



Wychall Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132075
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 293937
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Andrew Watters HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Middle Field Road
School category	Community		Northfield
Age range of pupils	3–11		Birmingham B31 3EH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4644255
Number on roll (school)	250	Fax number	0121 4643987
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	C Leigh
		Headteacher	T Allen
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007	Inspection number 293937
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area of high social and economic deprivation, with most pupils coming from the Wychall and Masefield housing estates. In 2003 Wychall became a full service extended school and is the centre of many adult and family learning initiatives. Most pupils are of White British origin, with just under a quarter from Asian British, Black British and mixed backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupil mobility at 26% is high. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 69%, which is very high and well above the national average. 40% of the pupils have specific learning difficulties, which is also well above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that successfully combines a strong focus on raising standards with a very positive approach to developing pupils' social skills and their personal qualities. The hallmarks of this success are shown by pupils' positive achievements, their good self-esteem and increasing confidence to raise their own expectations of what they might achieve in the future. The provision made through the school's status as a full service extended school is having a very good impact on raising achievement and making a positive difference to the pupils' life chances.

Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy and their personal, social and emotional development. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and the pupils make satisfactory progress towards improving their social and academic skills. Achievement in each key stage is satisfactory overall, with a significant proportion of pupils making good progress. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement in writing in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory.

A very strong 'can-do' attitude is demonstrated in all aspects of the school's work. Teaching and non-teaching staff respond very positively to the school's challenging circumstances, and expectations are high. The pupils' personal development and well-being and their care, support and guidance are good. The pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and have good attitudes. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. One parent said: 'I think this is a great school. My children are settled and are learning more than ever before. I can also go into school and talk to teachers about any problem.'

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some of the teaching, for example, the intervention work in Year 6, is outstanding. There is, however, a small pocket of relatively weak teaching where the pupils' work is not always matched well enough to their capabilities. The curriculum is good and has been successfully amended to meet the learning needs of most pupils.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very strong and effective partnership, giving a clear sense of educational direction and purpose. The governors keep a watchful eye on the school's performance. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement further, increasing the proportion of pupils who make good and better progress, particularly in writing in Years 3 and 4.
- Eliminate the small proportion of relatively weak teaching, ensuring that pupils' work is consistently matched to their different learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving rapidly. From a very low starting point, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress and are gaining new skills and knowledge at an increasingly speedy rate. In each class and year group, the number of pupils who are making good progress is rising steadily, particularly in reading. The pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory, although their progress in writing is far more variable. It is good in Years 2 and 5, generally satisfactory in Years 1 and 6, but too slow and unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Standards are below the levels expected for the pupils' ages, although the gap between what they are expected to attain for their age and what they are currently achieving is narrowing, particularly where the quality of teaching is consistently good. The value added to the pupils' achievements, as shown by the results of national tests and the teachers' ongoing assessments, is improving year on year and is satisfactory overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development, well-being and their personal qualities are good. They are adopting healthy lifestyles and their welfare is safeguarded effectively in a safe and secure environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school because their work is interesting and they know that adults will listen to their concerns. The quality of relationships and the pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. Attendance is satisfactory. The peer mentor scheme is effective in helping pupils overcome their personal challenges and resolve any conflict. The peer mentors themselves are impressive young people who are determined that their actions should make a real difference to their friends. The school council also plays a strong role in giving the pupils a voice in their school. Members of the council talked positively about the changes they have made in dining arrangements and to improve the playground environment. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there is a strong commitment to racial equality. Many pupils are making a positive difference to their community, for example, in their work on improving the local environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, ranging from outstanding to broadly satisfactory. A very strong feature of the teaching is the thorough and accurate assessment of pupils' achievements and what they need to do next in order to raise standards further. This information is used very effectively by most teachers, although

there is a small pocket of relatively weak teaching in Years 3 and 4 where the pupils' work does not always match their different starting points and capabilities, particularly in writing. The great majority of teachers have good subject knowledge and use lively and effective teaching styles. These qualities are helping the pupils to achieve well, work independently and develop important social and emotional skills. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to raising achievement, particularly with the pupils who have learning difficulties. The good relationships between teachers and parents are supported effectively by care and social workers and contribute very positively to the pupils' increasingly improving rate of progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum matches the learning needs of the great majority of pupils. Recent changes to make the pupils' learning more relevant and to provide more meaningful contexts in which they can apply their skills have made a positive difference to their progress and achievement. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education. This is helping the pupils develop and improve the personal qualities and academic skills which are preparing them well for their future in secondary education and the world of work. The school offers a good range of before- and after-school clubs and residential visits, for example, the Year 5 camping trip and the Year 6 visit to Oxford. Pupils look forward to and appreciate these greatly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's partnership with key services is very effective. Social and family care, adult learning and community health programmes play an integral and vital part in the drive to raise achievement further, establishing an increasingly strong home-school partnership. One parent said: 'All of our experiences with Wychall Primary have been excellent, positive, supportive and helpful in every way...we cannot thank the headteacher and all her staff enough.' Staff show a high level of commitment and competence in promoting pupils' health and safety. Vulnerable pupils and those at risk are well supported by the school and the extended service provision. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and checked regularly. Risk assessments are carried out rigorously and national requirements relating to child protection are met well. Individual pupils' targets are challenging and are regularly reviewed to reflect the pace of their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of the school's collective leadership and management is good. The headteacher has a strong passion for improving the pupils' life chances. In this she is very successful. Her drive and determination to raise achievement are evident in the use of assessment information to hold all teachers to account for the standards achieved

by the pupils in their care. The deputy headteacher also provides good leadership, best shown by the good quality of strategic planning. He is a good role model for other teachers, and typifies the school's positive 'can-do' attitude.

The headteacher and deputy receive good support from senior teachers. They all share an overriding commitment to lift achievement and make a positive difference to the lives of the children and their families. The school's recently introduced management structure is working very well. There is a common sense of purpose among all staff, a good team spirit and high levels of morale. There is a rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring the school's work. This includes checking the quality of teaching and the pupils' written work and assessing the pupils' progress towards meeting their targets. Self-evaluation is effective and the school's priorities for improvement, based on a thorough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, are accurate. The chair of governors gives good leadership to the governing body, which fulfils its statutory duties well.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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?	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?	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	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 very much for welcoming me to your school. For the two days I have been at your school, you have all made me feel welcome and have been very helpful. I have really appreciated the way you have introduced yourselves to me and checked that I was okay. I have enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking with you about your work. I can clearly see that you enjoy coming to school and try hard to do well in all the interesting work which your teachers plan for you. Well done!

I have been particularly impressed with the way in which you care for your school and have a chance to say what you think should be done to make things better. Your school council is making a real difference for you and has helped improve your playtimes. The peer mentors are doing a really good job to help you sort out your problems and disagreements. I hope that you will all carry on helping them in the very important work that they are doing to help you all.

You go to a good school which looks after you very well. Your teachers and all other adults who work with you are doing their best to make sure that you are safe and happy in school. I have asked the headteacher and the teachers to help those of you in Years 3 and 4 to improve your writing even more and to make sure that all your lessons give you lots of opportunities to do better than you are already doing!

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly.