



Ryders Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103979
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 286826
Inspection dates 31 January –1 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	Claypit Lane
School category	Community		West Bromwich
Age range of pupils	3–11		B70 9UJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5530658
Number on roll (school)	351	Fax number	0121 5800897
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mike Claridge
		Headteacher	Ian Wright
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 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 severe socio-economic disadvantage in West Bromwich. Because the immediately surrounding area is being redeveloped, the number on roll is falling. The school has gained the 'Healthy Schools' silver award, and gained established status in the 'Inclusive Sandwell, Inclusive Schools' programme. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is very high. Over half the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, including pupils of Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Caribbean, African or mixed heritage. About a third of pupils do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is about average. Staffing difficulties, including some long-term sickness, led to the appointment of the current acting headteacher from September 2006. A new children's centre has recently opened on the school site. The school, the children's centre and the adjacent secondary school are working very closely in a new strategic partnership under an executive director. On entry to the Nursery, standards are very low, especially with regard to communication and social skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This rapidly improving school sees itself as being on a journey to becoming good; currently, it is satisfactory because achievement, whilst improving, is satisfactory overall. The whole-school community has developed a tangible 'can do' attitude. As a parent said, 'All sides of the school, children included, pull together and there is a great sense of community and belonging.' This singleminded, shared commitment to improvement resulted in the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 improving phenomenally last year, even though pupils left the school with standards well below national averages. These pupils joined the school with standards that were very low. A legacy of underachievement, brought about by high levels of staff turnover and lack of continuity in teaching, was overcome by very rapid progress in Years 5 and 6. As a result, achievement over time in the juniors is satisfactory overall and good in mathematics. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress from a very low baseline because of well planned teaching and experiences, but still enter Year 1 with standards below expectations. Good progress continues in the infants and juniors. Improvements in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and self-belief through good teaching, care, guidance and support are all factors in the improving progress. Vulnerable groups are supported effectively by the well trained and effective teaching assistants. The use of short-term assessment to ensure that pupils know just how well they are doing and how to improve is developing. Currently, targets are set for groups and referred to in lessons, but they are not personalised enough to individual pupils. Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are good. They respond well to the school's warm and supportive ethos and appreciate the wide variety of enhancements to the curriculum. They really enjoy school and have a thorough understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Relationships are unfailingly positive and pupils care for each other well. The school is aware that the curriculum, although satisfactory, does not fully meet the needs of these learners and that thematic links to strengthen and reinforce learning are underdeveloped. Leadership and management are good. The highly committed senior leadership team work together with infectious enthusiasm and an overwhelming focus on improving the school's provision. However, members of the leadership team are not always able to identify sharply enough the outcomes of actions taken or planned. A sound improvement plan sets a clear, if short-term, agenda for further improvement and contributes to the school's good capacity for further improvement. The strategic partnership has already improved the school's financial management and plans are well advanced to improve provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement by:
- Making better use of assessment information to ensure that teaching and targets are more personalised to individuals and to challenge each pupil to do their very best.
- Improving the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils in the school, especially by forging strong links between subjects.

- Ensuring that strategic planning focuses equally on the outcomes expected as well as the actions being taken to improve provision, and that progress towards these outcomes is rigorously evaluated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils now make good progress throughout the school from a very low baseline. Despite their good progress in the Foundation Stage, children join Year 1 with standards that are below average. The school has recognised this and successfully changed how pupils in Year 1 are taught in order to ensure they continue to make good progress. Standards in Year 2 are within the average range, albeit slightly below, and have been rising modestly recently. Pupils in Key Stage 2, however, reach standards that are very low. This follows from a legacy of past underachievement caused by lack of continuity in teaching following high staff turnover. There have been some variations in progress: the school is aware that pupils with English as an additional language reached higher standards than native speakers last year. It explains that its teaching of basic skills was geared to the needs of these pupils particularly and that this is being addressed in the revision of the curriculum. Although pupils become technically adept, this affected all pupils' ability to reach the highest levels, as was evident when pupils looked at different descriptions of a scene. Because they knew that similes are features of good writing, they ranked a passage with a simile above others that were better. Until 2005, achievement in the juniors was also too low, but this improved massively in 2006 and school data suggests the improvement is being continued. Progress has accelerated for these pupils as they have moved through the juniors and overall achievement is satisfactory. However, school data shows that all pupils in the school, including those in the juniors, are now making good progress, which is confirmed by inspection evidence.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

There is a great sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm in the school, where pupils are encouraged to reflect upon and celebrate each other's success. Whilst attendance is below average, it is improving because the school makes great efforts to communicate with parents and help them understand the importance of regular attendance. Pupils pursue healthy lifestyles well, enjoying extensive opportunities to participate in team games and fitness activities as well as benefiting from healthy, balanced school dinners. High quality emotional health and well-being is a consequence of the school's concern for individual self-esteem, the constant emphasis on respect for others and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community and learn valuable enterprise skills. They raise money for charity, run regular school fairs where they organise stalls and take responsibility in teams, and enjoy links with a local factory. However, standards of literacy and numeracy inhibit their potential to thrive economically. Through a well established school council, they

influence decision making in school, while prefect and 'buddy' systems help them take responsibility for others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The main reason that pupils make good progress is the good teaching throughout the school. Lessons are planned rigorously so that pupils know what they are about to learn and how they might be able to measure their success. This is supported by the use of class and group targets that teachers refer to in lessons. However, there is scope to personalise this further and strengthen links with the National Curriculum so that pupils have an even better idea of their current status and what is expected. Teachers use questions that do not have a short answer well to test pupils' understanding and to identify and deal with potential misconceptions. Lessons in the Foundation Stage are carefully planned to include a balance between activities led by an adult and those chosen by children. This approach has continued into Year 1 with some success to meet the needs of those pupils who still need extra support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is presently satisfactory; recent improvements have yet to impact on learning. Throughout the school, topics are carefully planned but links between subjects are still being explored. Personal, social and health education has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage with a wide range of interesting activities, in all areas of learning, available for children to explore. Reception children have limited use of their small, secure outdoor area, although when the weather is better more activities are planned. Plans are well advanced for the Nursery to have an attractive outdoor area that the Reception children will share at playtimes. The curriculum is enriched well through a variety of visits and visitors. The most notable is a residential visit for Years 3 and 4: pupils were very excited about this. A good variety of extra-curricular activities is provided, including a number of sports and music clubs. The strategic partnership provides a great variety of additional learning opportunities for the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Learning takes place in a secure environment which is thoroughly checked for risks. The happy, productive ethos in school is a result of consistent and supportive interventions from teachers. There is little bullying because pupils are taught well to help and care for each other, and incidents are dealt with quickly. The school has good systems to check the progress of groups of pupils overall. At the same time, the advice they are given on how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve

is not yet specific enough. They do not always understand what their potential is and how to reach it, despite advances made by the school in helping them to reflect on their personal learning. The school's links with other agencies in the community are first rate. Its partnerships with secondary schools are well developed and prepare pupils well for their move to the next stage of education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The reorganisation of the senior leadership team, reinforced by the strategic partnership, has rejuvenated them and they are now bubbling over with enthusiasm and ideas to improve the school, which they are working together to introduce. However, whilst there are robust systems for monitoring the school's work, they do not focus enough on the expected outcomes, so monitoring and evaluation systems are satisfactory. This is reflected in the short-term improvement plan, put together by the senior team and already being refined, which would benefit from a clearer focus on outcomes. Nevertheless, the school is now improving rapidly. High staff morale has been nurtured by the acting headteacher and all staff work positively as part of the team with a burning desire to improve. This has borne fruit already in the improvement evident in achievement, which is being sustained. Equality of opportunity has a high profile in the school: senior leaders and all staff have the interests of each individual member of the school family at heart and this is evident in the good progress pupils make. The governing body is rapidly improving. Minutes of meetings show that they challenged well when the strategic partnership was being discussed. However, they have not had an opportunity to contribute to the school improvement plan or its monitoring, although plans for this are also well advanced.

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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	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	4
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

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?	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	3
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	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 being so polite and welcoming when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you work and chatting with some of you to help us to find out about the school. We think the school is improving quickly and is now satisfactory. These are the things we especially liked:
- Everyone in the school is working very hard to make it better. You are already learning more quickly because the teachers teach well.
- You get on well with each other, are really keen to learn and behave well. That helps your teachers to concentrate on teaching!
- You look out for each other too, for example, when you act as buddies in the playground.
- The acting headteacher and the other senior teachers have got lots of good ideas to make the school even better. There are some things we think will help the school as it gets better:
- You all have group targets and teachers remind you about them. We think the school could use these even better to help each of you to learn quicker. You can help by remembering your targets in lessons and taking notice of any comments your teachers make when they look at your work.
- You could learn even better if the different subjects were linked together more, so you could practise your writing in lots of other subjects, for example.
- The senior teachers know what they want to do to make things better and they must continue to do that. I'm sure you'll carry on working hard and do as well as you can.