

Ladypool Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103265
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286611
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rizwaan Faraz
Headteacher	Liz Manley
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2004
School address	Stratford Road Sparkbrook Birmingham B11 1QT
Telephone number	0121 464 7002
Fax number	0121 464 6876

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of considerable economic disadvantage. Over half the pupils are of Pakistani heritage. The remainder come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Most children enter the school with skills and experiences that are well below the levels expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. In February 2006 an associate headteacher took temporary charge of the school. The current headteacher has been in post since Easter 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ladypool is a satisfactory school. The school has come through a difficult period well and is improving. A widely publicised child protection case in early 2006 and the subsequent withdrawal of the senior leadership team rocked the confidence of pupils, parents and staff at a time when achievement was in decline. The good leadership of the associate headteacher and the newly appointed headteacher has successfully re-established a positive learning climate in which pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy school. Their personal development is now good and pupils are polite and well mannered and behave well. Regular meetings with parents have raised their confidence in the school and one parent summarised their views: 'The school has been through a lot recently but parents feel the new management is taking the school down the right path'. Staff morale is high and they enthusiastically share the headteacher's drive to improve the school further.

The school's growing confidence is leading to improvements in academic work. Achievement is now satisfactory overall. Standards are rising, although they are below average overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving in many respects. Relationships are good and lessons are generally interesting. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and try hard. Teaching is not yet good overall because there are too many variations in practice. For example, more-able pupils are not always challenged enough to ensure they make good gains and marking does not consistently provide targets for individual pupils to achieve. Good teaching is promoting good progress in Years 3 and 5. Teaching in Years 4 and 6 is satisfactory but has been less effective in accelerating progress and standards in these years remain too low. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Staff excel in their care for pupils and have played an important role in building trusting relationships. Staff have undertaken extensive training in child protection and these procedures are now very secure. Pupils at the early stages of learning English receive good support from adults who speak their home language. Care, guidance and support overall are only satisfactory because the academic guidance given to pupils is weak and pupils are not always sure about what they need to do next to make their work better. The satisfactory curriculum supports pupils' personal development and provides lively work that pupils find relevant and engaging.

The new headteacher has already had a significant impact on improving the quality of education. Subject leaders provide loyal support but they are not yet having enough impact on raising standards in their subjects and leadership and management are only satisfactory overall. The re-establishment of a happy and positive learning atmosphere and the record of recent gains in some areas show the school is satisfactorily placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good to ensure that all pupils, especially those in Years 4 and 6, make good progress.
- Ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Make sure that subject leaders play a full part in raising standards in the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are rising in English, mathematics and science but are below average overall. Progress is satisfactory but varies too much. Where teaching is consistently good in Years 3 and 5, pupils are making good progress and catching up lost ground. In Years 4 and 6, teaching is less effective and progress is satisfactory, which means pupils are still behind with their work. In the past, girls underachieved. Teachers now ensure that girls are actively involved in their learning by asking them to lead discussions and present their ideas. As a result, girls' standards have caught up with those of the boys and boys and girls now make similar progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English has also improved and is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in their mathematical development and their personal, social and emotional development. Their progress in reading and writing is slower, but is still satisfactory. Children's standards overall are below those expected by the time they start Year 1.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils respect each other, property and the world around them. They readily help each other in lessons and around school. There are now many more opportunities in lessons and assemblies for pupils to enjoy sharing each other's culture and festivals. They are very tolerant to people from a different background to their own. Pupils have regained their confidence in adults and now feel they can readily turn to one if they have a problem, confident that their worries will be sympathetically and effectively dealt with. Pupils behave well but will chatter if their work does not stretch them enough. Pupils keep themselves safe and report that the very rare incidences of bullying are quickly and effectively dealt with. They particularly enjoy lessons and one group said, 'Learning is great fun!' Pupils have a good understanding of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and do their best to take regular exercise and eat healthy food. This is greatly assisted by the recent appointment of a chef, who makes healthy school food very appetising. Pupils are keen to take responsibility as house captains and as members of the school council. However, they would like more opportunity to support the local and wider community through such activities as charity work. Although standards in the basic skills are below average, pupils' positive attitudes towards learning mean that their preparation for secondary school and future employment is satisfactory. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They play together well and readily share toys and apparatus. Attendance is below average, largely because of the high number of extended overseas holidays. The school is now working hard with parents to reduce absence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are many signs that teaching is improving. For example, teachers' good class management ensures lessons are now orderly and are no longer interrupted by silly behaviour. Pupils enjoy lessons and concentrate well because they find the work engaging. Teachers make increasingly

good use of test results to plan work that meets the different needs of pupils, which means that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. However, the work planned for more-able pupils is not always demanding enough and their progress sometimes slows. Teachers do not always get pupils to check their work to see that it is accurate. While marking shows where mistakes are made, it does not set challenging goals or show pupils what they have to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a sensible balance of adult-led and child-led activities in the Nursery and Reception. The school's curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Assemblies provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual matters and there are increasing opportunities for pupils to share the wide cultural heritage within the school. More practical learning, for example, using experiments in mathematics to develop estimating skills, is making the curriculum more relevant and engaging. Standards in mathematics have risen because there are more opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems. English standards are improving because plans put greater emphasis on talking and listening to help pupils organise their ideas before they write. The range of clubs provided is too limited and there are not enough visitors into school or visits out to broaden pupils' interests and raise their aspirations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory. However pastoral support is outstanding, which ensures that children feel very safe and secure in school. Pupils have regained full confidence in adults. The sensitive support given to pupils with disabilities is effective in ensuring they take full part in school life. The role of teaching assistants is improving and they provide satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and for the many pupils who are gaining proficient standards of English. Health and safety arrangements are robust. Teachers' marking and their feedback on test results to pupils is not effective in most classes. This means that pupils are not sure of their targets or how they can improve their work; as a result academic support is only just satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction for the school. She has capitalised on the improvements made by the associate headteacher and, with the good support of the senior leadership team and the local authority, has established rigorous procedures for checking and improving the school's performance. For example, the school now has effective procedures to check pupils' progress each term, and improved measures, such as booster classes, to help pupils catch up when their progress slows. The work of the leadership team with teachers has improved their class management skills so that lessons are not interrupted by poor behaviour and has improved teachers use of marks from tests to plan suitable work. Subject leaders are only beginning to take a full part in monitoring and evaluating standards and securing improvements in their areas.

The school has a fairly accurate view of the quality of education it provides and has properly identified clear priorities for improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are well informed and have high ambitions for the school. Their developing understanding of data means they are beginning to challenge the school over its performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

- 28 June 2007 Dear Pupils Ladypool Primary School, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham B11 1QT We enjoyed our visit to your school. You were very polite and friendly and you made us feel most welcome. We enjoyed the discussions we had with you about the work and activities you do at school. You clearly get on with each other and the adults in school very well and you are very proud of the school's happy atmosphere. We decided Ladypool is a satisfactory school. We also think it is improving. Here are some of our findings.
- You make satisfactory progress in all year groups
- Teaching is satisfactory
- You enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You behave well.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum helps you understand why it is important to be healthy.
- Adults in the school look after you very well.
- The headteacher leads the school well and teachers are working hard to make sure the school gets better. We have asked the school to do three things to help it improve further.
- Improve teaching so that you all make good progress.
- Make sure you know how to make your work better.
- Help teachers who lead subjects raise the standard of your work. We wish you all success in the future. Yours sincerely Gerald Griffin Lead Inspector