



Stivichall Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103686
Local Authority Coventry
Inspection number 286725
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Ian Knight

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Community		Coventry
Age range of pupils	5–11		CV3 6DH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76419555
Number on roll (school)	524	Fax number	024 76690281
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Pauline Parkes
		Headteacher	Pamela Cole
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves an area of some social advantage to the south of the city centre. Relatively few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Few pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. While most pupils are from White British backgrounds, a significant number are of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or of mixed heritage. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is high, though none are at the early stages of learning English. The headteacher is part-way through a two-year secondment to the local authority. The current senior management team is made up of acting appointments from the existing staff. Attainment on entry to the school is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'We are very pleased with the high level of education our children receive at Stivichall... both are keen and happy to go to school, enjoying the variety of activities on offer', was a typical response from a parent. This echoes the inspection team's view of this good school. Good care, guidance and support, including excellent pastoral care, result in pupils whose behaviour is outstanding and who really enjoy school. Good and effective leadership and management is enhancing teamwork between staff, governors, parents and pupils in the school. This is evident in the development of a more creative approach to the already good curriculum and the early preparations for the replacement of the school's buildings.

Children make good progress in the Reception classes because teaching is good. Teachers plan a good balance of activities led by adults and those initiated by children themselves. By the time they move into Year 1, their skills, knowledge and understanding are above the levels expected for their age. Good teaching continues throughout the rest of the school. Teachers use questioning well and have high expectations of how hard pupils will work. Pupils are willing to contribute to discussions, listening to the teacher and their peers attentively. Their personal development is good and their moral and social development is particularly strong. However, they do not consistently have opportunities to demonstrate true independence in their work because lessons are sometimes led too much by the teacher. Nevertheless, following good progress, standards in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 are very high in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics.

Standards in Year 6 in 2006 were above average. When these are considered in the light of these pupils' starting points and the progress made over time and in lessons, these outcomes represent good achievement throughout the school. Good links with other schools are beginning to improve provision for the most capable. However, the challenge such pupils experience in lessons is inconsistent because not all lessons include different tasks for different pupils. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures that they make the same good progress as their peers.

The acting leadership team ensure that all staff share a clear vision for the school. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained and there have been evident improvements, such as in the curriculum. These, together with effective longer-term strategic planning based on good quality self-evaluation, give the school good capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the all pupils, especially the most capable, are consistently challenged beyond their comfort zone so that they achieve as well as they possibly can.
- Make more opportunities for pupils to be independent in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and enter Year 1 with standards that are above the expected levels for their age in all areas of learning, and particularly so in early reading and writing. This prepares them well for learning in all subjects of the National Curriculum.

In Years 1 to 6, good progress continues. Standards in Year 2 in the 2006 National Curriculum tests were exceptionally high in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. Through an analysis of test papers in mathematics, the school identified that the reason for the slightly lower results was a relative weakness in written calculation methods. Strategies have been set in place to improve matters. In the juniors, standards are significantly better than average in all areas. An analysis of pupils' progress over time and in lessons makes it clear that achievement in Key Stage 2, as in the rest of the school, is good. Nevertheless, there is scope in all year groups for the most capable pupils to be challenged more consistently.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress from their starting points because they are given good support through individual plans and by adults in the classroom. Pupils from different ethnic groups all achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

'People enjoy school here', is a phrase that typifies pupils' very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life. This enjoyment is reflected in good attendance and punctuality. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It builds well on the good start made in Reception, where children settle very quickly into school. Pupils' moral and social development is particularly good and reflected in their outstanding behaviour. Pupils from different cultural backgrounds get on very well with each other. Bullying and racist incidents are rare. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility within the school community. The school council is working towards improving playtime equipment and 'playground pals' help other children well at playtimes. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities in the wider community and raise funds for a range of charities. Pupils are developing as well-rounded and confident young people. They eagerly welcome opportunities in lessons to work independently and use their initiative.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to stay healthy. They are clear about what constitutes a good diet and enjoy exercise. The take-up of after-school sporting clubs is good. Pupils are also safety-conscious and careful on the many steps and uneven surfaces around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Very positive relationships in classrooms and pupils' eagerness to learn mean that teachers are able to spend their time enriching learning rather than maintaining discipline. Staff are embracing the moves towards a more creative curriculum. This is beginning to bear fruit in lessons, for example, when work in history about the Romans was used as a basis for learning about non-fiction texts in English. Teachers use questioning effectively, asking questions that do not lead to short answers, and challenging pupils when their responses are superficial. However, pupils are not consistently given enough opportunities to be truly independent and to take charge of their own learning. Although examples were observed in which pupils had some opportunities, these do not currently go far enough. The most capable pupils are not consistently challenged by the work they are given because teachers' planning does not vary the tasks for different groups effectively enough. When leading small groups, in or outside the classroom, teaching assistants make a positive contribution and ensure that pupils who need a little extra help are able to make progress in a supportive atmosphere.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has made a good start to enhancing the already good curriculum by developing a more creative approach to learning through the arts. Pupils are actively involved in developing ideas and drawing up plans for the new school, using a wide range of skills and knowledge from across a wide range of subject areas. Visits and visitors captivate pupils' imagination and extend their knowledge and understanding. This supplements the continuing good focus on the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and successfully helps to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and future economic well-being. A feature of the good provision in the Foundation Stage is the good use of the outside area to support children's development across the six areas of learning. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship promotes their personal development well. A wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities caters for all interests.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Such pupils benefit, for example, from focused learning in smaller groups in English and mathematics. However, provision to challenge the most capable is inconsistent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care for pupils is outstanding. As one child said, 'You never need to panic, you can always get help'. This high quality care is based on a commitment to meeting

the individual needs of all pupils and the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe at school are secure and reviewed regularly. The school works well with parents and pupils to help pupils to make progress. Parents are kept well informed about what their child is expected to learn each term and targets for literacy and numeracy are shared with them. However, they are not always routinely informed about when or whether their children have met their targets. These targets currently relate to groups and are not always sufficiently matched to individual pupils' needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting senior management team is leading the school effectively during the headteacher's secondment. They work well as a team and successfully promote a continuing clear vision for the school's development. Day-to-day routines are well established and the school runs smoothly.

The acting headteacher has worked hard to involve all staff in planning the future development of the school, and in monitoring and evaluating the progress being made towards these goals. This shared sense of purpose is successfully focusing stakeholders' efforts on raising achievement. Subject leaders monitor the provision and standards in their subject effectively and present useful annual reports to senior managers, with this information forming the basis of future plans. The school has rightly identified that its present improvement planning cycle is too short and has implemented a three-year plan to help highlight more long-term goals. Links with outside agencies and parents are good. Most parents are pleased with the school's provision. Although a few feel that they are not informed or consulted enough about the school's work, consultations with all stakeholders about the design of the new school building are proceeding well. The governing body is well informed about the school's work through the acting headteacher's detailed reports and close links with subject leaders. Through their shaping and refining of the school's self-evaluation report and improvement plans, they have a clear appreciation of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve.

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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	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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.

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 being so welcoming and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed watching you work and chatting with some of you about the school. I'm writing to tell you what we found out. You said you think your school is good and we agree.

Here are the best things about your school:

- you behave really well and this helps your teachers to teach you well
- you do well in lessons, enjoy school enormously and reach good standards in your tests
- all of the adults in school really care about you and work hard to make sure you are safe and do well
- your lessons are becoming more interesting as the school uses more art, music, drama, visits and visitors to make them more exciting. We really enjoyed seeing you learn about the rain forests in Year 4 and listen to the storyteller in Year 2
- the acting headteacher and the other senior teachers know how well you and the school are doing and what they need to do next to make it even better

To help the school get even better, we've asked it to particularly concentrate on a couple of areas.

- Sometimes, those of you who learn fastest don't always have work that's hard enough. We've asked the school to make sure that everyone has work that is hard, but not too hard! You can help by always doing your best and telling teachers if the work you're doing is too easy or too difficult.
- Some teachers already help you to learn some things yourself, for example, by doing your own research on projects. We think you should have more chances to work like this.

We enjoyed visiting you and hope that you will carry on enjoying school and doing well. We wish you well for the future.