

Langley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103978
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	295328
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Viv Jones
Headteacher	Jane Aldridge
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2006
School address	Titford Road Oldbury B69 4QB
Telephone number	0121 5521744
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Langley Primary is above average in size. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds but a number of minority ethnic groups are represented in the school. A significant number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There has been a significant number of staff changes at all levels over the last two years. When the school was inspected in March 2006, it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, and, identifying and addressing the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. It was given a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school is now providing a satisfactory education for its pupils and is steadily improving. Much of this is the result of the good leadership and management of the headteacher. She has raised expectations and monitors the performance of pupils and staff rigorously. This has contributed significantly to the improvement in pupils' achievement and the quality of education provided by the school. There is still some way to go but, on the basis of what has already been done, the future looks promising. One parent summed this up by commenting, 'The encouragement my child now receives has led to a great improvement in their work.'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In a school with a history of underachievement, this is a great stride forward. Standards in Year 6 are below average because of underachievement in the past, although many pupils have made good progress over the last year. Although pupils are making at least satisfactory progress now as they move up through the school, there is disparity between the standards reached by different groups of pupils. Most noticeably, boys and Pakistani pupils at the end of Year 2 are not attaining as highly as other groups in their classes. Writing is the weakest element of English through the school.

Pupils now make better progress overall because the quality of teaching has improved. Currently it is satisfactory and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Despite good teaching in many year groups, there are still a number of classes where teaching is satisfactory because teachers' expectations are not high enough or insufficient attention is paid to the pupils' wide range of ability.

Children make satisfactory progress through the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of sound provision. The youngest children work and play together well and the Foundation Stage is particularly good at developing children's social skills. Aspects of the school's satisfactory curriculum contribute effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being which have improved since the last inspection and are good. Pupils are welcoming and keen to learn. 'Hello, how are you?' and 'What are you doing?' accompanied by a big grin is a typical welcome for visitors.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall and the pastoral care for pupils is good. Pupils feel safe at school and know that there is always an adult, such as the learning mentor or deputy headteacher, who they can turn to if there is a problem. Academic guidance has many strong features but there are inconsistencies in teachers' marking which means that not all pupils receive sufficient advice on how to improve their work or move on to the next stages of learning. The provision and support for pupils with learning difficulties are well organised and are now satisfactory. They have improved significantly since the school's last inspection when they were identified as weaknesses.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher receives good support from the school's deputy headteacher and they have already forged an effective partnership that is benefiting the school. Many middle managers are new to their roles. Improvements since the school's last inspection, particularly in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. The local authority has also played an important role in helping to improve the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the less effective teaching to the levels of the best, particularly in the attention given to all pupils' needs, so that all pupils achieve well.
- Improve standards for those groups of pupils who do not reach the same levels as their classmates as well as improving all pupils' writing.
- Ensure that all pupils receive high quality academic guidance through marking, telling them how to improve their performance. A small proportion of the 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

Achievement is satisfactory although standards are below average. Pupils are now making better progress than they were. In classes where teaching is more effective, progress is often good, for example, in Years 5 and 6. Because of previous underachievement in many year groups, school data indicates that standards are likely to be variable over the next few years as a result of the 'catching up' that has to be done. There is, however, an improving picture.

Children start the Nursery with attainment that is below that expected for their age. A small minority of children join with weak communication and social skills. Children get a good start to school in the Nursery and settle in well. They make good progress, particularly in developing their personal and social skills. Progress in Reception is satisfactory and, by the time children start Year 1, they reach the expected levels in most aspects of their learning with the exception of their communication, language and literacy skills. The 2006 Year 2 assessments showed that standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an improvement on the previous year. Standards reached by Year 6 pupils in 2006 were below average overall in English, mathematics and science. School data indicates that the pupils made satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points in Year 3. Across the school, writing is the weakest element of English and the school has introduced a number of good strategies to address this, although it is too early to judge their overall impact.

Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously against challenging targets. This ensures that all groups, including those at the early stages of learning English, make at least satisfactory progress. The school's provision for pupils with learning difficulties has improved significantly since the last inspection. This enables them to make at least satisfactory progress against their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good and reflected in the good relationships through the school and the respect pupils show for everyone regardless of their race or faith. Members of the school council are proud of the role they play in school decisions and in collecting the views of fellow pupils. They effectively contribute to making a difference in the school and wider community. Pupils enjoy working cooperatively and sharing ideas. For example, Year 1 pupils sensibly discussed what plants need to enable them to grow before planting their own seeds.

Behaviour in class and around school is good and has improved since the last inspection. This is also the view of the pupils. The work of the learning mentor has had a positive effect on

improving the behaviour of pupils. Rigorous systems to monitor and improve attendance have been effective, with attendance rates now being around the level found nationally. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their school work. They enjoy lessons and regard learning as 'fun'. Pupils have a good awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and play and work together safely. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and pupils are making better progress than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of good teaching that enables pupils to make good progress is steadily improving. This is a result of the headteacher's high expectations of staff and rigorous monitoring of teaching. The best lessons successfully cater for the wide range of individual needs found in each class because lessons are planned effectively. Teachers in these lessons are very aware of their pupils' potential and strive to ensure that their needs are fulfilled. Despite a rapidly improving picture, a significant minority of lessons are still satisfactory. Although most of these lessons are planned to meet the needs of all pupils, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged effectively and a few are not sufficiently engaged. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers' expectations are generally lower, and learning does not move along at such a lively pace. The pupils love to learn and, when given the right opportunities and appropriate challenge, do well in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

As with other aspects of provision, the curriculum is steadily improving. It has a number of good features such as its additional activities and a good range of after-school clubs. Sporting activities contribute well to the pupils developing active and healthy lifestyles, whilst residential visits and trips into the local community add another dimension to the development of their social skills. Year 6 pupils spoke very fondly of a visit to Weston-super-Mare and the opportunities it provided for team building and working together. Year 2 pupils were very excited about their visit to a local church.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Considerable work has been undertaken to improve the development of children's communication and literacy skills in the Reception classes, although it is too early to see any impact in their achievement. The curriculum for all years is planned appropriately to ensure a balance of subjects, but pupils' writing skills are not always sufficiently developed and extended through other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory. There are a number of strengths. Many pupils receive good academic guidance particularly in Years 5 and 6. The teachers ensure that pupils are provided with good information on how to reach their academic targets and the learning mentor also gives a number of pupils effective additional support. However, good academic guidance is not consistent through the school. There are shortcomings in teachers' marking. Not all pupils are receiving clear information on how to improve their work and move to the next stages of learning. Good links with parents and outside agencies

safeguard the most vulnerable pupils including those with learning difficulties. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and reviewed frequently.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's good leadership and management have brought rigour and accountability to the school. This has led to the school moving forward in the right direction and pupils getting a better education. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Despite many staff changes over the last few years, there is a clear sense of purpose about the school and a pride in what is being achieved. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the 'friendly and professional' approach of the staff and the 'welcoming atmosphere'. The new deputy headteacher is making his mark and has the same aspirations for the school as the headteacher. Staff appreciate having leaders who are supportive and ambitious for the school. The development of middle managers is a priority. Many are new to their post and developing their roles but have 'caught' the headteacher's infectious enthusiasm.

Governance is satisfactory. The strong chair is moving the governing body forward, particularly in keeping the school on track and monitoring the progress that pupils are making. However, many governors are new to post and a training programme has been established to support their development.

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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>	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	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	3

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?	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A

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	2
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

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Langley Primary School, Oldbury, B69 4QB

We visited your school a few weeks ago to see how well you are doing. This letter explains what we found. Firstly, thank you for making us so welcome. It was a pleasure to walk through the school with pupils saying 'Hello, how are you doing?' or offering to show us their work.

Your school has improved well since it was last inspected. Much of this is due to your good headteacher who wants you all to do as well as you can. Many of you told us that behaviour has improved and we would agree. It is now good. Teaching has also got better and is satisfactory. We would like it all to be good so we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to look at this.

The vast majority of you now make at least satisfactory progress. However, not all of you reach the same standards and your writing is not as good as your reading. We have asked the school to look at this as well. Most of you enjoy the after-school clubs, trips and visits provided by the school. It was good to hear that the Year 2 pupils really enjoyed their visit to one of the local churches.

The care for you provided by the school is good. Many of you told us how safe you feel at school and that there are adults you can turn to if you have a problem. You all talk confidently about your learning targets and a number of you are provided with lots of good support to help you reach these targets. Not everyone is helped to improve their work as well as they could be, so this is another area that we have asked the school to look at and improve.

You all appreciate that your school is getting better and better. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead Inspector