

Penns Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103356
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286636
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Arnalena Bee

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Buet
Headteacher	Maureen Jones
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2002
School address	Berwood Road Sutton Coldfield B72 1BS
Telephone number	0121 4648014
Fax number	0121 4648016

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Penns is slightly smaller than the average size primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A number of pupils from other minority ethnic groups attend the school. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is below average although the number of pupils who have statements of educational need is higher than average.

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 where all pupils flourish. Its success is as a result of the dedicated and very caring leadership of the headteacher and a remarkable degree of commitment from the adults who work in the school. Consequently, pupils arrive in school each morning ready to work hard. As one pupil said, 'Learning is fun here'. School life is interesting and exciting and pupils thoroughly enjoy all that they do. As a result, they leave the school as well-rounded individuals, oozing with confidence, aware of the importance of education and with a thirst for knowledge. Their personal development is outstanding. Pupils of all ages speak extremely confidently about the importance of living a healthy and safe lifestyle and talk very knowledgeably and maturely about the dangers they may encounter as they grow up. They talk about 'safe' drugs and 'bad' drugs and say they especially like it when the Health Education bus visits the school. These visits develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of these important issues very well. Pupils' contribution to the local community is good. They talked very sensitively and knowledgeably about why they sold cakes to raise money for a local hospice, for example. The curriculum is good but is especially well enhanced by an outstanding range of visits and visitors. This makes learning more interesting as well as reinforcing pupils' previous learning. The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. There are good induction procedures that help the youngest children settle in quickly and easily and make steady progress. However, some of these children do not achieve as well as they could in all areas of learning. This is because, during lessons, there is not always enough emphasis on the need for children to write letters, words and numbers with the correct formation and grammatically accurate sentences.

overall achievement is good and standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average as a result of significant improvement over the last three years. However, there are some year groups where progress is not always so rapid. This is because teaching is not consistently good in all classes. Even though teaching and learning are good overall there are occasions when pupils of all abilities are not challenged enough.

Leadership and management are good. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well. Good leadership and management has ensured a well motivated and buoyant team. Everyone enthusiastically does their bit to make sure the pupils learn in a safe, caring and stimulating environment. They all work very well together as a team and know, from the pupils' responses, that the pupils really appreciate all that they do. One boy said 'Our caretaker is great, he makes the outside look really nice and he even washes the tables when we go home.' Care, guidance and support are good. Outstanding attention to detail ensures pupils are kept healthy and safe. The personal development of pupils is very good as a result of good academic guidance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve all teaching to the level of the best so that pupils in all year groups are consistently challenged.
- Improve the teaching of writing and number formation in the Reception class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are well above average by the time they leave in Year 6. Pupils make good progress between starting and leaving school, but in some year groups, progress is not as rapid as in others. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. School information shows that pupils make better progress at the top of the school and in Year 2.

When children start school their attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. Most children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress and are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of Reception. 2006 national assessments show broadly average standards for pupils in Year 2, indicating satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. However, school data shows that current standards are slightly higher. Pupils' work in Year 2 indicates that they have made good progress this year. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved year on year since 2004 and are currently well above average in English, mathematics and science. The good support that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive from the teaching assistants contributes well to their achievement and enables them to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are proud of their school and love learning. As a result, attendance is above average and pupils participate enthusiastically in the wide range of opportunities provided. Behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils' awareness of how to keep safe in school and beyond is outstanding. Pupils' views are gathered in a number of ways including regular classroom meetings, which identify issues to be discussed by the school council. The introduction of healthy snacks at playtimes is just one example of pupils' views being valued and acted upon. This initiative reflects the pupils' excellent understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They really appreciate their beautiful school grounds and take full advantage of the opportunities for physical activity both inside and out. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy all activities offered during their celebration of cultural diversity in their creative arts week, for example. Even the youngest children learned how to dance an Argentinean Tango. Pupils know they are valued as individuals and recognised and rewarded for their talents, interests and efforts in many ways throughout their time in school. They work very well together in pairs and groups, and have many opportunities to be creative and make decisions so that they are well prepared for their next schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and teaching assistants develop very good relationships with pupils and this contributes well to the good progress pupils make. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good, as is their behaviour. No formal teaching of literacy and numeracy lessons was seen during the inspection because the pupils were taking part in 'Creative Arts Week' that was focused on 'Celebrating Diversity'. During these activities, many teachers used their interactive whiteboards well to support and reinforce learning. There are some inconsistencies in teaching and pupils

learn better in some classes than others. Pupils' work shows that most lessons are well planned and activities are generally well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers have high expectations with regard to presenting work neatly. Most books, especially those in Year 6, show beautifully neat work. In a few classes, work is not always challenging enough for different groups of pupils. In most classes marking is not only supportive but also informative and helps the pupils know what they need to do to improve. In a few classes the quality of marking is not consistently so good. In Reception there is not always enough emphasis on effectively developing children's writing and number skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is interesting and exciting. National strategies and guidelines are used well to ensure that learning is built on year on year, which enables most pupils to achieve well in English, mathematics and science. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the school was inspected last, which has resulted in pupils making better progress in this subject. The curriculum for the youngest children in the school is satisfactory and enables them to get off to a steady start. However, there is too little emphasis, at times, on developing basic writing and numeracy skills. Throughout the school, work for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is planned well, ensuring their good progress. There is an outstanding range of activities that enrich and enhance work in lessons. This makes a very good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils' cultural development is planned for very well, in particular during 'Creative Arts Week'. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the interesting and exciting activities that were planned to develop their understanding of South America, for example.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for. They learn and play in a very caring, safe and supportive environment. Procedures for keeping them safe are secure. Attention to health and safety arrangements in and around the school is outstanding. New pupils who enter the school at different times during the year say they settle in well and make lots of new friends. Good arrangements are in place to allow pupils to transfer to their next school easily and happily. There are also good links with specialist agencies to ensure that pupils with specific needs are well catered for. The good support most pupils receive helps them reach and often exceed challenging targets. Parents are well informed about pupils' individual targets and there are a number of systems to motivate pupils to achieve their best. The school acknowledges that there are some inconsistencies in the way pupils are supported to meet their targets. The best practice is in Key Stage 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the HT is outstanding, especially in the way she nurtures pupils' personal development. The new senior management team and middle management include a wide range of expertise and experience. They collaborate very well and are having a positive impact upon school performance. The capacity to improve is good. The tracking of pupils' achievements in English and mathematics has improved over the last few years. These new systems are used

effectively to identify individual pupils who are underperforming and require extra support. The system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has been developed well since the previous inspection. Although the school has correctly identified what is required to improve teaching further they have not yet fully implemented the actions required. The involvement of the whole school staff in identifying priorities for school improvement is good. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory, and has improved since the previous inspection. It is not yet sufficiently focused on the impact of the school's provision on pupils' achievement.

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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?	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	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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?	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.

Annex A

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	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

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Penns Primary, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1BS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school a few weeks ago. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the exciting things you do. We think that you go to a good school where all the adults work so well together to make sure that you have fun as you learn.

This is what we especially liked about your school:

- We think, and your parents agree, that you are safe and well cared for in school.
- Most of you make good progress and by the time you leave in Year 6 the standards that you reach are higher than those of other children of your age.
- We think the school is well led.
- The teachers plan a good range of exciting and interesting activities, which help you learn well. They also invite a lot of visitors into school to talk and work with you, which makes learning even more interesting and fun.
- You all behave well in lessons, in the dining hall and when you play outside.
- We think you are right when you say that your caretaker is great. The gardens and the outside area are beautifully kept. Inside, the school is very well looked after and a lovely place to learn.

To make the school even better, we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that in all lessons, everyone learns well and makes good progress
- make sure that the youngest children know how to form their letters and numbers.

Keep working hard, smiling and having fun as you learn

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee Lead inspector