

# Lickey Hills Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116773
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	290630
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	444
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Gallagher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Wallin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Old Birmingham Road Rednal Birmingham B45 8EU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4451992
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 4455803

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than many primary schools and serves a residential area on the south-western outskirts of Birmingham. There is a specialist speech and language unit for 20 pupils. Otherwise, the proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average. Very few pupils are learning English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good aspects. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall to reach above average standards by the time that they leave. This is a direct result of satisfactory teaching and satisfactory leadership and management.

The senior management team has sometimes been slow to respond decisively to aspects of performance which are not as strong. This includes teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 which has, over an extended period, been less effective than in other year groups. This has led to some underachievement in relation to the standards pupils had achieved at the end of Reception. In consequence, standards are average at the end of Year 2. They are above average in Reception and at the end of Year 6 because teaching is stronger in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6.

While pupils' overall achievement is currently satisfactory, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive. The effective speech and language unit provides an exciting learning environment, which stimulates pupils. As these pupils improve their skills, they have the opportunity to integrate into the main school for lessons.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall. Academic guidance is satisfactory but not as strong as the good pastoral care because, although some practice is good, there are inconsistencies in the way the information gathered is used to show pupils how they can improve. The school is not effectively analysing the data on pupils' progress sufficiently in order to be fully responsive to emerging trends. Some performance issues, however, have been tackled with significant improvement evident. The work of the speech and language unit, although successful because of the dedicated teaching staff, is not evaluated or given sufficient direction by senior leaders.

There are some clear strengths in the school. Pupils' personal development is good because of the good pastoral care and the school's commitment to ensuring the health and safety of pupils. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy the good curriculum, recently restructured, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to develop their creative talents. Consequently, the great majority of parents are pleased with what the school offers. They feel that it is a very inclusive community, providing well for the full range of needs.

Although the school's self-evaluation has an over-positive view of recent performance, all current development priorities are accurate. Many of the stronger aspects of provision have been sustained and developed well. In consequence, overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, with satisfactory capacity to achieve further improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils make faster progress.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the speech and language unit by the senior management team.
- Ensure that the leadership team is more proactive in identifying and taking action to deal with any underperformance by pupils.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although children who have attended the Nursery start with more advanced skills than the others, skill levels on entry to Reception are broadly in line with levels expected for their age. As a result of good provision, children make good progress in Reception so that, on entry to Year 1, standards are above average.

In recent years, the brisk start in the Foundation Stage has not been sustained in Years 1 and 2. Instability in staffing and inconsistent teaching have contributed to some underachievement, so that by the end of Year 2, standards have been only average, with too few pupils working at the higher levels. The pace picks up from Year 3 and, with better achievement; standards are consistently above average by the end of Year 6. Although the school has not previously tackled all the underlying issues in Years 1 and 2 with sufficient resolve, the improvement in standards in writing in Year 2 in 2006 and the overall improvement in mathematics in 2007 are the result of successful management initiatives. Across the school girls perform significantly better than boys, although boys still achieve better overall than they do nationally. The challenging targets for Year 6 are likely to be achieved in 2007.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress, because their needs are identified promptly and they are well supported. In Years 3 to 6 pupils identified as talented and gifted are helped to achieve their full potential. In the speech and language unit, pupils appear to make at least good progress but this is hard to confirm because of the complexity of available data and the lack of summary information.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and behave well in class and around the school. Their attitudes to lessons are often very good. Pupils feel safe and confident that adults will deal with issues competently and promptly. They report that there are few incidents of bullying. Older pupils confirm that they find staff supportive and helpful. Attendance is good.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' social and moral development is a strength. For example, older pupils readily adopt caring roles when supporting younger children during the 'Primary Pupil Partnership Project' initiative. Pupils actively contribute to the school community through the pupil and 'Eco' councils and the talented and gifted (TAG) group. These help them to utilise skills which they will find useful in later life. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility. They contribute actively to creating a safe and happy learning environment. The school is the proud holder of 'Healthy Schools' status although pupils do not always practise what they know.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many lessons in Years 3 to 6 are good. In the speech and language unit and Foundation Stage good teaching enables children to make good progress. However, teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 has, over time, been less effective, leading to inconsistent progress.

Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are good. This helps pupils to enjoy their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and behaviour management skills. In the best lessons, pupils answer questions eagerly, are attentive and concentrate well. Teachers plan appropriate activities that meet the needs of all learners. Not all teachers plan in the same detail for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. In some lessons, there are missed opportunities for pupils to reflect together on their learning.

Teachers carefully assess the performance of each pupil. In most classes, pupils receive accurate feedback with suggestions for improvement. This information is used effectively in planning the next stages of learning. However, this is not consistent through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported by committed teaching assistants.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good, broadly based and relevant curriculum that ensures pupils receive a wide range of experiences. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and Year 6 pupils also have the opportunity to learn French. Initiatives to improve provision have enhanced learning; for example, 'Better Reading', which involved parents, has helped to raise standards, while the 'Network Learning' initiative has boosted performance in mathematics. The new skill based, thematic curriculum ensures that full coverage of the expected curriculum is secured over time. Teachers are planning links between subjects based on 'themes' or 'topics' to develop pupils' skills in a more interesting way. Learning is enlivened through the good use of visitors' expertise and well chosen visits. Personal, health and social education is well embedded in the curriculum and ensures that pupils gain a keen awareness, for instance, of the need to stay fit and healthy. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended. Pupils also praise the new information and communication technology provision and the talent showcase and assemblies when they celebrate their achievements.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers regularly monitor pupils' performance and inform them of their progress. Pupils are beginning to understand their targets for learning and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not yet embedded in all year groups to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. Good links are made with other professionals to promote the care and welfare of pupils.

Pastoral care is good. Arrangements to ensure pupils are safe and healthy are very good. Procedures for child protection are in place and effective. Risk assessments are carefully attended to. The pastoral welfare system, which contributes well to pupils' enjoyment and well-being,

is a significant strength. The school encourages pupils to express their views and the school council enables pupils to influence many aspects of daily life. A very good induction programme for children entering Nursery and Reception ensures that they quickly settle into school. The partnership with parents of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those in the speech and language unit is very good and helps these pupils to do well. Meetings are organised so that all parents can discuss how they can support their children at home.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Over time, the senior management team has been very successful in promoting pupils' personal development, in the context of a highly inclusive community, so that pupils are confident and principled young people, well prepared for the next stage of their education. Working relationships are effective and there are strengths in the leadership of the Foundation Stage, of learning difficulties and disabilities and of the talented and gifted programme. Subject leaders implement an extensive monitoring programme with some thoroughness.

The senior management team has been less effective in providing resolute direction to arrest all aspects of underperformance in Years 1 and 2. The work of the speech and language unit, although effective because of the dedicated teaching staff, lacks monitoring and evaluation by senior managers and there is no systematic evaluation of its performance or clear direction for development. The school does not effectively synthesise and summarise the large amount of data about pupils' progress which it collects so that trends can be readily identified and prompt action taken. That said, when specific areas for development were identified in writing and mathematics in 2006, interventions were planned and initiated promptly. Governors, although supportive of the school, are not sufficiently rigorous in holding senior staff to account for the school's performance.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	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	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

15 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lickey Hills Primary School, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8EU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were polite and friendly and very willing to talk to us. We were impressed by how hard you work and how interested you are in your lessons. We enjoyed the discussions we had with you. We know that you are proud of your work and the experiences you have at school. We found that Lickey Hills Primary is a satisfactory school.

These are the things we most liked about your school.

- You are friendly, well behaved and polite. You are enthusiastic about school and attend as much as you can.
- You work hard and your teachers look after you well. They mostly teach you satisfactorily and give you sound guidance about how to improve your work. As a result, most of you make steady progress in your lessons and reach good standards.
- The curriculum is imaginatively organised and you have good opportunities in after-school clubs and activities.

We have asked the people in charge of the school, who do a satisfactory job, to make some improvements to help the school to be even better.

- Make sure that the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is more consistent so that you all make the progress of which you are capable in those years. This would help you to do even better in Years 3 to 6.
- Use all the information available to identify when things are not going so well and take action quickly to deal with the problem.
- Look in detail at the work of the speech and language unit to see exactly how well everyone is doing there.

You can all help too by continuing to work hard and do your best.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

George Logan Lead inspector