



Elston Hall Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104351
Local Authority Wolverhampton
Inspection number 286916
Inspection dates 3–4 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	Stafford Road
School category	Community		Fordhouses
Age range of pupils	3–11		Wolverhampton WV10 6NN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558866
Number on roll (school)	572	Fax number	01902 558868
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Don Jones
		Headteacher	John Withers
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 3–4 October 2006	Inspection number 286916
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Elston Hall is a very large primary school serving an area with some degree of deprivation. Although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average. A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties, none of whom has a statement of special educational need.

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 special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, where the teaching is good and the curriculum is well adapted to their needs. Standards at the beginning of Year 1 are slightly above average, but the pupils leave the school with below average standards, having made inadequate progress. They do not make enough progress in mathematics, science and the skills that they will need in later life. This is because inadequate teaching is not meeting the needs of the pupils. The work pupils are given is often too easy because teachers do not expect enough of them. Pupils often spend too long on the same activity.

Pupils behave well and develop a good sense of right and wrong. They have a good understanding of different cultures and get on well together. Their attendance is in line with the national average. Although teachers are always ready to help them, the school does not place sufficient emphasis on ensuring that pupils' safety is paramount. The school has not kept up to date with current regulations and guidance in this respect.

The school has been in decline for several years. School leadership has not done enough to halt the decline and have been slow to take action. The checks made on teaching and the implementation of policies relating to ensuring pupils' health and safety are not rigorous enough. They do not provide an accurate picture of the school's provision, so managers feel that it is satisfactory, rather than inadequate. Initiatives now in place have had too little time to take effect and are not tackling some of the root causes of underperformance. The school's managers cannot point to a convincing track record of improvement, so are unable to demonstrate the capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils are implemented rigorously.
- Ensure teachers set suitably challenging tasks for pupils and increase the progress made in lessons, especially in mathematics and science.
- Carry out more rigorous monitoring of teaching to identify exactly where weaknesses lie. Draw up and implement plans to rectify the weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. Their attainment on entry to the school is a little below average, but pupils end their Reception year with standards that are slightly above average. They make good progress in all aspects of their work

and start Year 1 keen to learn. Progress from Year 1 onwards is inadequate, so pupils leave with standards that are below average. Pupils of all abilities are not making enough progress in the school. Progress in English is satisfactory, but there is widespread underachievement in mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and has significant strengths as well as some weaknesses. Throughout the school, pupils behave well in lessons and at breaks. Racial harmony is evident throughout the school. Pupils generally enjoy their learning, although they say that this varies from lesson to lesson. They understand how to live a safe and healthy life, particularly in relation to diet and exercise. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of what it means to be a young citizen through opportunities to make real decisions, such as improvements in the hall décor. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, particularly in terms of knowing right from wrong and understanding other cultures. However, there are weaknesses in the acquisition of some of the basic academic skills they will need in the future. The latest published attendance data for a full year is in line with the national figures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Many of the basic elements of teaching are in place. Teachers are well organised and manage pupils well, so there is rarely any problem with misbehaviour. The consistent reinforcement of rules helps pupils to develop a clear understanding of how to behave and why good behaviour is important. Lessons are invariably planned well, with different tasks for pupils of differing abilities. However, too often the plans are not put into practice or are badly timed. The activity at the start of the lesson goes on for too long, so pupils spend too much time sitting on the carpet answering questions without learning anything new. The tasks that are given to pupils are sometimes too easy, because teachers are not selective enough in choosing which pupils do which task. When the tasks are appropriate to the group, the teacher spends too long talking to one group, without checking that the others are working.

However, in the Foundation Stage, the teaching exhibits many strengths and none of these weaknesses. Here, information from assessments is used to very carefully match the work to the children, ensuring that they make good progress in all aspects of their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, although there are strengths in the Foundation Stage. There is a good emphasis on literacy, numeracy and social development in the Foundation Stage, which leads to pupils making a good start to their education. The curriculum is planned to match the needs of different groups, but is not always matched to the needs of the individual because information from assessments is not used well enough in lessons. There are a good number of visits, which lead to greater understanding of the environment and different cultures. Visitors are welcomed into the school. They play a significant role in developing pupils' understanding of how to stay safe by teaching topics such as road and fire safety.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The quality of care, guidance and support is inadequate and this has contributed to the decline in standards over recent years.

Relationships with adults are good, so pupils can ask for help when they need it. Expectations of behaviour are high, resulting in an orderly community where pupils feel free from any form of harassment. However, there are serious weaknesses in the implementation of procedures to ensure the safety of pupils. The required checks on staff have not been carried out in many cases. Fire drills are not carried out early enough in the year to ensure new pupils know what to do in the event of an emergency. Risk assessments are especially poor. The poor condition of the playground, including blocked drains, mud and debris, presents an unnecessary danger to pupils and results in an unusually high number of minor accidents at break and lunch times.

The school has very recently introduced a system of tracking pupils' progress and setting academic targets. However, this has not been done soon enough to provide pupils with a clear picture of the progress they are making or to ensure the best deployment of support assistants.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school has been in decline for several years as a result of inadequate leadership and management. Actions taken by school leadership have been too few and too late to prevent achievement falling to an inadequate level. Weaknesses from the previous inspection remain unresolved. The school does not have adequate systems for checking how well it is performing. The records of checks on lessons show that individual weaknesses are given too little weight when reaching a judgement, so teachers are told their lesson is good when it has significant weaknesses. The weaknesses in the school's performance have been identified but action so far has had insufficient impact. Some, such as standards in science, have not been addressed at all as the school has concentrated on English and mathematics. Many plans have only been implemented

in the past few months, so have not had time to show whether or not they will prove successful.

The day-to-day management of the school has serious weaknesses, especially in ensuring that pupils' health and safety are secured. Basic checks have not been carried out and statutory requirements are not met in this respect.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
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 into your school and helping with the inspection.

We thought you behaved well in school and got on well with each other. We were very impressed by how quickly the children in the Nursery had settled in, and how much those of you in the Reception classes had learnt. Some of you in the rest of the school are not learning enough mathematics and science. You said this is often because the work is too easy for you, and we agree. So we have asked the teachers to make sure you are given work that is hard enough.

The standards of work in the school have not improved enough over the last few years. We have asked the people who run the school to check how teaching can be improved, to help you learn more. We are concerned that the school is not doing all it can to make sure you stay safe, so have asked the teachers and governors to check what they should be doing and then follow all the rules for keeping you safe and secure in school. Inspectors will visit regularly to check on the progress your school is making.

We wish you all the best for your future.