



Bearwood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103933
LEA Sandwell
Inspection number 277028
Inspection dates 3 November 2005 to 4 November 2005
Reporting inspector Bogusia Matusiak-Varley RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bearwood Road
School category	Community		Smethwick
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B66 4HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 434 4499
Number on roll	525	Fax number	0121 434 4499
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr Steve Eling
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Marian Harker

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bearwood Primary is a large school situated in a socially and economically deprived area. Over half of the school's intake is made up of pupils mainly from Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean backgrounds. Approximately a third of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. A significant minority of pupils leave and join the school during their education. The new headteacher has been at the school for two years. Otherwise, staffing is stable and well established. The school is involved in a national initiative to develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below that expected nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bearwood Primary is a satisfactory school, and is improving. This is also the school's view. From a very low starting point, pupils make satisfactory progress and, in some cases, progress is good. Very good progress is made in ICT and design and technology, and Year 6 pupils reach high standards in these subjects. Those in Years 5 and 6 achieve well. The school's attention to improving standards has resulted in Year 6 pupils now reaching average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 2 are average in reading and science, but are below average in mathematics and writing. Good pastoral care makes an important contribution, and ensures that pupils enjoy learning and behave satisfactorily. However, good progress is still patchy. Weaknesses in the use of assessment mean that activities are not always matched well to pupils' needs, particularly to those of the few higher attaining pupils. Pupils are also not consistently given guidance on how they can improve their work.

The leadership and management of the new headteacher are good, and she has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. She is gradually bringing other staff with her in order to increase their effectiveness as subject leaders and senior managers. The growing signs of improvement to the school's work indicate a sound capacity for moving forward.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching is vibrant and exciting in Years 5 and 6, but these features are not found in all lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The quality of education and the standards reached by children in the Nursery and Reception classes are satisfactory, but there are missed opportunities in the Reception classes for children to record their work. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Enliven the quality of teaching, especially in Years 1 and 2, so that all learning is interesting and stimulating.
- Use assessment information more precisely so that work is always challenging and well matched to pupils' needs, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Ensure that children in the Reception classes are given sufficient opportunities to record their work.
- Rapidly develop the role of subject leaders and the senior management team.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory as a whole, and there are areas in which pupils achieve well and very well. For example, progress is very good in ICT and design and technology, and Year 6 pupils reach high standards in these subjects.

Standards are influenced by the significant number of pupils at the early stages of learning English, and also by the movement of pupils in and out of the school. Pupils

learning to speak English make sound progress, as do those with learning difficulties. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average, especially in language, literacy and mathematical development. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, and standards are below average by the time they enter Year 1. Progress is more rapid in the Nursery. This is because activities at this early stage are more closely matched to children's needs than they are in the Reception classes. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading and science. Attainment remains below average in mathematics and writing.

Progress is good in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is stimulating and exciting, and targets are challenging. As a result, Year 6 pupils achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Issues related to the achievement of boys in writing and girls in mathematics have been soundly tackled. Increases in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2005 show the success of recent improvements, particularly as this group of pupils had very low starting points when they entered Year 1. However, good progress is not yet taking place throughout the school. This is because there are still shortcomings in the use of assessment. Therefore, activities do not consistently challenge pupils to do their very best, especially the few more able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory, and has recently increased. Pupils come to school happily and look forward to their lessons. Their attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils are polite and friendly around the school and work and play well together. Behaviour is generally well managed in classes, but sometimes deteriorates when teachers do not set sufficiently challenging tasks.

Spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory, and cultural development is good. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to appreciate and learn about different cultures. This prepares them well for adult life by giving them an understanding of the multicultural nature of our society. Pupils develop a good awareness of how to work and play safely, and to eat healthily. They make a positive contribution to the community through their involvement in fundraising, and when representing the school at national conferences, such as those promoting ICT and design and technology. The school council has been involved in many school improvement projects. The recent re-designing of the playground has improved team building and cooperation skills. Pupils develop work place skills adequately as a result of improved standards in English and mathematics, and have strong skills in the use of ICT by the end of Year 6.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some very effective teaching of ICT and design and technology. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good. It is vibrant and exciting, and teachers have high expectations of all their pupils. For example, when Year 6 pupils were asked to write a story, the quality of their writing was enhanced because they were first encouraged to imagine the setting in their minds. Those pupils who are learning to speak English, and those with learning difficulties, learn quickly when they are taught in small groups. This is because support assistants know them well and anticipate where they will need help.

Teaching and learning are largely satisfactory, rather than good, in other year groups. In the Reception classes, for example, children do not develop their language and mathematical skills at a faster rate because they are not regularly given the opportunity to record what they have learned. Teaching is not always as lively as it could be in Years 1 and 2, largely because there is an overuse of worksheets. There is also a tendency in these classes to go over what pupils already know, rather than move them on swiftly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with some good elements. The ICT curriculum, for instance, is well planned. Its use across several other curriculum areas, such as science and mathematics, significantly contributes to learning. Overall, the curriculum is well balanced. Some good attention has been given to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, although these initiatives have not yet been effective right across the school. Planning does not always take full account of the needs of pupils with different abilities, especially with a view to accelerating the progress of the small minority who are more able. There is a good programme for enriching pupils' experience which adds significantly to pupils' cultural awareness and social development. For instance, pupils visit theatres and many different places of worship, and they also participate in a good range of sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school gives satisfactory care, guidance and support to all its pupils. Pastoral care is strong, and there are good opportunities to promote personal development. For example, Year 6 pupils develop self-sufficiency when they are away on a short residential visit. Issues that can cause anxiety, such as bullying, are often discussed in lessons so that they can be dealt with quickly. Good procedures are in place for child protection.

Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Recent improvement has been made in the academic support given to pupils. For example, pupils are given individual targets to aim for in their learning in English and mathematics. However, assessment information is not consistently used to plan activities that take account of pupils' capabilities, or to give pupils feedback on how they can get better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, improvement is gathering pace. The school has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses and these are clearly reflected in the school's improvement plan. Governors are actively involved in monitoring and fulfil their expected duties appropriately. For example, there is a programme which allows individual governors to visit lessons with the headteacher. This initiative has considerably increased their knowledge and understanding of the school's work. The headteacher's clear vision has enabled her to tackle issues robustly. A careful analysis of test results has directed attention to areas of weakness. She consults with parents on all aspects of school life, and most are pleased with the school. Improvements to standards in Year 6, illustrated in the 2005 test results, demonstrate that the school has the capacity to make further improvement. There is strong support for pupils' pastoral needs and for developing pupils' understanding of other cultures. However, improvements to assessment are not yet ensuring that the academic needs of all pupils are consistently well met and encouraged to the full.

Other staff are gradually taking on greater responsibility for increasing the school's effectiveness and monitoring its progress. Together with the local education authority (LEA), the headteacher is ensuring that senior managers and subject leaders have the necessary support to develop their leadership skills. A reorganisation of the staffing structure will bring the school in line with recent legislation and has been passed to governors for their consideration.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	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?	3	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

Bearwood Primary School Bearwood Road Smethwick West Midlands B66 4HB

5 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school. You are a truly friendly group of children and good ambassadors for your school. We are delighted that you like your teachers, and think that your headteacher is fair and has made so many improvements to your school.

We think that your playground is looking very attractive, and we think that you are making really good progress in ICT and design and technology. If we could buy the prototype of your car that you designed for the Humdinger Project, we would! We think that your behaviour and your attitudes to learning are satisfactory and that you are polite to one another.

We have asked your teachers and headteacher to help you improve your learning even further. This is what we have asked them to do:

- Use their knowledge of how well you do in lessons to challenge you even further, especially in mathematics and writing in Years 1 and 2 and for those who find learning easy.
- Ensure that your teachers mark your work thoroughly, show you where you can make improvements and make lessons more lively and interesting.
- Make sure that all the teachers help your headteacher to make the school even better.

We wish you all the very best, and once again thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead inspector