers' comments in marking do not always show pupils how they can improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons involving 14 teachers; six of these lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also observed two assemblies.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by parents and carers who spoke with them at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dennis Brittain

Additional Inspector

Sue Calvert

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background. An increasing number come from minority ethnic groups, but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, in this case those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- The school provides a 'nurture' group for some of its pupils. Called The Acorn Class, this currently caters for 16 pupils who have emotional and social needs.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one morning and one afternoon Nursery class, and two Reception classes.
- A high proportion of pupils join or leave partway through their primary school education. Less than half of the Year 6 pupils in 2012 started their education at the school.
- The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2011, and the assistant headteacher in April 2012.
- A private provider, Bright Kids, manages before- and after-school care called Wigwam. This is subject to separate inspecting and reporting arrangements.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding so all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, particularly in Key Stage 1, by:
 - extending recent initiatives, including working closely with parents, to raise attainment and progress in reading to the same levels as writing
 - increasing the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for more-able pupils
 - teachers insisting on the highest standards of presentation in all work
 - ensuring that teachers' comments show pupils clearly how they can improve their work
 - sharing the best teaching practice in the school with all staff.
- Further develop the roles of subject leaders by:
 - giving them more opportunities to check on teaching and learning, and to guide the development of teachers' skills
 - involving them fully in data analysis, tracking pupils' progress and monitoring school improvements.
- Improve attendance to above the national average by ensuring that all parents and carers take heed of the school's advice and support and send their children to school regularly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. They are taught well and have made good progress by the time they start Year 1.
- By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they have reached broadly average standards in English and mathematics. This reflects good overall progress, particularly for those who have been at the school since Reception.
- However, this good academic progress is not reflected in the 2012 Year 6 national test results, which are misleading because they do not give a clear picture of the progress made at the school by pupils who had recently joined, many of whom were previously performing below age-expected levels.
- The school's own data for 2013 show that while attainment has been below average at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, increasing numbers of pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those supported by the pupil premium and those learning English as an additional language, are now making better progress. This is happening because teaching now reflects higher expectations for what pupils can achieve, and the systems to check their progress are more thorough. However, too few pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work.
- Pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 1 is quicker than in reading. Attainment in writing has improved as a result of the successful school focus on this area, although standards of presentation are not always of the highest quality.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) by using teachers and teaching assistants to run daily, small-group sessions. Results in the national phonic screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2012 were above average. Other initiatives to improve reading are too recent to have had a marked impact on attainment and progress.
- Pupils in the nurture group, The Acorn Class, make good progress in their social and personal skills because their specific needs are extremely well provided for.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide one-to-one support, nurture provision, speech and language support and opportunities to take part in visits, music and sport. The 2012 national test results show that the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was on average one term ahead of their classmates in English, but one term behind in mathematics. This year the gaps have closed rapidly and pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is now similar to that of their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Most parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to Parent View rightly said that their children were making good progress due to good teaching.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. The few pupils who find it difficult to

control their behaviour are well managed by the teachers and adults assigned to support them.

- In the best lessons teachers ask pupils probing questions to check and deepen their understanding, and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to their learning. Good links are made with previous work and other subjects. Pupils are motivated by the tasks in hand, for example planning the Year 5 camping trip or researching how to look after the school chickens.
- Pupils have good opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with each other. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, where the teachers challenged pupils to apply their knowledge of shape to solve problems.
- Teachers create opportunities to write in many different contexts, and this develops pupils' skills and stamina for writing. During the inspection pupils wrote letters, descriptions of settings and reviews. Before writing they talked to their teacher and to each other about their ideas, which the teacher then used to model the writing. This talk developed pupils' language and vocabulary exceptionally well. However, teachers' comments on how to improve their work do not always guide them to make even better progress during 'finish up Fridays'.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in a culture where individual differences are celebrated. They constantly encourage positive relationships, alternative thinking and behaviour strategies, and an excitement in learning. Consequently, pupils are determined and feel confident 'to have a go'.
- All groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those learning English as an additional language and those in the nurture group, are taught well and make good progress. When pupils first arrive, teachers quickly identify their individual needs and provide additional support that is well managed by the deputy headteacher. Teachers know their pupils well, although in a few lessons they do not ensure that more-able pupils are challenged sufficiently.
- Teachers and teaching assistants successfully promote the pupils' knowledge and use of phonics. They provide interesting opportunities for pupils to read, both for enjoyment and to find information to support their topic work. The sharing of a 'class book', author visits and workshops for parents are all helping to develop a reading culture in the school, although this is relatively new and parents are not fully helping by getting pupils to read regularly at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They demonstrate positive attitudes that support their learning well.
- Pupils respond well to the rewards and celebrations for good work and behaviour – including the 'Bank of Alfred' which pays out cheques to reward good behaviour. The school's 'passport for learning' also has a good impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The school values and celebrates the diversity within its community. Teachers and pupils support new arrivals to the school very well, which enables them to settle quickly and play an active part in the school community.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey indicate that their children feel safe at school.

- Pupils understand different types of dangers, including those associated with roads, fire and drugs. They say that they feel safe, and that racist incidents are not an issue. They show good awareness of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils indicate that incidents such as name-calling rarely occur because the school leaders deal with them swiftly.
- Pupils are motivated to take up take roles of responsibility. They act as peer mentors and look after the school dog, Alfred, the chickens and the school garden. Pupils value these roles.
- The school has excellent working relationships with outside agencies to support pupils and families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Parents and carers said that all pupils are able to access high-quality learning and enrichment activities, for example learning the steel band and participating in the choir.
- Although pupils' attendance has improved over the past years, it remains average. While most parents have responded well to the school's thorough procedures for encouraging good attendance, a small minority do not send their children to school regularly enough or make sure they are not late to school.

The leadership and management are good

- Improvements since the previous inspection have been good because of the headteacher's constant drive to improve teaching, raise achievement and promote high expectations. She has managed the pace of change well, including the increasing number of pupils, and ensured a common sense of purpose among the staff and pupils.
- Regular lesson observations and a successful programme of staff training have ensured that virtually all teaching is good, and an increasing proportion is outstanding.
- Rigorous and regular checks are made to find out how well pupils achieve. Staff routinely check that all pupils are on track to make good progress. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress, although not all teachers have had the opportunity to learn from the very best practice in the school.
- Leaders and managers know the school well. They have clear plans to make it even better. The consistent, marked improvements over time demonstrate good capacity for further improvement.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Differences in achievement between groups of pupils are closing rapidly. There are no recorded incidents of harassment. Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that eligible pupils make good progress.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are fostered through regular communication, workshops, and 'stay and share' sessions. During the inspection many Year 4 parents attended an art exhibition which involved them working and painting with their children.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their topic work, which links subjects together meaningfully and contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Some innovative approaches to teaching in Key Stage 2, involving teams of teachers, allow staff to work effectively with small groups to accelerate learning.

- Lessons are enriched through a wide range of after-school activities and opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language. Visits, including camping and residential visits with opportunities to develop musical, sporting and artistic skills, add further enhancement.
- Regular support from the local authority has helped leaders to evaluate the school's performance accurately and develop a clear strategy to improve the school further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body makes use of its recent training to both support and monitor the work of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance information and how much it has improved. They provide good support to the headteacher and senior leaders because they are increasingly able to ask difficult questions about how decisions will have an impact on pupils' learning. The governing body is regularly kept informed about how teaching is improving. This has led to good decisions being made on the rewards that teachers receive and effective allocation of the school's finances, including the pupil premium, which it monitors effectively. The governing body carries out its statutory duties well. It makes sure, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and fully meet national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	132075
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	412443

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	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Leigh
Headteacher	Therese Allen
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2010
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