



Perryfields High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104012
LEA Sandwell
Inspection number 277049
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 14 March 2006
Reporting inspector David Biltcliffe AI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Oldacre Road
School category	Community		Oldbury
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		West Midlands B68 0RG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4217979
Number on roll	949	Fax number	0121 4215718
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Carole Gallant
Date of previous inspection	18 March 2002	Headteacher	Mr David Meredith

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and has slightly more boys than girls. Three-quarters of pupils are White British and just over one tenth are of Indian heritage. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' social and economic background is typical of the country as a whole.

Pupils' overall attainment on entry to Year 7 is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is a little below the national pattern.

The school has just gained specialist college status for mathematics and computing.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Perryfields is a good, improving school. Its strengths far outweigh its few weaknesses. Both parents and pupils rate the school highly.

Most pupils make good progress. The overall standard of work is in line with that seen nationally – and rising – although the highest-ability pupils do not gain enough A* grades at GCSE. Of the three core subjects, English and mathematics are strengths. Science is satisfactory and improving.

Teaching is good overall. Most lessons are well planned and managed, and cater well for pupils of all abilities. Sometimes, however, pupils (and especially those of the highest ability) are inadequately challenged, lessons do not end with adequate summaries and class management is weak.

Pupils are well cared for, enjoy school and are keen to learn. The vulnerable are thoughtfully supported, although some pupils with learning difficulties require more help. Pupils are well behaved, courteous and proud of their school. The school is a welcoming place and has good links with the outside world.

Leadership and management are good at all levels. Senior management has improved pupils' achievement and raised the quality of teaching. The headteacher's lead is outstanding. Teamwork is strong and staff morale is high. Management has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness: its judgements are close to those of inspectors. The school is a happy, well-run place.

Governors and managers have lifted the school's quality since its last inspection in 2004 and have tackled effectively all the main weaknesses identified then. Senior management's track record of improvement indicates that the school has the capacity to improve. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring all teaching up to a good level by ensuring that all lessons are well managed, with clear learning aims, probing questions and discussion, and adequate end-reviews.
- Ensure that the highest-ability pupils achieve to their full potential.
- Provide more support in class for pupils with learning difficulties.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment is broadly average. Their achievement is good. These standards, given pupils' just below average attainment on entry, represent a clear rise in quality in recent times as a result of improved teaching and the intensive efforts of the school's management.

In Year 9, overall attainment is average. In 2005, the national test results in English and mathematics were in line with the national average. Standards in science were lower than they should have been. Through effective management action, however,

on the basis of lesson observation and an analysis of pupils' current work, standards in this subject have improved and are currently in line with the national average.

In Years 10 and 11, most pupils are making good progress. The 2005 GCSE results were average, though a higher proportion of pupils gained both English and mathematics than did so nationally. Other stronger subjects include history, information and communication technology (ICT), Spanish, physical education and religious education. Two subjects that were weak at the last inspection (science and design and technology) are now satisfactory.

Classroom support for pupils with learning difficulties is limited, although most make satisfactory progress. The highest-ability pupils, though progressing satisfactorily, do not gain as many A* grades as they should. Except in science, the school met (or exceeded) the appropriate examination targets it set for pupils in 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school. They display good attitudes, showing respect for one another and their teachers. They behave well in and around the school: their recreational areas, for example, are free from graffiti and litter. Pupils act safely and sensibly in lessons and say that they feel safe from bullying and racial harassment within school. Both attendance and punctuality are good.

Most pupils adopt reasonable lifestyles and make satisfactory healthy eating choices. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with strengths in the moral and social aspects. Pupils readily take responsibility - as, for example, by serving on the school council or by mentoring their peers.

At some stage of their school lives, all pupils undertake environmental and charity work that enables them to contribute positively to their local community. The school prepares pupils satisfactorily for their future lives by, for instance, focusing hard on English, mathematics and ICT, although the fostering of enterprise is limited.

It regularly surveys pupils' views and takes appropriate action as a result.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are improving as a result of the school's intensive work: in science, for example, where there have been staffing problems, teaching and learning are good. Throughout the school, most lessons are organised well, with clear learning objectives. Work is usually carefully tailored to the different learning needs of pupils.

In the very best lessons, teachers set work that challenges all pupils, including the highest attainers. In these instances, teachers' questioning makes pupils think deeply

and explain their views in detail, so consolidating their understanding and leading to good achievement. Tasks ensure that pupils have to discuss their reasoning and evaluate how well they are performing. At the end of these lessons, teachers make sure that pupils know clearly what they have learned and what they need to do next.

In the very small number of unsatisfactory lessons, class control is not effective, learning objectives are not clear and pupils go away not sure of how much they have achieved. In a small proportion of otherwise satisfactory lessons, questioning and discussion are shallow and higher-ability pupils are not adequately extended.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The extensive personal, social and health education programme includes sex education and drugs awareness and provides good advice on careers and further education.

The range of subjects and courses in Years 9-11 provides good opportunities for work experience, vocational courses and alternative, work-based education. The school tries hard (and with success) to meet all pupils' needs – as, for example, providing Latin, Spanish and courses in building construction and on health and beauty. There is a wide range of enrichment activities.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. Specialist staff work closely with pupils, teachers and parents to provide carefully planned support that enables most pupils to make sound progress: the quality of this support is good, but there is not enough of it.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good level of care, guidance and support for its pupils that nurtures their academic progress and personal development well. Academic coaches, learning mentors, pastoral managers and school management, for example, provide a substantial network of support. Careers advice is good. The school's ethos is one of considerate behaviour and hard work. There is a happy atmosphere in the school.

Health and safety measures and child protection procedures are robust. Arrangements are securely in place to safeguard children who need support. Of particular note is the high number of pupils who attend the breakfast club. The system for monitoring pupils' annual academic progress is effective, though there is limited evaluation of how well pupils do over the whole of their school career. Good links are maintained with parents through newsletters, reports and parents' evenings.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This is demonstrated by the fact that the school's central tasks are done effectively: pupils achieve well and are carefully looked after.

Governance is good. Governors acted decisively in 2002, when the school was struggling, and had a clear strategy for recovery. They have since resolved all the weaknesses from the previous inspection. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths, weaknesses and priorities.

The headteacher is an outstanding leader – a fact clearly recognised by staff, pupils, parents and others connected with the school. He has played the key role in turning the school round. He has acted, with sensitive resolution, to replace weaker teachers and has established effective systems for improving all aspects of the school's work.

A strong ethos of teamwork permeates the school, giving a ring of substance to the school's motto, 'Together We Achieve Excellence'. The senior leadership team is effective, with complementary strengths. As a result of an imaginative programme of training, middle management is now good: all are closely involved in the evaluation and development of their own teams. The school runs smoothly. It reviews most aspects of its performance accurately and knows where it needs to improve further. In addition, external consultants help to ensure rigour in self-evaluation. A minor weakness is the school's limited analysis of pupils' academic performance over time. Links with parents and local business are strong. The school gives good value for money. It has the capacity to become an even better 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	NA	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	3	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	3	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	2	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	3	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?	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	3	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

This brief letter is, first, to thank you for the pleasant way you received us and what you had to say to us. Second, it is to tell you what we think about your school.

These are the things that we consider to be the main strengths of your school:

You receive a good education here. Your parents, too, rate the school highly.

Nearly all of you make good progress in your studies.

The vast majority of you are very pleasant, behave well and work hard.

Your headteacher does an outstanding job in leading the school forward.

Perryfields is a good school and getting better – and this is what you also think.

There are just a few things that need to be better. Please think carefully about them and play your part in improving your school:

Sometimes, you do not have to think hard enough or a few pupils are inattentive.

The most able amongst you should achieve a bit more, especially in GCSE.

Some of you with learning difficulties need more help.

We send you our best wishes for the future. David Biltcliffe

Dr David Biltcliffe Lead Inspector