



Ashwood Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103818
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 277000
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector Graham Sims AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bells Lane
School category	Community		Stourbridge
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands DY8 5DJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818545
Number on roll	418	Fax number	01384 818546
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Ann Harrison
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr Michael Ullah

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ashwood Park Primary School is a larger than average primary school which draws its pupils from socially and economically diverse backgrounds. The school has its own nursery, and children transfer to a Reception class in either September or January. A below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The school's unit for hearing-impaired pupils draws from a wide area and accounts for the above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average overall.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ashwood Park Primary School is a good school where pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well. When children join the Nursery and Reception, standards are broadly average. When pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Standards in mathematics are not as good as in English and science, but the school is taking sensible steps to improve progress in this subject. Pupils' personal development is good, and there is a calm, orderly and friendly atmosphere within the school.

The quality of teaching and learning, the school's curriculum and the standard of care, support and guidance are all good. Some of the teaching is excellent. Teachers have high expectations and provide clear, helpful guidance in class, but do not always display similar standards or give pupils a clear enough indication of what they need to do to improve when marking pupils' work. The quality of education in the Nursery and Reception is good, and standards are above average by the time children enter Year 1. 'Themed' days and a wide range of extra-curricular and special activities enrich the curriculum. Staff know pupils well and pay good attention to their welfare, health and safety. The school is led and managed well. The senior staff provide strong leadership and have an accurate perception of the school, which accords in every respect with that of the inspection. They are fully aware of areas for development. Governors fulfil their roles well. Past improvement planning has been effective and indicates that the school has capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching of calculation skills and their application in solving problems in order to raise standards in mathematics.
- Mark pupils' work more rigorously and give them a clearer indication of what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school. Hearing-impaired pupils are well integrated and achieve well because of the specialist help they receive. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in all parts of the school.

From broadly average beginnings, children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their understanding of language and literacy. Standards are now above average by the time they start Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, where results for the last three years have been above average. Standards in Year 6 are above average. This represents good progress, as these pupils entered Year 3 with only average standards.

The school met its targets in English last year, but narrowly missed them in mathematics. Targets for the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level are suitably challenging, but are not ambitious enough for those exceeding the expected level.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve better in English and science than they do in mathematics. For the last few years, standards in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been only just above average. Good work was observed in some other subjects, including history, art and design, and physical education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. By the end of Reception, children show above average levels of personal, social and emotional development. Pupils enjoy school. In lessons, they behave very well and work happily together. They relate well to each other and to adults, and they are friendly and polite. Pupils behave well at playtimes and in the dining room.

Attendance has declined recently but is still just above the national average, and the school is working appropriately to improve it. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community, and their views are valued and acted upon. As a result of discussions at the school council, older pupils lead games and help younger pupils in the playground at lunchtimes. The school ensures that pupils learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle, and many take an active interest in the wide variety of clubs the school makes available. Pupils feel safe in school. The good progress pupils make in their learning and their skills in forming effective relationships prepare them very well for the next stage of their education and, eventually, the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some of the teaching is excellent. Lessons include a good mix of teacher-led and independent activities. For example, after an introductory session led by the teacher, pupils' learning came alive when they were divided into Athenians and Spartans and asked to research different aspects of life in Ancient Greece in books or on the internet. An excellent discussion ensued as pupils contributed the knowledge they had gleaned from their research.

The teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes work well together to plan and provide stimulating lessons which interest and engage children in their work in a well-organised and attractive environment. Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, especially those with a hearing impairment, are supported well in lessons and have some additional coaching which helps them to make good progress.

The teaching of mathematics has not been as effective as that for English and science. However, the school has analysed the reasons for this and has devised new approaches to developing and applying pupils' calculation skills. These have not yet had time to have a significant impact on standards, although the teaching of mathematics observed during the inspection was good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. In the Nursery and Reception, activities are well planned, varied and interesting. During the inspection, one boy exclaimed, 'It's exciting!' as the children focused on learning how to make pancakes and prepared for a pancake race. Some good work is under way to make the curriculum more vibrant. For example, pupils benefit from, and greatly enjoy, the special 'themed' days. Staff are starting to enrich pupils' learning by linking work in different subjects, but do not always spot such opportunities. Pupils greatly appreciate the extra-curricular activities, which include an excellent range of sports for both younger and older pupils. Good involvement of visitors, such as the school nurse and a theatre group, as well as visits, help to make the personal, social and health education programme effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care, guidance and support helps pupils make good progress in both their learning and personal development. Procedures for keeping track of pupils' learning and personal development are both thorough and effective. The exact learning needs of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a hearing impairment, are carefully worked out, and detailed and effective individual education plans are drawn up to help them make good progress.

Teachers tell pupils precisely how they need to improve during lessons, often referring to learning from the day before. However, teachers' marking of the work in pupils' books is often not rigorous enough. Too much praise is given and not enough indication as to where pupils have made mistakes and how they might improve their work. The school is working well to develop better procedures for involving pupils in their own learning in mathematics and writing, and the new target-setting system is giving pupils a clearer view of where they need to focus their efforts to improve their work. The school looks after all pupils well. Pupils almost always feel that staff take their concerns seriously. Child protection procedures are secure and well understood by all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. Staff are united in their drive to maintain the positive ethos of the school and to improve academic standards. A reorganised leadership team and the establishment of teams of staff to oversee core subjects, such as English and mathematics, have helped to make all staff very aware

of the school's agenda for improvement. The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and perceptive, and detailed action plans set out clearly how staff are going to tackle identified weaknesses, such as mathematics.

The quality of teachers' planning and pupils' work is checked regularly, and any shortcomings are identified, communicated to staff and addressed. Teaching is monitored regularly by senior staff, but subject coordinators do not yet have sufficient opportunity to get a clear picture of this aspect of provision in their subjects. The school regularly seeks the views of parents through questionnaires and of pupils through the school council and takes these views into account when planning for the future. The governing body is supportive and knowledgeable. Far-sighted planning has ensured that the school's accommodation is bright, attractive and functional and serves the needs of pupils well. There is a strong commitment to the principles of inclusion, and the well-run unit for hearing-impaired pupils provides an enriching added dimension to the school.

The effectiveness of the school's leadership and management is seen in good improvements since the last inspection. Previous key issues have been tackled well, improvements have been made to accommodation and resources, and standards have risen throughout the school. These improvements and the impetus of the leadership and management teams indicate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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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

Ashwood Park Primary School Bells Lane Stourbridge West Midlands DY8 5DJ

2 March 2006

Dear Pupils

We greatly enjoyed visiting your school on Shrove Tuesday and St David's Day. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us. You think your school is good – so do we! These are the main things we found out:

- You work hard and make good progress in most of your subjects, but you are not doing quite as well in mathematics as in English and science.
- You are polite, friendly and well behaved, and this makes it a pleasure to be in your school.
- You enjoy school and particularly like the good range of activities and special occasions, such as 'themed' days.
- The quality of the teaching is good, and sometimes it is excellent.
- The teachers provide helpful guidance in lessons, but sometimes let you get away with too many mistakes in your written work and don't always give you a clear enough indication of what you need to do to improve your work.
- The staff care for you well, and you feel safe in school.
- The school is well run, and staff have good ideas for making it even better.
- The school is improving, and the results you achieve in the national tests are better now than they were a few years ago.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your school and work together with your teachers to make it even better.

Yours sincerely

Mr Graham Sims Lead Inspector