



Cradley CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103846
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 286786
Inspection dates 13 July 2006 to 14 July 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Cradley
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Halesowen, West Midlands B63 2UL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818230
Number on roll	201	Fax number	01384 818232
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Panter
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2002	Headteacher	Mrs Janeen Slack

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school with seven classes. Nearly all pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the numbers of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times are below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the progress made by pupils in Years 1 to 6, the quality of teaching, the use of assessment and curriculum planning.

Over the past two years the school has experienced significant change with the loss of many experienced teachers. The school has been forced to make temporary appointments. This has led to weaknesses in both the teaching and the curriculum. The school's present effectiveness is inadequate and it provides unsatisfactory value for money. However, pupils enjoy school. They attend well and have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils with learning disabilities are given support that effectively enables them to be included in lessons and make satisfactory progress against their learning targets.

Overall provision in Reception is satisfactory. Children come into school with the skills and abilities expected for their age. They make steady progress and by the time they start Year 1 most have reached the expected levels. They make particularly good progress in developing their personal and social skills.

Pupils have not made the progress they should have by the end of Year 2 because, until very recently, teaching in Year 2 was inadequate. The current teaching is better and is helping pupils to make up lost ground. Nevertheless, standards remain below average at the end of Year 2.

In Year 6, standards are average. However, this group of pupils has not made sufficient progress since Year 2, where they attained well above average standards. Teaching has not always given these pupils sufficient challenge for more able pupils or support lower attainers. Progress in writing has been particularly weak. This is because what is planned for pupils, as they move through the school, is not building on what they have already learned and achieved. The use of assessment to match work to pupils needs has been inadequate and some assessments made have been inaccurate. Over the past year teaching has improved because of the support provided by leaders, and is now satisfactory. Some weaknesses remain such as in the consistency in marking and opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum.

The school's leaders have been largely successful in tackling weaknesses, although the response to some teaching issues has been slow. Progress since the previous inspection has not been sufficient, but current improvements in teaching and pupils' progress show the school has the capacity to improve. Governors support the school strongly and acknowledge weaknesses but have been reluctant to challenge inadequacy. Although leaders accurately identify strengths and weaknesses, the school's own view of its effectiveness is too generous.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 so that the needs of pupils are effectively met.
- Improve the accuracy and use of assessment so that work is matched to pupils' needs and progress is carefully measured.
- Ensure that curriculum planning enables skills to be built on progressively, especially in writing in different subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate overall, although pupils with learning disabilities make satisfactory progress against their learning targets. Children enter the Reception year with expected skills and abilities, but a few have weaknesses in speaking and listening. They make satisfactory progress overall through Reception, but good progress in their personal and social development. Most children reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. In Year 2, standards are below average because too many pupils do not achieve what they should. Both lower and higher attaining pupils do not progress at a sufficient rate. There are however, clear signs of improvement following new teaching arrangements and pupils are beginning to make up lost ground.

In Year 6 standards are average. However, these pupils have made inadequate progress in relation to their starting points at the end of Year 2. There is a particular weakness in writing. Leaders have provided significant support for new and inexperienced teachers which has improved teaching and pupils are beginning to make broadly satisfactory progress. The school set challenging targets for 2006 which were missed, narrowly in mathematics, but widely in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and attend well. Behaviour is particularly good in lessons. Pupils feel safe and well cared for because they know that adults are there to help them. They say that staff deal effectively with any incidences of bullying. Pupils are considerate towards each other and behave in a safe way as they move around the school and on the adventure equipment in the playground. They are suitably involved in making decisions, such as developing new playground equipment. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral and cultural development. Special assemblies help them to be sensitive and appreciate the achievements of others.

Pupils are aware of the reasons for healthy eating and the need for exercise, although they do not always choose the healthy options available at lunchtimes. There is a broad range of fundraising activities for local and international charities, a few of which are initiated by the pupils. Considerable sums of money are raised for communities who need extra help. These initiatives do much to develop pupils' personal qualities and

an understanding of how they can help. However, several pupils are ill-equipped for the next stage of learning because they have not developed sufficiently well the skills and abilities of which they are capable, particularly in writing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. This is due to new appointments and successful intervention by the headteacher and senior staff. Until very recently, teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 were inadequate overall and resulted in underachievement, although it was stronger in Years 3 and 4. The use of assessment to match work to pupils needs has been weak and some assessments have been inaccurate.

The current picture of teaching is more positive. Overall, teachers manage pupils well and promote good relationships. Pupils are keen to answer questions and co-operate well with each other in group work. In Reception, teaching is lively and work provided is well matched to children's needs. The teacher and teaching assistant work effectively as a team. In Year 2, teaching is developing some good opportunities for pupils to assess their writing so that they are clear about how to improve. Assessment is being used more effectively so that pupils of different abilities are increasingly being given work which is sufficiently challenging. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is often enthusiastic and pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas with each other to develop their understanding. Marking is broadly satisfactory but is inconsistent across the school. Teaching assistants provide valuable in-class support for pupils with learning disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Overall the curriculum is inadequate. Following a secure start made in Reception and Year 1, work does not build sufficiently well on what has gone before, particularly in writing. Too often the curriculum is not meeting the needs of pupils and is not helping them to make the progress they should. Despite this, there are good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology. Scientific investigations incorporate numeracy satisfactorily. However, there are not enough opportunities to write in different subjects and this lack of practice is a key factor in the low standards. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and sometimes work is not adapted sufficiently well for the needs of more able pupils.

The breakfast and after-school clubs are popular with parents and pupils but other opportunities for extending learning are limited. Pupils report that they are disappointed with the limited range of extra-curricular activities and say that they would like more visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff know the pupils well and the school is a welcoming and safe environment for learning. Effective steps have been taken to deal with incidents of bullying reported earlier this year. Child protection procedures are in place and staff training is up-to-date. The individual support provided for pupils with learning disabilities is good. Individual education plans give appropriate strategies and targets, incorporating advice from external agencies. The school welcomes parents into school, to join in assemblies or work with their children in family learning activities. Pupils are mostly aware of their learning targets and report that they are 'just hard enough' but marking is inconsistent across the school and does not always give pupils sufficient constructive advice on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Over the past two years many experienced staff have left and there have been difficulties in recruiting replacements. These changes resulted in weaker teaching. The headteacher and senior staff are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses and have largely successfully tackled the weaknesses. This has ensured that teaching is now satisfactory. However, improvements have been too late to prevent underachievement. A few staff have been slow to respond because they have not been sufficiently challenged to improve the consistency of their teaching. Improvement planning identifies the right issues for further development. The headteacher has arranged for external support and organised further targeted intervention. She has maintained good staff relationships and there is now a more stable staffing position. The systems to monitor and track pupils' overall progress are satisfactory but need to be streamlined to make information more accessible. However, staff are given clear feedback about the progress of individual pupils in their classes. This is helping them to plan for pupils' individual needs and combat underachievement. The work of leaders shows that the school has the capacity to improve.

Links with external agencies and parents are effective. Parents and pupils' views are sought through regular questionnaires. A few parents have voiced legitimate concerns about the limited range of activities outside lessons. Staff and governors are focused on improving standards and achievement and are all suitably involved in improvement planning. Governors have been kept informed about weaknesses in teaching. They provide strong support for the school but have been slow in challenging the headteacher about falling standards.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes.

We were very impressed with how friendly you were and ready to give your opinions about the school. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us.

What we most liked about your school

- The youngest children work well together.
- Your positive attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- How well you use information and communication technology.
- How clearly your headteacher knows what needs to be improved.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on

- Improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum in Years 1 to 6.
- Making sure that the work given is not too easy or difficult.
- Providing you with more opportunities to develop your writing skills in all subjects.

We enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.