



Rounds Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103980
LEA Sandwell
Inspection number 277041
Inspection dates 20 September 2005 to 21 September 2005
Reporting inspector Doris Bell RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Brades Road
School category	Community		Oldbury
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B69 2DP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5521910
Number on roll	325	Fax number	0121 5521910
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Janet Kendrick
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Michael Murphy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

With 276 pupils on roll, 139 boys and 137 girls, Rounds Green is about the same size as most primary schools. The school serves a very deprived neighbourhood that includes a local refuge and it has a high proportion of pupils with emotional difficulties. It has a learning mentor and has set up a number of initiatives aimed at helping pupils to come to terms with their situations so that they might learn better. For example, a part time 'Nurture Group' offers counselling and therapy, and links to external agencies support pupils' personal development.

More pupils than average are eligible for free school meals, and high numbers of pupils enter or leave the school at different times throughout the school year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above the national average. About 30% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Around half of these pupils do not speak English as their first language but only a small number are at the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected for pupils' ages and their language skills are particularly weak. The school is receiving intensive support from the local education authority to raise standards, develop middle managers, improve attendance and develop emotional intelligence. Since the last inspection the school has had a very high turnover of staff, particularly so in the past two years. However, the situation has now stabilised and this is helping the school to move forward.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it can reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.

This is an improving school. Working effectively in partnership with the local education authority and its partner schools, it has significantly improved pupils' progress in the past year. It sees itself as effective, and there is clear proof that it is becoming so. However, pupils in Year 6 have not achieved well enough over time and the standards reached in the national tests are well below average. The school's overall effectiveness, and its overall improvement since the last inspection, are therefore inadequate.

Good provision and good progress in the Foundation Stage indicate good improvement in this area since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress. However, attendance is unsatisfactory and this affects learning. The previous high staff turnover has undoubtedly hindered improvement. Nevertheless, the school acted quickly when staffing stabilised last year, embedding good assessment procedures into teaching to procure more rapid progress, and teaching is now satisfactory overall. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and it has a clear agenda for improvement. The teamwork, dedication and clear thinking of the staff and the governors, the school's effective links with other organisations and the evidence from the past year show that the school has the capacity to improve further. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the school's self-evaluation. However, the school has not improved standards and achievement enough since the last inspection. It has not provided satisfactory value for money in the past but it is beginning to do so now.

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What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in English, particularly in writing, continue to improve mathematics, and raise standards in science
- accelerate the rate of progress in Years 1 to 6, and particularly in Years 3 and 4
- improve attendance

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

As a result of their good progress, children in the Foundation Stage come very close to meeting the nationally expected standards at the end of the reception year. Pupils enjoy learning. Throughout the school, and especially in Years 5 and 6, pupils are starting this school year at a much higher level than in the past because the school set ambitious targets and worked very hard last year to raise standards. Generally, these targets were met well and some pupils in Years 5 and 6 significantly exceeded them. In 2005, the school doubled the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics. It has set very challenging targets again for next year, aimed at having around half of the current Year 6 pupils reach the higher levels in that subject. Demanding targets have also been set for English as the school starts to focus on writing this year while continuing its successful work in mathematics. It is tackling the issue of boys' underachievement well by linking subjects together through themes (the thematic curriculum), which is raising boys' motivation in writing. Pupils in Year 5 are doing particularly well but there remains a dip in attainment in Years 3 and 4. The school recognises this and has targeted support well for these year groups. Pupils learning English as an additional language, and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress towards their targets. Overall, however, and acknowledging recent improvements, standards and achievement have not improved fast enough in the five years since the previous inspection. The capacity to do this more rapidly is now evident.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

By the time the youngest children leave the reception class, they have successfully learned how to work and play together, share things and take responsibility for themselves and their learning. These skills are developed well throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn, and the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They feel that they are listened to and their views are valued. They know how to keep themselves safe and they understand what a healthy lifestyle is. They were particularly keen to talk about the school rule 'build up your body'. They see all cultures in the school as being equal and they readily mix together and understand each other's different approaches to life. They develop well spiritually, speaking warmly of how their teachers help them to do this. They know right from wrong and are very aware of the consequences of their actions. This is demonstrated in the good relationships evident throughout the school, in the good behaviour of most of the pupils and in their positive attitudes towards each other. Their participation in the school council, their work as 'playground buddies' and their support for different charities all contribute to their understanding of good citizenship. They show good levels of independence in and out of lessons. Attendance, though improving, is unsatisfactory and this affects learning for the pupils concerned.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have risen well to the challenges posed in raising standards and achievement. This is evident in the pupils' improved progress in the past year, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is satisfactory and it has several good features. Teachers make good use of assessment procedures and other information to plan, track and record pupils' progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and pupils for whom English is an additional language are clearly identified in planning. Work is planned at the right level for them and well briefed support assistants help them to achieve their targets. Learning intentions are shared with pupils, revisited during lessons and evaluated at the end. As a result, pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do next. They spoke animatedly about how they highlighted targets to show they had achieved them. Work is usually well matched to the pupils' different stages of learning and good links are beginning to be made between different subjects. In a good literacy lesson, for example, information about Vikings was used effectively to promote learning in history, geography, English and personal development. This and the stimulus of a previous drama session helped pupils, including boys, to make their writing more lively and interesting. Teachers often skilfully adapt their questioning to suit the pupils' learning needs, enabling them to participate equally well in all sessions. Resources, including support staff, are used satisfactorily to promote learning. Good examples were noted of the use of interactive whiteboards and the promotion of group and independent learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has recently developed a thematic curriculum that ensures statutory requirements are met in an exciting way for the pupils. Evidence of the effectiveness of this is beginning to emerge in the pupils' improved attendance and progress over the last twelve months and in their recently improved progress. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are included in all work and the school is making increasingly better use of computers as tools for learning. The curriculum has already been reviewed and themes adapted to suit the pupils' needs and different learning styles. The school has used external help and advice effectively to make teaching and learning more stimulating throughout the curriculum. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities contribute to learning and to personal development. Visits, visitors and peripatetic music lessons further enrich the curriculum. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds and for vulnerable pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has successfully developed a range of initiatives to develop pupils' emotional health and well-being and pupils have many opportunities to express their opinions and ask for help. Vulnerable children are well cared for in, for example, the Nurture Group. The school's very welcoming and supportive ethos is evident in the way parents confidently bring their children into school and chat to the staff, including the headteacher. These good relationships lead to an effective partnership between school and home. Good attention is paid to health and safety. The school has very good links with a wide range of external agencies and readily seeks support to help it improve. For example, its involvement with the Children's Fund has been instrumental in establishing a learning mentor who works particularly with vulnerable pupils. The procedures for child protection are robust. The personal and academic progress of all pupils is effectively monitored.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, middle managers and governors carry out their roles and responsibilities satisfactorily. The headteacher and governors have set a clear direction for the school and together with the staff they have successfully improved it in the past year. Self-evaluation is sound and staff and governors are fully involved in it. The school development plan sets a clear agenda for improvement. It shows that the school knows its strengths and is doing something about its weaknesses. The impact is evident in the improved achievement in the past year. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Governors know the school well. They rightly questioned why staff appeared to be working so hard yet standards were not improving, and they have supported the headteacher in all of the initiatives that are beginning to bear fruit. For example, their decision to employ additional teaching assistants and retain teachers to keep class sizes smaller has had a beneficial effect on learning. Finances are carefully monitored and the school has managed the falling roll situation well. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been slow in coming, but it has accelerated in the past year and is satisfactory.

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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?	4	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	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	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	4	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	3	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?	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?	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

Thank you very much for making us so welcome in your school and talking to us about yourselves and your work. We enjoyed visiting your school and finding out about how you learn.

We liked these things most of all:

you have made good progress in the past year, especially in mathematics

you behave well and are polite and courteous

you enjoy coming to school and you take good care of it and of yourselves

you work well together when you are asked to, and are willing to help others.

These are the things we have asked your school to work on now:

help you to do even better in English, especially in your writing, and also in mathematics and science

make sure that your progress improves steadily in every year in the school

improve the attendance of those of you who are absent from school too often, because this affects your learning.

We hope you will all achieve much more as a result of the school making these improvements and that you will enjoy learning throughout your lives.