



Water Mill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103326
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276893
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Tom Shine RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Water Mill Close
School category	Community		Selly Oak
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Birmingham, West Midlands B29 6TS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4647769
Number on roll	184	Fax number	0121 4645043
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Steve Pratt
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Ms Jenny Edginton

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Water Mill is a smaller than average primary school. Its pupils reflect the diverse population of the area where there is a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds and a high level of economic and social disadvantage. About 45% of the school population is from minority ethnic groups, the majority of whom speak English as an additional language. The largest group is from the Philippines. There is a much higher than usual movement of pupils in and out of the school, with many arriving at short notice and speaking no English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school that gives good value for money. This differs from the more conservative view of the school that judged it to be satisfactory. However, that judgement was made five months ago when the new headteacher and her deputy were much less experienced. The quality of education overall, including teaching, is good. This enables the pupils to achieve well when they enter the school and attain high standards when they leave. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and others in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, make good progress in English, mathematics and science and in their personal development and well-being. There is a warm atmosphere in the school and the levels of care and support for the pupils are good. There are also good systems in place to check how well the pupils are doing. But some teachers' marking is not effective enough in telling pupils how they can improve their work. Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage are good. The curriculum is good in literacy, numeracy and science, but there are weaknesses in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 1 and 2, as the organisation of the computers does not enable skills to be taught regularly and systematically. The headteacher knows the strengths of the school well, and weaknesses such as in ICT have been identified for improvement. She leads the school effectively and has successfully tackled the issues raised in the last report.

The headteacher knows what needs to be done to move the school forward and to make it become even more effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- provide more access to computers in Years 1 and 2 to enable pupils to improve and practise their skills more frequently
- ensure all teachers' marking shows pupils more clearly how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's key skills when they enter the reception reflect their wide range of backgrounds and pre-school experiences. Overall, they are slightly below average for their age. The good provision in the reception enables most children to make a good start to their education and to progress well. The pupils make good progress from Years 1 to 6, except in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, where progress is satisfactory. Standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. This is reflected in the national tests over the last five years and is similar again in 2005. Pupils are achieving well, including pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. In Year 2, standards are broadly in line with national averages for reading and writing and below in mathematics. The school has set challenging but achievable targets for the pupils in the current Year 6. Standards in ICT in Key Stage 1 are not as high as they are expected to be because of the limited

number of computers available to these pupils. In art and design, there are examples of very high quality work throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils make good progress in developing their moral understanding, social skills and cultural awareness. Pupils are positive about school. They especially value meeting their friends and teachers. They work hard in lessons and clearly enjoy learning. This underpins the good progress that they make. They behave well in classrooms and at playtimes and respond well to the staff's high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils from all ethnic groups get on well with each other. There are very few recorded instances of bullying and these are dealt with well. There were two fixed term exclusions last year, both on health and safety grounds. Attendance is broadly average, with some families taking their children on holiday during term time. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the day, with a few persistently late in spite of the school's best efforts. Pupils are conscious of the need to stay healthy and safe and the school council, for example, has been proactive in making suggestions about healthy school lunches. Pupils are keen to contribute to the smooth running of the school and also work together well on charity fund-raising projects. They are developing the self-confidence and skills to help them in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, although in a few year groups they are satisfactory. This overall good quality of teaching is the main determinant of pupils' good progress and achievement by the time they leave the school. Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively, particularly when teaching literacy and numeracy, and have high expectations that all groups of pupils will do their best.

Teachers know the pupils well, enabling them to set realistic targets and have good systems to check on how well the pupils are learning. However some teachers' marking does not show clearly enough what pupils should do to improve their work. Teachers ensure pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given work matched well to their needs enabling them to make good progress. Teaching assistants are also used effectively to ensure these pupils and those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are given good support, either in class or in small groups, to achieve their targets.

Teaching is good in the reception class. The teacher begins assessing the children's levels of attainment as soon as they enter the reception to enable all learning activities to be matched to their needs. As a result of good teaching and encouraging and supportive staff, the children get off to a very secure start.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school plans interesting work for its pupils. It is securely based on the guidance for children in the Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It successfully engages all pupils in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding through relevant projects and activities. Pupils are equipped effectively to achieve well in later life. There is a good programme to ensure that pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe. Work in classrooms is enhanced by a good range of special events, visits, visitors and out of school clubs. The school has won several awards for curriculum innovation including an Artsmark Silver Award. Currently, all the pupils in Year 4 are receiving expert brass tuition and are learning to play new instruments loaned for the academic year and funded by a national grant.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good provision for pupils is based on very good relationships and mutual trust between staff and pupils. Staff know the pupils well and work hard to meet their individual needs through focused support and clear guidance. There are good procedures in place to check on the progress that pupils make in both their academic and personal development. These are used effectively to identify and support the special needs of individual learners. Pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language have their needs assessed as soon as they come to school and are given effective support that enables them to make rapid progress.

Staff work closely with parents to enhance pupils' progress and are able to call on outside agencies when necessary. There are good arrangements to help pupils new to the school to settle in quickly, especially those who arrive during the course of the year. There are also good procedures to ensure that pupils are safe at school and child protection arrangements are sound.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This differs from the school's view that judged it to be satisfactory. This is because the headteacher and her deputy make an effective team, manage the school well, and know what needs to be done to bring about further improvements. The headteacher has quickly assessed the school's strengths and weaknesses and has shared her vision successfully with all staff. This is to maintain high standards and to ensure that pupils' personal needs remain a high priority within a caring community. The school is proud of its reputation as having 'the best parts of a village school on a city street corner' and the headteacher is keen to nurture its strong family ethos. All staff feel valued and, as a result, work well as a team.

The school improvement plan for the current year, which takes account of the views of parents and pupils, including the school council, contains sensible priorities, including

improvements to ICT. Governance is good. The governors have a clear understanding of their role, and are very supportive and committed to the success of the school.

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Inspection judgements

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

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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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

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	2	NA

The quality of provision

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?	2	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	2	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

Water Mill Primary School Water Mill Close Selly Oak Birmingham B29 6TS

16 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for all the help you gave to the inspectors when they came to your school a few weeks ago. We liked talking to you and to your teachers and coming to your assembly. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

These are the things we liked most about your school:

- when you first come to school in the reception, you make a good start to your education and do well.
- You do well in English, mathematics and science because you have good teachers.
- Mrs Edginton runs the school very well and makes sure those of you who need extra help get it.
- you told us you feel safe and well supported and that you like school because 'all teachers and children are friendly'.
- you are taught the importance of exercise and you like the change to healthier meals.

But to make things even better we have suggested a few things we think will help:

- we think pupils in the younger classes should be given opportunities to use computers more to learn and practise their skills.
- we also think it would help when your teachers mark your work if they told you what you need to do to improve it.

Yours sincerely

Tom Shine

Lead Inspector