



Hawthorn Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103214
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286592
Inspection dates 19–20 October 2006
Reporting inspector Anthony Dobell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hawthorn Road
School category	Community		Kingstanding
Age range of pupils	4–11		Birmingham B44 8QR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4643891
Number on roll (school)	217	Fax number	0121 3509833
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	A Poulton
		Headteacher	H Mortiboy
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves a community experiencing significant socio-economic deprivation. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but a substantial minority come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds, including a small number of refugees and asylum seekers. Children's levels of understanding are very low when they enter Reception. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs. This is partly because the school has a Hearing Impairment Resource Base for pupils with severe hearing impairment. The proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language is above average, although relatively few are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is improving further. Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points and capabilities because teaching is good. Pupils' good progress starts in Reception where provision is good. Standards are above average when pupils reach the end of Year 6. In 2005, for example, pupils' results in the national tests were significantly above average.

Teaching is planned carefully so that learning activities are well matched to pupils' differing needs. Teaching groups are organised so that pupils with similar needs are taught together and given learning tasks which enable them to build on their existing levels of understanding. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress. The integration of pupils with severe hearing impairment into classes is a strength. Sensitive support enables these pupils to play a full part in learning. One said, 'I can do the same things as my friends.'

Pupils' personal development is good because the quality of care provided by the school is outstanding. Parents appreciate that the school provides a safe and secure learning environment in which their children develop into confident and articulate young people. For example, the chair of the school council approached inspectors to offer his help at the start of the inspection. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve their work.

The school provides a good curriculum. The range of extra activities to support learning is outstanding and includes clubs, visits out and visitors to school. Pupils enjoy school a lot. Their involvement in the school community and in the local area is outstanding, for example, with senior citizens, sports clubs and other schools. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future lives. Although the curriculum meets pupils' needs well, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) does not enable pupils to research independently and to develop the skills of managing their own learning. In lessons, teachers have begun to explore how work in one subject can support learning in another, but this is at an early stage.

Good leadership and management by the headteacher, with the full support of all adults, has enabled the school to improve well since its previous inspection. This has underpinned a major improvement in the standards reached by the end of Year 6. There is a clear and effective determination to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for ICT so that pupils can use the school's facilities to support their learning in all subjects.
- Increase the links teachers make between subjects in lessons to make learning experiences even more interesting and meaningful for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good. Children's levels of skills and understanding are very low when they enter Reception, particularly in communication, number and their awareness of the world. They settle quickly into the school, gain in confidence and make good progress, although standards remain well below those normally found.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress, although standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been significantly below average in recent years. This is because pupils have so much ground to make up in developing basic skills, particularly in literacy. The school has recognised the need for pupils to make more rapid progress to compensate for their low starting points. To achieve this, the teaching of literacy has been recently revised. Early signs are encouraging and progress is starting to accelerate. Because pupils are now moving on well, standards are beginning to rise.

Until 2005, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were significantly below average. In 2005, standards were significantly above average. This improvement in standards was sustained in 2006. Pupils leaving the school in 2005 and 2006 made outstanding progress in Years 3 to 6. Progress continues to be exceptionally good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This improvement results from the steps taken by the school since the previous inspection to raise standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attendance has risen since the last inspection and is now above average. This illustrates pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils explain that they are enthusiastic about school because they feel safe and secure. They say that there is no bullying - 'You don't have to worry about bullying because of the "playground buddies" (pupils who look after others).' Behaviour is good in class and at play and pupils are confident that they can share any problems with an adult. A few pupils find it difficult to control their emotions, but counselling is readily available to help these pupils and their families. This confidence and their enthusiasm for learning helps pupils to make good progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know the difference between right and wrong and have a good awareness of social responsibility, for example, by serving on the school council and accepting responsibilities around school. A good focus on cultural diversity prepares pupils well for life in a culturally diverse society.

Pupils know the importance of keeping safe and healthy. One pupil observed: 'This is a very healthy school: we don't have lots of fatty foods.' Pupils understand the dangers of smoking and alcohol, and of the misuse of drugs. Pupils' development of good skills in literacy and numeracy prepares them well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding, enabling pupils to achieve well. Skilful questioning in lessons ensures that all pupils are fully included in learning and effectively develops their understanding. Work is regularly marked and comments frequently show pupils how to improve their work. Teachers explain carefully what is to be learned in lessons so that pupils can evaluate their learning. Pupils are helped to have a very good understanding of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve. A pupil in Year 6 said: 'I am at Level 4C in literacy. I am determined to reach Level 5C and I know how to achieve this.' Teachers help pupils to take responsibility for their learning and this contributes to the good progress made. A relatively weaker aspect of the teaching is that teachers usually focus on only one subject in a lesson and rarely make real links with pupils' work in other subjects. The school recognises that this results in some missed opportunities to make learning more meaningful for pupils.

Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with hearing impairment, are supported well in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants, many of whom sign routinely. This enables these pupils to play a full part in lessons and to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all groups of pupils well. Practical learning activities in Reception help children to settle quickly in the school and to make rapid progress. An effective programme of personal, social and health education in Years 1 to 6 helps pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and an appreciation of others. The curriculum is organised to make learning enjoyable. A Year 6 pupil said: 'Our education is really good because teachers make learning exciting and fun.' However, the school's provision for ICT does not enable pupils to research independently and to take the initiative in their learning. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of visits and visitors which make learning come alive. Residential visits develop pupils' self-confidence well. Pupils also appreciate the clubs and activities provided. Another pupil said: 'The clubs are a really good idea because they're fun, you're learning, and everyone can get involved.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils. This gives them security and a feeling of being valued so that they develop confidence and a positive self-image which underpins their good progress. A highly effective introduction into Reception helps children to settle quickly and to feel safe and secure. Personal achievements both in and out of school are recorded and celebrated. Pupils' academic

progress is tracked systematically and highly effective guidance means that pupils understand clearly how well they are doing and how to improve. Very good links with external agencies mean that any pupils, including those with learning difficulties and hearing impairment, have access to specialised help where it is needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have helped the school to improve well since its previous inspection. Astute leadership by the headteacher, based on incisive self-evaluation and the full support of all her colleagues, has resulted in a significant improvement in standards when pupils leave the school. There has been, and continues to be, accurate analysis of the school's needs and shrewd planning to overcome identified weaknesses. A focus on ensuring that pupils are very aware of how well they are doing and how to improve has been central to the rise in standards. Subjects are managed well and subject leaders have a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects. For example, they appreciate the need to improve ICT provision.

Governors understand the reasons for the school's good improvement and are ambitious to develop it further. They are supportive, but willing to challenge and question so that the school uses its resources effectively. There is a clear unity of purpose among all adults in the school. This, together with a very high level of support from parents, means that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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	2
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	2
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	1

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

Thank you for welcoming us into your school, being so friendly and polite, and telling us about your learning and your lives in the school. We think that yours is a good school.

What we found that the school does well

- You make good progress because you try hard with your work.
- You have a very good understanding of how well you are doing and how to improve your work further.
- You enjoy school, behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- All adults take very good care of you and help you to improve your work.
- Teaching is good and teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting.
- You enjoy opportunities to take responsibilities and carry them out well.
- You understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to make the school even better.

What we have asked the school to do

- We have asked the school to improve the provision of information and communication technology so that you can use it more often to help you to learn.
- We have asked the school to help you to use your work in one subject to help your learning in others.

We enjoyed our two days in your school very much and wish you well for the future.