



Hall Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103977
LEA Sandwell
Inspection number 277040
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Colin Lee AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Westminster Road
School category	Community		West Bromwich
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B71 2JQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5882080
Number on roll	301	Fax number	0121 5882218
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Miss Kim Heng

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. The children are taught in single-age Nursery and Reception classes but all other classes have pupils from two year groups. Children's attainment on entry is below average overall, and often very low in literacy, mathematical and personal and social development. Fourteen per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and four per cent have a first language other than English, although no pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school serves a disadvantaged area and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportions with learning difficulties or disabilities and with statements of educational need are above national averages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. The headteacher's good leadership has been instrumental in creating a school where many past weaknesses have been eliminated and standards and achievement are generally on the rise. Inspectors agree with the school's own view of its effectiveness. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Standards are below national averages but this is satisfactory because most pupils have a low starting point. Importantly, the gap between the school's and the national test results is narrowing slowly but steadily. While achievement is satisfactory overall, there are variations between and within year groups. In the Nursery and Reception, for example, progress is good because of the many improvements in provision that have been made. In Years 1 to 6, higher-attaining pupils are generally not progressing as well as they should because there is not enough challenge in their work. There are general weaknesses in pupils' speaking, listening and mathematical skills, the areas of greatest weakness when they start school. Not enough is done to encourage pupils to use these skills in subjects across the curriculum. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and much more consistent than in the past. However, while target setting is good for those pupils with learning difficulties, assessment information is not used well enough to set targets for other pupils.

Pupils behave well and form good relationships with others. They make a good contribution to the school community through taking on responsibilities and suggesting practical improvements to the facilities. There are strengths in the care for pupils' welfare. The school does all it can to encourage pupils to attend regularly and most do so. However, the frequent absences of a few pupils bring attendance levels down to below average.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The many vacancies on the governing body require the governors to work very hard to carry out their responsibilities. The improvement since the last inspection shows there is a clear capacity to improve further and the school has identified its next priorities very accurately.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement further, particularly in speaking and listening and mathematics, by providing more opportunities for pupils to use these skills in all subjects.
- Improve the planning of learning activities for higher-attaining pupils so that there is more challenge in their work.
- Make greater use of assessment to set meaningful, short-term targets for pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and the under-achievement found at the last inspection is gradually being eradicated. Most groups of pupils are now achieving equally well.

Recent improvements in provision for the youngest children have resulted in them achieving well, particularly in the Nursery, where they make very good progress. By the end of Reception most children now reach levels expected for their age, except in language and mathematical development. These are the weakest areas when children start school but good progress is made. In Years 1 and 2 progress is slower and higher-attaining pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 2. The standards of current Year 2 pupils are below average overall. There are particular weaknesses in pupils' speaking and listening skills and mathematics.

Pupils' progress increases across Years 3 to 6, although standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English and science, and well below average in mathematics. Inadequacies in the past education of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 left many gaps in their knowledge. Good teaching has helped the pupils to catch up in many areas and be in line to reach the realistic targets set for them. There are indications of improvement and younger pupils, notably in Year 4, are attaining standards very close to those expected at their age. Weaknesses remain in pupils' use and understanding of technical vocabulary in mathematics and in subjects such as science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with some good features. These include their behaviour and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all ages show respect for each other and all the adults in the school. The vast majority of pupils show positive attitudes towards school but attendance is below the national average in spite of the school's best efforts to improve it.

The school council is regarded by pupils as very effective in representing their views. Its work has resulted in many improvements, including the building of sports facilities, better toilets and training for pupils to become 'Playground Buddies.' Older pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities, contributing significantly to the smooth running of the school community and the safety of pupils. All pupils have a sound awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and of safe practice. Information and communication technology skills are satisfactory and will contribute to pupils' future economic well-being. However, while basic literacy and numeracy skills are improving, they are not yet sufficiently developed to prepare pupils fully for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching has had significant impact on the quality and there is less inconsistency than before. The recent but significant improvements in the quality of learning in Nursery and Reception and in Years 3 to 6 are evidence of the way that better teaching is helping many pupils to make faster progress.

Where teaching is most effective, pupils are strongly driven towards meeting their teachers' high expectations of them. In some lessons, teachers' thorough planning provides pupils with work that is well matched to their needs. However, across the school this is an area where some inconsistency remains and there is generally insufficient challenge in the work set for higher-attaining pupils. Teachers' expectations of these pupils are often too low and there is insufficient use of assessment to set challenging targets for the next stage in the pupils' learning. This contrasts with the provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, who have clear short-term targets for their learning. This is a well-established feature of the consistently good teaching of these pupils by both teachers and learning support assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is planned suitably to cover the age range in mixed-age classes. There is good attention to ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Planning for higher-attaining pupils is less effective and lack of challenge means that their progress is sometimes limited. There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and mathematical skills across the curriculum.

In Nursery and Reception, a well-planned, exciting curriculum is very effective in meeting the needs of the younger children.

Enrichment of the curriculum is good, with a wide range of visitors and visits, including residential education, that contributes well to pupils' social and academic progress. The good range of out-of-school activities is well supported by pupils and adds significantly to their enjoyment of school. Teaching of personal, social and health education is planned well for all ages and makes a positive contribution to the pupils' capacity to stay healthy and safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

These aspects are good. The school has good guidelines for safeguarding pupils, including robust procedures for child protection. Pupils of all ages report that they

feel safe and secure at all times. They are confident that there is always someone to turn to and confide in. There is early identification of any pupil at risk and they are well supported. Indeed, the quality of support for all pupils is good, but that of the learning mentors for the pupils with whom they work is of an exceptionally high quality.

The school works very hard to develop a partnership with parents and carers so that care and support for pupils are seen as a joint responsibility. Many parents and carers have told the inspection team how happy they are with the support their children receive at school. The school works hard to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly by immediately making contact to follow up any absence. Pupils receive satisfactory educational guidance that helps their academic progress, for example, through teachers' marking of work, but targets set for pupils are sometimes too vague and long term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The foundation of the school's steady improvement since the last inspection is the headteacher's good leadership. She has skilfully guided the school through a period of significant changes in staffing. Most other leadership and management posts have only recently been filled. The deputy headteacher, who held this post temporarily until very recently, has provided the headteacher with very good support during this period of transition. All key leaders are clear about their areas of responsibility and are beginning to make a good contribution to school improvement. The improvements in achievement, standards, teaching and learning since the last inspection are due to the guidance of the headteacher and the way that she has motivated teachers, pupils, parents and governors to work together to improve the school.

There is thorough, ongoing self-evaluation of the school's work. Governance is satisfactory and this is due to the hard work of the small number of governors currently serving. With five vacancies, individual governors show tremendous commitment and determination to meet all the requirements made of them. The well-led governing body has clear awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the impact of what is being done.

Grade: 3

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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

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

11 June 2006

Dear Pupils,

We very much enjoyed visiting your school and we want to thank you for talking to us and showing us your work.

What we liked most about your school

- You made us very welcome.
- You are very friendly to one another and always help someone who needs it.
- The adults in school look after you well and make sure that you are safe.
- The school council is doing good work to improve the things you can do at playtimes.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a really good start and many older pupils can be pleased with the progress that they are making.
- The headteacher leads your school well and teachers and learning support assistants work hard to help her to improve things.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Give you more opportunities to improve your skills in speaking and listening and in mathematics.
- Make work a bit harder for those of you who find it easy.
- Introduce more targets so that you know what you have to try and achieve.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lee, Mrs Cotton and Mr Allen Members of the inspection team