



Harvills Hawthorn Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 131591
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 293787
Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006
Reporting inspector Ruth Westbrook

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wolseley Road
School category	Community		Hill Top
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Bromwich B70 0NG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5571034
Number on roll (school)	380	Fax number	0121 5201120
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Beryl Hocknull
		Headteacher	Harold Mcneil
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	29–30 November 2006	293787

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school situated in an estate on the outskirts of West Bromwich. The housing contains a mixture of private and rented accommodation. The school has a large nursery. Most children entering the school have a much lower understanding of words, number and social skills than is usual for their age. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and disabilities are well above the national averages. About a fifth of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school was awarded a bronze award for Health Promoting Schools in December 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and improving. The newly appointed headteacher has ably led staff through a number of significant changes which have transformed the culture within the school. There is a very strong emphasis on pupils being able to achieve, summed up in their motto, 'I can fly'. The good curriculum is carefully planned to include an effective balance of basic skills and themes. The school environment is an attractive resource which stimulates pupils' learning. This is contributing effectively to the school's drive to raise standards.

By Year 6, standards are broadly average but remain below average in English. Boys, in particular, are underachieving in writing. The school has identified literacy as an area for development and is including strategies that will help boys with reading and writing. There has been a considerable programme of training to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Although a proportion of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding, most of it is satisfactory. The school is improving the quality of these satisfactory lessons so that pupils make better progress. There are a number of developments in place which are beginning to improve the quality of pupils' learning, such as, the strategies to encourage greater collaboration between pupils. All staff work well together as a team on these developments and have a shared understanding of how the school will improve.

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. Teaching assistants give wide-ranging support in the school to help pupils achieve their targets. The school has put in place a number of effective additional strategies like 'Home from Home' to increase the level of care and support for particularly vulnerable pupils. Satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children have a settled start to school life. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, but some aspects are good. Pupils behave well in school and in the playground. They are lively, friendly and helpful to each other. They enjoy school a great deal but this is not reflected in their attendance which is unsatisfactory.

Overall, leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school evaluates itself soundly, and knows its strengths and weaknesses. The monitoring of the school's work by its senior leadership team is good, and has contributed to the school's improvement. The skills of subject coordinators are being developed so that leadership and management are more effective at all levels. The effectiveness shown by the senior leadership in improving the school substantially over a short period of time and the school's recent expansion of its leadership team indicate that there is good capacity for further improvement. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The response from parents during the inspection shows their recognition of the positive impact that recent changes have had on their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in literacy across the school, especially that of the boys.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make faster progress.
- Work with parents to raise the attendance of learners across all ages.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Most children arrive with particularly weak language, social and personal skills. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, benefiting from the recently improved provision.

Standards had been declining in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, but in 2006 they improved markedly in all three subjects as a result of action taken to improve teaching and learning. The greatest improvement was in writing. In 2006, girls in Year 2 made good progress, achieving standards that were close to average in all three subjects. Boys' progress was slower, and at the end of Year 2 their standards in reading and writing were still well below average.

By Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards and make satisfactory progress except in English where boys underachieve. Pupils have made inadequate progress in science over several years, but in 2006, as a result of action taken by the school, the national test results improved substantially and were broadly average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' attitudes to work are positive, and this is reflected in their good behaviour, both during lessons and in play. Pupils' involvement in learning improves as they move through the school and the development of their skills increases. They respond well to encouragement to be happy and to enjoy each other's company. Pupils say they 'feel comfortable and safe' and 'know they can trust' their teachers. Lunchtimes are sociable and relaxed and pupils play safely. Attendance is low, and punctuality is an issue with some pupils. Efforts are being made to reduce absences, with increasing success this term.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to respect the beliefs and cultures of other people. Pupils take advantage of the extensive school grounds for exercise and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. There are satisfactory opportunities, like the recently formed school council, for pupils to take on responsibility and develop their independence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Some good and occasionally outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. The good teaching engages pupils' interest through lively and stimulating learning activities. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and other teaching aids. Pupils generally concentrate well, but some lessons lack pace, and fail to grip the attention of pupils as well as they should to accelerate learning. Joint observations of the most effective teaching, including feedback, ensure that best practice is shared across the school.

A good feature of pupils' learning used across the school is a collaborative style which engages pupils in discussions and extends their understanding, whilst at the same time developing their speaking and listening skills. Pupils with learning difficulties make steady progress because their individual needs are carefully assessed. In the most effective lessons, planning with the teaching assistants ensures additional support is well directed but this approach is not consistently applied where teaching is satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers its pupils an interesting and stimulating curriculum which is well matched to their needs. There is a good focus on basic skills which is preparing pupils satisfactorily for their future learning and working lives. This is balanced with an innovative themed approach which is carefully planned and is effectively motivating pupils, including several boys who were previously more difficult to interest in their work. Although the themed approach is relatively new, it is having a positive impact on enjoyment and pupils are putting much care, thought and effort into their work. The emphasis throughout the school on improving language and literacy skills benefits those pupils who are learning English as an additional language. In the Foundation Stage there is an appropriate emphasis on developing children's social and personal skills. Creative play and role-play contribute well to language development.

A wide range of additional activities enriches the curriculum and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are able to develop their talents and interests. School visits are well planned to support the themes in the curriculum. Residential visits help pupils develop independence and maturity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care provided for pupils promotes a good, inclusive environment. Meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is managed effectively. Good facilities are provided to support the needs of disabled pupils, and the nurture room is beginning to assist more vulnerable pupils to integrate more fully into school life.

The school has appropriate systems in place to ensure pupils' health and safety. Risk assessments are thorough and child protection procedures are securely in place.

Pupils are well supported in their learning. They know their targets and what they need to do to reach them. The tracking of their progress is regular and thorough, and additional strategies are in place to support those who are underachieving. Low attendance levels continue to impede progress and the school is developing its work with parents to improve this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The newly appointed headteacher has provided clear leadership for the school. He has promoted and achieved improvements in standards and ensured that pupils make satisfactory progress. Other senior colleagues have supported this process well. The headteacher and senior staff are implementing clear plans to provide a caring, secure and stimulating environment for pupils. Staff respect this leadership and work well together towards school improvement.

Systems for checking the school's work are good and well established. The school is developing its skills in self-evaluation and has an accurate overall view of where it is at. Evaluation is not yet finely tuned to focus on the detail of the information available and to consider the impact of its work on different groups of pupils. The school is beginning to extend the leadership role to a wider group of staff who are developing their monitoring and evaluation skills. These plans are helping to improve consistency of practice across the school and to raise standards further. Governors know the school well and have given sound support to senior staff in developing the agenda for improvement.

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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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
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	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?	2
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?	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

Recently, we visited your school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming to us. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We thought you might like to know what we found out about your school and how we think it can improve:

- The school has improved a lot recently and it provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.
- The headteacher and staff in the school look after you well and make sure that you are safe.
- You behave well and care for each other.
- You find your lessons interesting.
- You work hard in lessons and your skills in numeracy, science and ICT are improving well, but you all need to improve your literacy skills, especially the boys in developing their writing.
- Most of you make satisfactory progress in lessons and teachers are working hard to improve the quality of their teaching and your learning so that you make even better progress.
- Some of you would make more progress in school if your attendance and punctuality were better.
- We have asked the school to do a number of things:
 - Improve your literacy skills, especially the boys' writing.
 - Make sure that all the teaching helps you to make faster progress in your learning.
 - Work with your parents to ensure that you all attend school regularly and punctually.

We hope that you will do your best to help teachers put these in place and make the school even better than it is.