



Perry Beeches Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103163
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286578
Inspection date 2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Beeches Road
School category	Community		Great Barr
Age range of pupils	7-11		Birmingham B42 2PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3602213
Number on roll (school)	334	Fax number	0121 3666883
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Keith Perks
		Headteacher	Norah Hickey
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Perry Beeches is a large junior school. Whilst most of its pupils are of White British heritage a large proportion are from minority ethnic groups and many have English as an additional language. There is a larger proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than is found nationally and a greater proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than is usual. Perry Beeches is part of a collaborative group of five schools and an Extended Schools cluster which shares many activities. There are strong links with the nearby school for the visually impaired and a changing number of its pupils join those at Perry Beeches for a variety of lessons.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Perry Beeches is an effective school that continues to provide the same good standard of education that was recognised at the last inspection. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses based on effective monitoring of its provision. Although the senior team is new, leadership and management are good, and under the purposeful leadership of the new headteacher, staff are effectively working towards further improvement. The general rise in standards in Year 6 over the last three years is evidence of the school's secure capacity to succeed.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and pupils want to do well. They enjoy their lessons, know what is expected of them and try hard. 'Lessons are fun', said one pupil, explaining why pupils find their lessons interesting. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average and the result of pupils' good progress, especially in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because of the effective support they receive, especially from the well trained teaching assistants. However, tasks are not always sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils and they make less progress than their peers.

Pupils' personal development is good. Relationships throughout the school are strong and most pupils behave well. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is needed to lead healthy and safe lives and they enjoy the good range of sporting activities provided. An effective curriculum is enriched by many additional activities that extend pupils' skills and knowledge. The school is successfully maintaining its tradition for developing the arts and is now looking to extend links between subjects so that learning is more meaningful and exciting. Staff are focusing particularly on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) because at present it is not used sufficiently well to support pupils' learning across a range of subjects. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the future but do not have enough opportunities to use new technologies both to develop the skills necessary to find future success and to take independent decisions about how to research and develop their work.

Perry Beeches is an inclusive school that welcomes pupils of all abilities and backgrounds and provides good levels of care, support and guidance. There are strong links between the various schools on the campus that enrich pupils' experiences and extend their knowledge and skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide higher attaining pupils with a wide range of challenging activities to ensure that they achieve as well as other groups.
- Make better use of ICT to support pupils' learning in all subjects, both to extend their knowledge and to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well to attain average standards from their below average starting point when they join the junior school. Boys' standards are often lower than those of the girls. Most pupils make good progress across Years 3 to 6. The boys achieve well because of the good support they receive, particularly in reading. Similarly pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately assessed and support strategies are effectively employed to help them achieve well. Progress in mathematics and science is particularly strong. It is slower in English because of the large number of pupils with English as an additional language. Most are not in the early stages of learning English but they are all well supported by well trained staff so their achievement is good. It is the higher attaining pupils who achieve less well in all subjects and especially in writing. The school met its challenging targets for Year 6 test results in 2005 and 2006 in all areas except in the number of pupils attaining the highest level in English. Staff have therefore identified the need to extend the learning of this group.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development has a significant impact on how they achieve because they have good attitudes to their work and want to do well. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are good and pupils show good understanding of the needs of others and the need to be fair and caring. The inclusion of pupils from the school for the visually impaired and disabled pupils from other schools has a significant impact on development of pupils' strong sense of empathy and understanding. In comparison to other aspects of pupils' personal development, their spiritual development is only satisfactory because teachers give less attention to promoting it. Most pupils behave well but a few pupils find difficulty in behaving appropriately and this affects other pupils' feelings of security from time to time.

Pupils are aware of how to keep safe and have a good understanding about the need for healthy eating. Pupils are given a range of responsibilities, which they carry out sensibly. They make a good contribution to the life of the school. The school council, for example, took responsibility for raising money for the new adventure trail. Pupils support local community groups, such as the local hospice and raise extensive amounts of money for world-wide charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and promotes pupils' effective learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they ask searching questions to check pupils' understanding. Lessons

are well structured so that new ideas are introduced in a progressive manner and so quickly understood. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants who have a good understanding of their

difficulties and engage them effectively in their tasks. Similarly, those with English as an additional language are well supported by trained staff whose knowledge of their home language encourages pupils' greater understanding. Pupils' progress is well monitored and teachers' marking makes clear what pupils have done well and how to improve. Pupils told the inspector that teachers are very good at helping them to understand new ideas. Activities in lessons are usually well matched to the range of abilities in the class. However, in English and mathematics lessons where pupils are taught in ability groups, this is not the case and the most able pupils are consequently not sufficiently challenged. Lower ability pupils who find difficulties are given additional support in 'booster sessions' and make better progress than the most able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and provides a successful basis for developing pupils' knowledge and skills. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is thorough and promotes pupils' good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, which enables them to make positive choices. The school has a strong tradition of promoting the arts, especially the performing arts, and also in sport. Gifted and talented pupils, particularly in art, music and sport, are well supported and encouraged. The skills and knowledge of ICT are taught satisfactorily but insufficient use is made of this knowledge to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. The computer suite is sometimes left unused and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to pursue independent research. The curriculum is enhanced by many additional activities, many of which are provided through the strong links with partners in the 'Extended Schools Project'. The support and involvement of the Parent Association, especially in the provision of the weekly after school club, is quite exceptional.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. One parent wrote, 'Children love to come to school and love to learn in this very friendly school.' Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified early and effective targets for their progress are set. Outside agencies are used well when required. Partnerships with parents to support pupils' learning and welfare are good, particularly with those whose children have learning difficulties and with families who have English as an additional language. Those pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well so that they are enabled to play a full part in school life. However, some pupils feel that teachers sometimes do not give the time to listen to their concerns when upsets between pupils occur. Good procedures, including those for child protection, ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment.

Academic support and guidance for pupils is good. Pupils' progress is efficiently monitored and challenging targets are set for their next stage in learning. Their achievement is discussed so that teachers recognise those who are not progressing as well as expected and additional support is provided for those who find difficulties. Extension for the higher attaining pupils, however, is not yet sufficiently effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There is a clear focus on raising standards and on the pastoral care of all pupils. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have set out a clear vision and staff work well together as an efficient team. The recent reorganisation of the management structure of the school has resulted in improved levels of communication and greater understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on shared monitoring and review. Senior managers have distinct responsibilities but their expertise overlaps so a strong overview of school performance is gained. Weaknesses in the progress of higher attaining pupils and the need to strengthen the provision of ICT have been accurately identified but plans for improvement have not yet taken effect. The improved provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities since the previous inspection is additional evidence of the school's good capacity to improve further.

The governing body has a longstanding record of effective strategic management and it provides well informed support and challenge for the headteacher. Its committee structure is a little unwieldy and time consuming, but this is under review. The partnership with parents is good and the school seeks their views to further improve school effectiveness.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing to say thank you for making me feel welcome in your school and for helping me with my questions. I really enjoyed chatting to you and found what you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what I found out about your school.

What I liked about the school

- Perry Beeches is a good school where you are happy and enjoy your lessons.
- You get on well with each other and with the adults in the school.
- Most of you behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- You try hard in your work and achieve well.
- You understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe.
- You are given opportunities to take responsibility and you do it well.
- You try hard to help other people at school, in the local community and around the world.
- You are well taught and the teachers do all they can to help you to get better at your work.
- The headteacher, other senior staff and governors lead the school effectively.
- All the adults in school look after you well.
- There are lots of great activities for you to enjoy out of lessons.
- All the schools on your site work well together to give you lots of new experiences.
- What I have asked the school to do now
- To ensure that those children who could reach higher standards are given more challenging work, so that they make better progress.
- For teachers to give you more chances to use the computers to do your work so that you have more opportunities to choose how you present your work and to find out things for yourself.

Thank you again for being so polite and helpful to me.