Starbank Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number   103258
LEA   Birmingham
Inspection number   276878
Inspection dates   2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector   Helen Barter RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	**School address**	Starbank Road
School category	Community		Small Heath
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Birmingham, West Midlands B10 9LR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	**Telephone number**	0121 4642638
Number on roll	738	**Fax number**	0121 4642638
Appropriate authority	The governing body	**Chair of governors**	
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2000	**Headteacher**	Mrs Christine Woodin

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Starbank is a large primary school situated in an inner urban area of Birmingham. The context in which the school educates pupils is constantly changing. A very high proportion of pupils (85%) have English as an additional language. Seventeen different home languages are spoken. Sixty-eight per cent of pupils are of Pakistani heritage, with most others from Bangladeshi, Black African, Indian, Caribbean and White British heritage backgrounds. The number of 'newly arrived' pupils who speak very little or no English is increasing. Eighty such pupils have recently arrived in the school. Some pupils leave and rejoin the school at different times of their education. The school has a large inclusion team, including three learning mentors, who support pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Year 6 pupils attend school in a separate annex about half a mile away from the main school. During the inspection the local community was celebrating Eid. The inspection team were informed that many pupils would be absent from school on the second day of the inspection. Although this was the case, it did not have any adverse impact on the inspection process.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with the school's view that it is effective and provides pupils with a good education.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children start in the nursery with limited experiences and low communication and language skills. Good provision in the nursery and reception classes enables children to achieve well. Pupils continue this good progress from Years 1 to 6 so that standards are broadly average by the time pupils leave. Standards are higher in English than they are in mathematics and science. The school recognises that pupils' achievement is affected by their language difficulties. Special groups in mathematics are helping more capable pupils learn the vocabulary they will need to enable them to achieve higher standards. This support is not provided in science and this limits pupils' achievement in this subject. Opportunities for all pupils to use their numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum are limited and this is stopping standards in mathematics from rising further.

Pupils enjoy school. Attendance has improved considerably to satisfactory levels. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan work and use support staff well to ensure all pupils make good progress, particularly in their speaking and listening skills. The school cares well for pupils and helps them to develop good personal skills. Parents are very pleased with the school and the progress their children make. Good leadership and management by the headteacher and senior team, and the development of successful strategies to raise all pupils' achievement, have resulted in the school improving well. Good progress is being made, albeit in small, gradual steps, in terms of raising standards. Frequent changes in the school's population and difficulties in recruiting teachers have resulted in some improvements taking longer to implement than the school would have liked. The school knows where standards still need to be improved. Senior staff correctly identify the need for all staff to learn how to use information on pupils' achievement to continue to raise standards. The school provides good value for money and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills in science and numeracy skills in other subjects to further raise standards.
- Use assessment information more effectively to raise expectations of what pupils might achieve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Many children joining the nursery are reluctant or unable to communicate. They make good progress in nursery and reception classes, particularly in their personal, social and physical development. Their language and communication

skills improve considerably but very few are working at expected levels at the start of Year 1.

By the time pupils leave the school, standards are broadly average. From a low starting point, this represents good achievement. Standards have gradually risen over recent years. It is evident that the pupils who complete all or most of their schooling at Starbank make better progress than those who join midway through.

All pupils make very good progress in English because of the success of programmes to improve their reading and writing skills and the good support for pupils who have English as an additional language. Most pupils achieve well in mathematics but those who are capable of reaching particularly high standards do not always do as well as they should. Achievement in science is satisfactory, although standards are affected by pupils' difficulties in understanding scientific language. The underachievement of pupils of Pakistani heritage in recent years has been reversed. These pupils now achieve well because of well targeted support to improve their speaking and listening skills. Girls' achievement has been a concern. It is being improved by giving girls clear targets for improvement, although boys still do better overall.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good because the school places strong emphasis on developing their self-esteem. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Separate weekly worship for different faiths enable pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and cultures. Pupils enjoy celebrating the achievement of others in assemblies. They know that the school teaches them to behave well. They treat others with respect and know that racism is unacceptable.

Pupils' enjoyment of their education is reflected in their much-improved attendance. The school's sustained hard work and use of the 'Cool Cat' award scheme has paid off and raised attendance to expected levels. Pupils like Starbank and speak positively of the help that teachers give them to learn. They understand well the need to be safe and to make healthy eating choices. Pupils contribute well to the community through their fundraising activities during the Lord Mayor's Citizenship Week and in environmental and recycling Missing footer*** projects. They are prepared satisfactorily for life ahead, although they lack confidence in the use of their numeracy skills.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning help all pupils to make good progress. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and have good relationships with them. They place good emphasis

on helping pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects. Teachers and other staff raise pupils' confidence in learning through their encouragement and care.

In most lessons pupils achieve well because work is well planned for their different needs. Pupils make good progress when marking in their books tells them what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. At times, however, teachers do not make enough use of the information they have to plan work for different levels of abilities and to raise expectations of what pupils might achieve.

Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well because they know the specific needs of individuals with whom they are working. Teachers support parents and carers well in their efforts to help learning through workshops and open days.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It ensures that pupils learn about every subject. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language get good support. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. It provides plenty of opportunities for children to develop early speaking and listening skills through interesting and imaginative activities. The focus on developing the speaking and listening skills of all pupils, particularly those with English as an additional language, has resulted in improved standards. The school has taken effective action to help more capable pupils develop their understanding of mathematical language in mathematics but there is a lack of planning to help pupils to develop their scientific vocabulary. However, the main weakness in the curriculum is that pupils do not make enough use of their numeracy skills in subjects such as art and design. Visitors to the school, and a range of visits make learning interesting for pupils. There is a satisfactory range of after school clubs although, for cultural reasons, many pupils are not able to attend. Residential visits provide good opportunities for pupils to take part in enjoyable activities that promote their personal development. Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and say that they feel safe at school because adults look after them. Worry boxes give pupils the opportunity to state their concerns in confidence. Pupils are positive about their school council because ideas are listened to and acted upon. Pupils have told the school that they feel that the meals provided for them are not healthy enough, and the school is reviewing the quality of its catering as a result. Procedures for child protection and for health and safety are good.

The inclusion team is very effective in assessing individual pupils' needs and putting in place support in groups and in the classroom which helps them to achieve well. The work of the learning mentors is very good in helping children and their families to

overcome difficulties which affect learning, particularly poor attendance. The needs of pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties, including looked-after children, are identified well and good support is provided for them. Pupils at an early stage of learning English achieve well because they are well supported by specialist teaching assistants.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very strong commitment to helping pupils benefit from all that the school has to offer. She manages the school's finances, staffing and resources effectively and works hard to ensure that pupils achieve well and the school runs smoothly. Much is achieved in spite of difficulties with split-site accommodation, in recruiting staff and in managing an ever-changing school population. Senior managers support her enthusiastically in their quest to help pupils overcome their language difficulties and to raise standards. The leadership of the inclusion team co-ordinator ensures that all pupils get the support that they need to help them to learn. Governors support the headteacher satisfactorily in her work and make sure statutory requirements are met.

Good account is taken of staff, governors' and parents' views in identifying the priorities for the school's improvement plan. It rightly focuses on raising standards but the targets are not always clear enough to tell the school how well it has done in bringing about improvement. The action the school has taken has been particularly effective in raising standards in English. The whole- school emphasis on speaking and listening and on reading in Years 1 and 2 is paying off in terms of pupils' achievement. The school has correctly identified the need to develop the ability of leaders of other subjects and year groups to use assessment information more effectively to raise expectations of pupils' achievements.

Grade: 2

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19

Overall effectiveness

	School Overall	16-19
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

	School Overall	16-19
How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards[1] reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

	School Overall	16-19
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

	School Overall	16-19
How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

[1] Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Starbank Primary School Starbank Road Small Heath Birmingham B10 9LR

4 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school this week to find out how well you are doing. Thank you also for talking to us about your school and your work. Yours is a good school and these are some of the things we like about it:

Your teachers help you to improve your speaking, writing and reading.

You do well at school because you are taught well and you like learning.

You know that it is important to come to school regularly and are much better at doing so than you used to be.

You behave well and are kind to each other.

You make good decisions about how to improve your school in the school council.

Your parents are very happy with your school and think you do well.

Your headteacher and all the other teachers care about you and want to help all of you to do as well as you can.

We have asked the school to do some things to help you learn even better. These are:

Help you to improve your number skills by giving you lots of practice, not just in mathematics lessons, but in other subjects as well.

Help you to understand better what you are learning in science.

Use all the information about what you have learned to help you to do even better.

Thank you again for being so polite and friendly. We hope those of you involved in Eid celebrations enjoyed them and would like to wish you Eid Mubarak.

Yours sincerely

Helen Barter Lead Inspector