



Pegasus Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103379
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 296028
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Rob Hubbleday HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Turnhouse Road
School category	Community		Castle Vale
Age range of pupils	4–11		Birmingham B35 6PR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4644293
Number on roll (school)	179	Fax number	0121 7494854
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Carol Westwood
		Headteacher	Robert Lee
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 1999		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006	Inspection number 296028
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is situated on a large housing estate on the outskirts of Birmingham and most of the pupils are of White British backgrounds. There are high levels of social deprivation and around 40% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. A similar proportion have special educational needs, which is well above average. The pupils' attainment when they join the school is generally below average but has been steadily improving. There are about 60 fewer pupils than when the school was last inspected but numbers are slowly rising. The headteacher was appointed in 2001 and the deputy headteacher in 2003 after the school had experienced an unsettled period of temporary leadership appointments. Most of the teachers joined the school before this time.

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, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to aspects of its leadership and management.

In many respects, the school serves the needs of its pupils extremely well. Parents and carers are right to be pleased with its efforts to foster their children's self-esteem. The school has developed a distinctive and positive ethos under the headteacher's influence so that it is a calm and supportive environment. Children in the gardening club, for example, carefully tend a pair of rabbits who roam freely in a courtyard, and teaching assistants are always on hand to advise pupils who are upset. Particular emphasis has been given to stimulating the pupils' imagination and language through a close link with a theatre group. Well focused initiatives encourage social awareness, confidence and good health.

There is no doubt that the pupils' personal development is good because of the attention it has received but their academic progress is not so clear cut. Although the pupils leaving Year 6 appear to have made outstanding progress in their final year, there is little evidence in the present quality of teaching, which is only satisfactory, to explain how this has come about. The school explains it by saying that the high expectations and motivational skills of the Year 6 teacher have inspired the pupils to make up lost ground in their final year. In addition, in the run-up to the national tests, they receive a personalised curriculum taught by a range of adults who tackle areas of weakness identified by the pupils themselves. The headteacher acknowledges, however, that lower down the school he has been frustrated by the lack of improvement in some teaching and now recognises that he ought to have acted more swiftly. Teachers' expectations remain too low. Significant attention has been paid to improving the quality of provision and standards in the Reception class, which are now broadly satisfactory, but there is a high degree of external support. In several other classes, achievement is barely satisfactory and sometimes inadequate. Standards are routinely below average rather than at the level suggested by the results of the end of Key Stage 2 test results.

The school's response has been to give the deputy headteacher a more extensive role to support teaching across the school and for him to assume responsibility for assessment. In a short space of time, he has gathered sufficient information to set worthwhile targets for each class, which will enable the school to check progress more effectively. The school has demonstrated its capacity to improve through developing considerable strengths in some areas and by identifying its failings and acting upon the information. It plays an important part in its community and is improving, although not in a wholly efficient or effective manner. Weaknesses in leadership and management, particularly the inadequate role played by the subject co-ordinators, reduce the school's effectiveness, which is therefore judged to be inadequate. Attempts to improve the quality of learning have not been implemented consistently. The

headteacher has made too many allowances for the reluctance of his middle managers to take a lead and has not demanded enough of them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure middle management post holders contribute effectively to the school's development by defining their responsibilities more precisely and holding them accountable for managing improvements.
- Ensure that pupils make more even progress across the school by raising the teachers' expectations and monitoring the quality of teaching and provision with greater rigour.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Across the school, achievement and standards are only satisfactory despite the extremely good achievement of pupils in Year 6 over the last three years. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 have risen significantly each year since 2004 and indicate that standards are above average. In 2006, nearly every pupil reached the level expected for 11 year olds, with many gaining the higher Level 5. As most of the pupils started Key Stage 2 with below average standards, this represents remarkable progress. However, these substantial gains are largely achieved only in Year 6 and, for the most part, in the period immediately before the tests are taken. Across the school, including in Year 6, standards are below average in much of the pupils' day by day school work.

The school agrees that the pupils' achievement across much of the rest of the school is satisfactory at best and sometimes inadequate. In particular, the pace and quality of learning are often barely acceptable. The school's own assessment data shows that sometimes pupils have failed to achieve even modest targets in lower Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, standards have risen from exceptionally low in 2004 to below average and pupils have made broadly satisfactory progress to achieve these standards. Attainment in mathematics is better established than in reading and writing. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties make the same rates of progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school, generally behave well and work co-operatively when required. Although many of the pupils are easily distracted and can be challenging, they respond well to the school's extensive support mechanisms.

The school has introduced a number of well judged initiatives to promote good attendance. These have led to some improvement but attendance remains below average. Families taking children on holiday during school time is a major factor.

Pupils know that through the school council they can influence the decisions made on a range of matters, such as the refurbishment of the toilets and 'buddying' initiatives. Raising funds for several charities through their own enterprise has also given them a sense of responsibility and some insight into the world of business.

Pupils benefit from the particularly good attention paid to helping them lead healthy lives. There are many ways for them to participate in extra-curricular competitive sport, including an exciting programme which includes circus skills, judo and water polo. Many healthy foods are available at lunchtimes and they choose sensibly.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their understanding of right and wrong has been fostered well through the development of class charters. Pupils are developing good social skills and the introduction of a scheme called 'Playground Friends' makes a significant contribution, so that older pupils are sometimes able to resolve their own conflicts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but varies from outstanding to inadequate. Most lessons are satisfactory and are organised effectively so that pupils know what they have to do. The teachers usually manage the pupils' behaviour soundly and provide generally relevant activities to develop their skills and knowledge. There is an increasing use of practical activities to interest the pupils but their potential benefit is sometimes lost because the learning points are not drawn out clearly. The teachers' expectations are too low; some tasks underestimate how far the pupils might go and are based on only a shaky understanding of the pupils' stages of development. Teaching assistants play an extremely valuable role in supporting individuals and small groups, particularly those who have learning difficulties. All classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards but few teachers exploit them effectively.

Since his appointment, the deputy headteacher has taught Year 6 and has achieved impressive results based on high expectations and instilling self-belief through well taught techniques. This year he does not have a class and is supporting other teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with some strengths. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved but its potential is not capitalised upon consistently. The curriculum is currently under review as the school recognises that its schemes of work do not make sufficient links between subjects. However, the curriculum is enriched through focus weeks and educational visits. The innovative Enrichment and Enjoyment club for the older pupils includes cookery, textile work and team building activities. The school works closely with a theatre in education group and offers pupils an exciting range of first-hand experiences through drama, art, music,

dance, poetry and literature. A wide range of lunch and after school clubs enhances pupils' learning experiences. Good community links add to the provision, in particular the involvement of pupils with the local Environment Group. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides a limited range of learning activities for children and insufficient use is made of the outdoor learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and have a very beneficial impact on the pupils' personal development. Effective support and guidance are rooted in the positive relationships between most staff and pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to support pupils' learning needs. There are good links with outside agencies to complement the work done by the school, particularly in supporting and safeguarding the needs of vulnerable pupils. Careful attention is paid to health and safety issues and child protection. The school gives high priority to developing both the physical and mental health of all its pupils and provides very effective support through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme. Pupils feel safe and know they can turn to staff for help with any problems they might face. The Pyramid Club and Resilience Group help the more vulnerable children develop positive and confident attitudes through feeling secure and valued.

The school strives to develop strong partnerships with families and is generally successful. Parents particularly welcome the opportunity to attend workshops which help them support their children's learning. The school's use of targets to help the pupils know what they need to improve on is satisfactory and developing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate because they have allowed too much inconsistency in provision to persist, leading to teaching and achievement that are sometimes inadequate. The headteacher has played a vitally important role in stabilising the school, restoring the parents' confidence and promoting the pupils' well-being. His course has been guided by a clear set of values which have ensured that the school is welcoming and supportive, particularly for vulnerable pupils. There is close teamwork with the deputy headteacher but, until this year, nearly all the management responsibilities were carried out by the headteacher alone. The monitoring of performance in classrooms took place but was intermittent and did not lead to sufficiently firm action to bring about improvement. Staff have been given significant opportunities to benefit from training on a wide range of pertinent matters but the impact has been limited. Until very recently, the school did not have a robust system to gauge the extent of the pupils' progress and was therefore unable to exert pressure where it was required.

Apart from the deputy headteacher's leadership of numeracy, subject leadership is poor. The co-ordinators do not understand the significance of their role nor have an

overview of strengths and weaknesses across the school to enable them to influence development. The responsibilities of phase co-ordinators are unclear. As a result, intended developments have not been implemented consistently.

The governing body works constructively with the headteacher but struggles to recruit members and to be proactive. It has taken bold decisions, such as investing heavily in information technology, but has not asked the searching questions needed to know how successful such initiatives have been.

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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?	2
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	3
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	3
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?	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?	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	3
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	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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping Mrs Bathgate and myself when we visited your school to see how well it was doing. This letter is to give you an idea of what is in our full report, which we sent to Mr Lee.

We think that all the adults take really good care of you so that you feel happy to come to school. There are some exciting activities for you to take part in and we think that you are being helped to grow up fit and healthy. Mrs Bathgate enjoyed talking to members of the school council and learning about the ways they help to improve your school.

In the last few years, Year 6 pupils have done very well in their SATs. However, we were surprised that the standard of work in many of the other classes was not as good as we were expecting. It seems that there is a lot of catching up going on in Year 6, which is fine, but it would be better if you learnt more when you were in some of the other classes.

We have asked the school to concentrate on two areas.

- Mr Lee and Mr Newell work very hard to introduce new ideas to the school but there is too much for them to do alone and they need some of the teachers to help them by taking on more responsibilities.
- We want Mr Lee and Mr Newell to make sure that the good things going on in some lessons are used more regularly by everyone so that you can learn as well as possible whatever year group you are in.

Inspectors will visit the school again to see how successfully these two things are happening.