



Heathlands Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 103382
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286644
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Heath Way
School category	Community		Castle Bromwich
Age range of pupils	3–11		Birmingham B34 6NB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7472705
Number on roll (school)	462	Fax number	0121 7495997
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	W Watts-Boothby
		Headteacher	K Whitehouse
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006	Inspection number 286644
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school takes most of its pupils from the local estates and tower blocks of Castle Bromwich. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. An average number of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average, with language and social skills being especially weak. In the Nursery and Reception classes, there are more children in the early stages of learning English than in the past.

At the time of the inspection the headteacher was on long-term sick leave. The deputy headteacher had been acting headteacher since December 2005, but on the first day of the inspection a newly appointed acting headteacher took up post.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where pupils are happy and grow in confidence. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps children to make good progress, though standards are lower than those found nationally by the end of the Reception year. In the Reception classes, in particular, an exciting curriculum makes learning interesting and helps children to acquire new skills quickly.

Standards are below average by the end of Year 6. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is now satisfactory overall, but there remains a backlog of underachievement in mathematics. In the last year, senior managers have rightly focused on raising standards in English and this has had a positive effect, with national test results improving in 2006, particularly in writing. Pupils are now doing better in English because teachers are matching work more closely to individual needs and are using targets well to identify those requiring additional support. This good practice is less evident in mathematics and there are too many occasions when work does not build on what pupils already know, slowing the pace of learning.

Throughout the school, pupils are polite and courteous and they especially enjoy the way that visits and visitors help to make learning fun. Pupils respond well to the praise given by members of staff, who recognise and celebrate their efforts. This helps to raise pupils' self-esteem. Pupils work hard most of the time, though they sometimes lose interest when expected to sit for too long during lessons. They learn to eat healthily and develop a sound awareness of how to stay safe. Through fundraising and other activities, they make a good contribution to the local community. There is a satisfactory curriculum, though some lessons are too long and the school has rightly identified that there is too little use of numeracy and literacy in different subjects. This reduces the rate at which skills can improve. Nevertheless, this is a school that is not standing still, despite the long-term absence of the headteacher. Senior managers have high aspirations for the school and underachievement in English has been tackled rigorously. There have been many good recent developments and there is a secure understanding of what still needs to be done. The school has a wealth of information about pupils' progress. However, this is not yet used well enough to identify strengths and weaknesses, making it difficult for subject leaders, in particular, to respond quickly to areas of concern as they arise.

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, pupils do not do well enough in mathematics. Before its next Section 5 inspection, inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days' notice of such a visit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that teaching consistently meets differing needs.
- Make better use of information about how well pupils are doing to identify and tackle any underachievement as soon as it arises.

- Review the length of lessons and increase opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and literacy skills in different subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress from their low starting points, though by the end of the Reception year, standards are still below nationally expected levels. Progress is especially good in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average overall, with test results in mathematics consistently lagging behind those of English and science. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and science, and test results rose in 2006. However, in mathematics, test results at the end of Year 6 fell, and too many pupils of differing capabilities failed to reach the targets that had been set for them. In mathematics, teaching is not yet ensuring that all pupils do well enough. Older pupils have weak basic mathematical skills and they lack confidence when solving problems or carrying out investigations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy coming to school. Consequently, attendance has improved over the last few years and is now only slightly below average. Pupils generally behave well in lessons, though they sometimes become inattentive when expected to sit for too long and they can be overly boisterous at playtimes and lunchtimes. Relationships are harmonious. Bullying and racism are rare and pupils agree that when they do occur, they are dealt with very quickly.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Social skills are successfully improved through a good range of educational visits, including a residential experience for Year 6 pupils, which helps to develop independence and confidence. The school council gives pupils good opportunities to have their views heard. School councillors are pleased that teachers take their suggestions seriously, acting upon them whenever possible. Pupils understand which foods are healthy and are beginning make wise choices at lunchtime. Pupils have a sound awareness of how to stay safe. They make a good contribution towards the community by organising fundraising activities and visiting a home for the elderly. Activities such as these prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, where teaching is often good, teachers plan activities that interest and challenge the children, helping them to make good progress. In Years 1 to 6, teachers are hard working and make good use of resources to make learning fun. Skilled teaching assistants give good support, especially when they are working with small groups of pupils. Teachers manage lessons well and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. However, pupils are often asked to sit for too long at the start of some lessons, which unnecessarily delays things. Teachers plan very carefully for lessons but in mathematics, work is not matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils; this slows the pace of learning. Teachers are beginning to use their assessments of pupils' work to help set clearer targets for learning. Presently these are used more consistently in literacy than in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a lively range of experiences which meet their needs well. In Years 1 to 6, there is rightly a strong emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills and this is beginning to raise standards, especially in English. However, some lessons are too long and there are missed opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills by using them in different subjects. There are a good number of out-of-school activities that enrich learning and have a good effect on pupils' personal development, for example, pupils' work with the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. This gives them good opportunities to work together, exploring and creating music for themselves. Visits from a local police officer help pupils to learn about how to stay safe and be responsible.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with a strength in the quality of pastoral support. Members of staff are kind and caring and get on well with the pupils. One pupil said, 'If you're feeling down you get lots of support and it relieves the stress'. The school identifies and helps pupils at risk and works very closely with outside agencies to safeguard the well-being of all pupils. A learning mentor plays a key role in providing personal support for pupils who find school difficult. She is readily available to resolve problems. A very well-attended breakfast club gives a good start to the day for many pupils and improves attendance and punctuality, as well as helping to introduce healthy eating.

Academic support is satisfactory. There are sound procedures for assessing pupils' progress but insufficient use is made of this information to guide planning and to ensure that all pupils are challenged fully, especially in mathematics. A recently

appointed teaching assistant provides good support for those pupils in the Nursery who start school with limited spoken English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The drive and commitment of senior managers and the support of the local authority have meant that, in the absence of the headteacher, the school has continued to move in the right direction. Members of staff are working well as a team and are very positive about recent changes. There are satisfactory systems for evaluating how well the school is doing, though too little of this responsibility is given to subject leaders, making it difficult for them to take a significant role in improving standards. The school has begun to use information to ascertain how well pupils are doing. More needs to be done to ensure that any underachievement is identified and dealt with as soon as it arises. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive but do not do enough to hold the school to account, so making it difficult for them to be involved fully in strategic planning. Nonetheless, this is a school that, under the purposeful leadership of senior managers, is improving. The school has shown in the effective way that it has quickly raised standards in English that, despite the continued changes in leadership, there is a sound capacity for further improvement.

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

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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly.

- What your school does best
- Children quickly learn new things in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You enjoy school and are polite and courteous.
- The school council is doing a good job.
- Your teachers are very kind and caring and they look after you well.
- The school is good at teaching you about the importance of staying healthy and there are lots of interesting visits and visitors.
- Members of staff are working very hard to make sure that you learn even more quickly.
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you do better in mathematics by making sure that the work that they give you is not too hard or too easy.
- Use information about how well you are learning to make sure that you are doing well enough from year to year.
- Give you more chances to use your reading, writing and number skills in different subjects.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and trying to concentrate more when you are sitting together on the carpet at the start of lessons.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Capper Lead Inspector