



Wrens Nest Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103823
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286776
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector David Driscoll

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Foxglove Road
School category	Community		Dudley
Age range of pupils	3–11		DY1 3NQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818515
Number on roll (school)	367	Fax number	01384 818516
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	C Lacey
		Headteacher	R Wylie
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006	Inspection number 286776
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wrens Nest is a large primary school serving a very deprived area. More than half the school population are eligible for free school meals. Over a third of pupils have learning difficulties or physical disabilities, many of whom have communication and behavioural difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wrens Nest is a rapidly improving school as a result of good leadership and management. Senior staff, especially the headteacher, have made good progress to overcome many weaknesses in performance as a result the school is now providing a satisfactory education. The senior management team have all the skills necessary to take the school forward. They are successful because they have concentrated on the basics, such as improving pupils' attitudes and tackling weaker teaching. The school's evaluation of its performance as good, rather than satisfactory, is a result of too much emphasis being placed upon the school's care and guidance, rather than weighing this against the quality of teaching and learning, which is satisfactory.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although they leave school with standards that remain below average. Teaching is satisfactory, and strengths in Years 3 to 6 where pupils make good progress in the older classes. In Years 1 and 2, pupils often spend too long on the same activity, as their concentration wanes, the lesson slows and they do not learn as much as the older pupils. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children make good progress in their personal development. However, the curriculum does not place the same consistent emphasis on improving children's basic skills of reading, writing and number work. In all years, the wide range of activities available to pupils ensures that the curriculum is satisfactory, although they do not get enough opportunities to work on their own initiative.

The school's greatest strength is the excellent way it works with so many others to meet pupils' individual needs, and ensure that their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There are clear improvements in pupils' attitudes, attendance and behaviour as the school's good procedures for care, support and guidance take effect.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers use shorter, frequently changing tasks to improve pupils' concentration and the pace of lessons in Years 1 and 2.
- Plan the curriculum in the Foundation Stage to place a more consistent emphasis on the development of basic skills.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to take responsibility and work on their own initiative.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress at the school, both in terms of their academic standards and the basic skills that they will need later in life. Children join the Nursery with standards that are very low. Many have difficulty communicating and few have reached the stage of development expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Their personal development is good, but

by the time they start Year 1, standards in other aspects of their development remain exceptionally low. Satisfactory progress continues through Years 1 and 2. Pupils improve their basic skills, but by the end of Year 2 their reading, writing and mathematical skills remain very low.

Progress improves significantly in Year 3 so that pupils gain an adequate grasp of basic skills, this enables them to make good progress in all subjects in Years 4, 5 and 6. Although standards are now below average by the time pupils leave school, this is a great improvement and reflects the much better progress that pupils make in Years 3 to 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory and this is reflected in the improved attendance and punctuality to school. Few pupils, however, are sufficiently self-confident to use their own initiative, preferring to rely heavily on their adult helpers. On starting school, many pupils have difficulty controlling their behaviour and actions towards others. Their understanding of the impact that their behaviour has on others develops well. As a result behaviour at the school is now satisfactory and the number of exclusions has fallen rapidly. Pupils enjoy coming to school; a view strongly supported by parents. Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The pupils learn best when they are given short activities that change frequently. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 consistently use this approach to maintain pupils' concentration. The short activities mean that teachers are able to push pupils through new topics at a good pace, setting tight time limits, which the pupils are keen to meet. Such an approach is not prevalent in Years 1 and 2, so these pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils frequently spend too long sitting on the carpet, so they start to fidget and lose concentration. This in turn can often lead to pupils not settling quickly to their next task. Standards of discipline across the school are good, so pupils with behavioural problems rarely disrupt lessons. If they do, they are calmly dealt with so lessons continue with the minimum of delay. Marking is satisfactory, but many comments consist of 'well done' or 'brilliant', without telling the pupils how they could do even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school uses its excellent links with outside agencies to arrange many extra activities to meet the specific needs of groups of pupils. Those who find it difficult to control

their behaviour, for example, have their curriculum adapted to focus on learning the skills that will allow them to be reintegrated back into their class. Pupils with communication difficulties have their curriculum carefully adapted by specialists to make sure they can make themselves understood as quickly as possible in order to play a full part in the life of the school. Many activities are aimed at overcoming pupils' past difficulties, such as unhealthy lifestyles and poor behaviour, and are successful in raising standards of personal development to a satisfactory level. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to take responsibility or to work on their own initiative. The lack of such opportunities within the school leads to pupils having only a satisfactory understanding of their role in the community, despite good activities such as fund raising for charity and inviting members of the local community into school. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is successful in improving pupils' personal development, but does not place the same emphasis on consistently improving other basic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school works exceptionally well with a wide range of partners and local agencies to meet the needs of all pupils. If a child has a specific need, the school goes to great lengths to help them. A specialist in communication is employed full time in the Foundation Stage, for example, and the school pays for its own assessment of pupils' learning difficulties so it can act to address them quickly. A significant number of pupils have difficulties in managing their behaviour, but there are very effective systems in place to support them. The assistance of learning mentors is outstanding in helping older pupils to control their behaviour, while the Nurture Group does the same for younger ones. Attendance is improving rapidly because the school is constantly reminding parents of its importance. Last year, for example, any persistent latecomer arriving after 9.00am was marked absent and the parent informed. Punctuality has dramatically improved as a result. Parents know that if a pupil stays away without good reason, a member of staff will quickly be in touch to find out what is going on. Parents value the school's high commitment to their children's health and safety. Procedures to safeguard pupils are followed rigorously. The academic guidance pupils receive is satisfactory. Most of the more able older pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve, but lower attainers and younger pupils do not understand the system. Several of the younger ones think the 'Ladder of Success', for example, is a measure of how tall they are, not how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is now improving rapidly under the inspired leadership of the headteacher. Parents hold her in high regard because she fights hard for the school and the local community. She has successfully forged the staff into a team that is intent on transforming a satisfactory school into a good one. There have been indicators of

widespread underachievement in the recent past but these have now been overcome. Further signs of good improvement are seen in many aspects of the school's work, such as attendance, punctuality and pupils' behaviour. In order to get this far, the school's managers have concentrated on getting a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The systems used, especially the analysis of data, have proved successful. They have allowed managers to concentrate on the big issues that affected the whole school. However, the time has now come when the focus of initiatives needs to be more precise, and this is not evident in the school's current plans. Plans to improve teaching, for example, focus on the whole school, whereas the aspects in need of improvement are different in Years 1 and 2 to those in Years 3 to 6.

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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?	1
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?	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	3
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	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?	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	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	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 very much for helping us with our inspection. You told us lots about what you do at school and this made it much easier to find out what is going on there.

You told us you like coming to school, and that it is getting better. We agree. The school is satisfactory, but is getting better all the time. We saw that you are helping by not missing school and making sure you are out of bed in time so you are not late. You have lots of grown-ups to help you, and the school is very good at making sure you get help when you need it.

There are some things that the school could do to get better even quicker. Those of you in Years 3 to 6 are getting on well, but those in Years 1 and 2 can get a bit bored when you are asked to do the same thing for too long. So, we have asked your teachers to make sure you only do the same thing for a little while before changing to do something else. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes quickly learn how to get on well with each other, but we have asked the grown-ups to do more reading, writing and maths with them. Finally, the last thing is about the way you rely on the grown-ups. We have asked them to help you work more on your own. Often you ask for help when you do not really need it. Many of you are better at things than you think you are. So, if you believe that you can do something, then have a go at it and see what happens.