



Whealers Lane Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134099
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 282455
Inspection dates 22 June 2006 to 23 June 2006
Reporting inspector Bogusia Matusiak-Varley AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bagnell Road
School category	Community		Kings Heath
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Birmingham, West Midlands B13 0SJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4642551
Number on roll	650	Fax number	0121 4644026
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Tennant
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Knight

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school was formed in 2004 from an amalgamation of Wheelers Lane Infant and Junior schools. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. The rate of pupils entering the school throughout the school year is high. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is average. The school has an above-average percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs. A small minority of pupils is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The many barriers to raising standards the school encountered during the amalgamation process have now been resolved.

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 has a satisfactory level of effectiveness, with some good features, and is improving rapidly. It provides satisfactory value for money and has the capacity to improve further.

Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and are improving. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but their rates of progress are inconsistent, especially in mathematics. Some teachers do not use assessment data sufficiently well to move higher-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities on in their learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they exceed the expected standards on entry to Year 1.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, behave well and are developing into well-rounded individuals because of the good care, guidance and support that they receive. Parents are pleased with the school and are very supportive of the many changes that have taken place.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some examples of outstanding teaching. Subject leaders are not yet skilled enough in monitoring teaching and learning in order to address inconsistencies. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good provision for enrichment through extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors.

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory, although the leadership and management of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in all subjects and improve pupils' rates of progress especially in mathematics.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- Use assessment data rigorously to ensure higher-attaining pupils, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are consistently challenged.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a better understanding of how to monitor and evaluate standards and quality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. However, rates of progress are inconsistent throughout the school. As a result of the good progress in the Foundation Stage, pupils enter Year 1 with standards above the level expected. Pupils also progress particularly well in some classes in Year 3 and Year 5.

By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). In the national tests of 2005, standards were above average but pupils' progress was not as good as it should have been. This has now been resolved effectively following very good monitoring of

teaching and learning by the headteacher which has arrested the pupils' underachievement. There are examples of pupils making outstanding progress in Year 6, where teaching is consistently good, with exemplary features. This is particularly evident in the standards they attain in writing, which have improved as a result of a whole-school focus.

This year the school has set ambitious targets which it is very likely to achieve because of its improved systems for tracking pupils' progress. Throughout the school, there is room for improvement in developing the rates of pupils' progress in mathematics, especially in mental/oral starters, and in using and applying mathematics across the curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy themselves and work happily and safely together. Pupils develop in self-confidence as they move on through the year groups. Pupils show respect and consideration towards others. They develop their skills of independence well and actively undertake research, for example, into what constitutes an effective library environment.

The school council takes its responsibilities very seriously and all pupils are very proud of their school. 'This is a great school and our teachers make learning fun,' said one pupil interviewed.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, behave well and are keen to learn. Attendance is satisfactory; pupils arrive in school punctually and are eager to start work. They do not want to leave school at the end of the school day and eagerly participate in the good range of extra-curricular activities.

The pupils learn the importance of eating healthily, backed by the school's well-promoted healthy snack policy. They also understand the benefits of leading active lifestyles, which the school encourages through the use of sports coaches. Pupils contribute well to the community by fund raising and they achieve economic well-being by participating well in teams and expressing their own points of view in classroom debates.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some examples of outstanding practice, but in the short history of this school, there has not been enough time to iron out all the inconsistencies. Some aspects of teaching fall short in important areas, especially the use of assessment to challenge higher attainers and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. This means that, in some lessons, these pupils do

not make the progress they should. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by support assistants but their tasks are not always adapted well enough. Teaching enables the pupils to make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3, 5 and 6.

Where teaching is consistently good, teachers share their passion for the subjects taught and encourage pupils to move out of their comfort zone and rise to challenges by giving them consistent encouragement. Teachers have high expectations and explain new information well. A particularly effective aspect of teaching throughout the school is the way in which teachers encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. There is satisfactory provision for the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT but opportunities are not planned to use these skills across the curriculum. The school is working at ways to improve links between subjects in order to help pupils make connections between aspects of their work. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It covers all areas of learning well and there is a good balance between play and formal learning.

A good programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils clear information about how to keep safe and build good life skills. Links with secondary schools, partnership and other agencies are good.

The curriculum is enriched by an impressive range of club activities, visits and visitors, and opportunities to find out about healthy lifestyles and staying safe. These contribute positively to pupils' personal development and well-being and their good attitudes to learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall. The day-to-day pastoral care is good, resulting in good standards of behaviour throughout the school. Child protection arrangements are secure, as are risk assessments. The school has promoted healthy eating and a great emphasis is placed on encouraging healthy lifestyles. The School Council continues to be instrumental in helping all pupils to recognise their responsibility towards the environment through its sustained recycling of waste paper.

The monitoring and tracking of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall but the school recognises that these need improving. Targets in writing and regular marking are examples of good guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work. However, this practice is not consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior leadership team are good and have been instrumental in ensuring that a clear educational direction has been set and that systems are in place to help teachers teach and pupils learn. As a result, the school is well placed to improve further. The headteacher has worked relentlessly in ensuring that the amalgamation has run smoothly and she has improved everything identified in the school improvement plan. For example, standards in writing have risen and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. By contrast, the roles carried out by subject leaders, other than for literacy, are barely adequate. Most do not have the necessary skills to evaluate provision and raise standards. Under the new management structure of the school, this is being addressed. The headteacher uses self-evaluation procedures well so that there is an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governance of the school is good. Governors are supportive, knowledgeable and fulfil their statutory duties.

The school actively seeks the views of its stakeholders and links with outside agencies are good. Parents are very supportive of the school. One parent said, 'we have been hugely encouraged by the changes that have been implemented.'

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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	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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?	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?	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	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	3	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

What an exciting time it has been for you all with the new school rebuild and the amalgamation of your two schools! We think that you have been marvellous and coped very well. Thank you for making our stay so pleasant and for showing us how to get to your classrooms when we got lost on your long corridors.

We are pleased with your attitudes to learning; we think that you behave well and you are developing into good citizens. We agree with you that your teachers make learning fun and that your new headteacher is working very hard at ensuring that you get the best start in your education.

Even though you reach high standards, we think that you can learn at a faster rate and we have asked your headteacher and staff to do a few things to enable this to happen.

We think that your teachers could be making better use of information that they have on your previous learning to challenge you even further, especially those of you who find learning easy and those of you who have some difficulties in learning. We have asked your teachers to improve some aspects of their teaching to ensure that all teaching is at least good: this will help you get even higher standards.

We have also asked those teachers who have responsibility for leading subjects to get a better understanding of how to help you attain higher standards. We also think that your teachers can help you improve in mathematics by enabling you to have more opportunities to practise your mental mathematics.

Once again, thank you for making our two days' stay with you so pleasurable.