



King Charles Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104175
Local Authority Walsall
Inspection number 296444
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wilkes Avenue
School category	Community		Bentley
Age range of pupils	3–11		Walsall WS2 0JN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01922 721368
Number on roll (school)	166	Fax number	01922 646194
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Elizabeth Ince
		Headteacher	Sue Machin
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

King Charles Primary School serves the North Bentley area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average and few children come from advantaged homes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is just above the national average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has been awarded Active Mark, Investors in People and Investors in Children for the Foundation Stage. It has a nurture unit that provides for very vulnerable pupils from a range of local primary schools.

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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

King Charles Primary School is not an effective school. The school has correctly identified that standards are too low and pupils make inadequate progress, but it has found it difficult to identify why. This is because the school's self-evaluation is not rigorous enough. Judgements the school makes about many aspects of its work, including overall effectiveness, are too generous and the school has not made the necessary connections between the quality of its provision and the impact this has on pupils' learning. Time is not always used effectively, teachers' expectations are not high enough and the guidance they offer pupils is not precise.

Pupils enjoy school and are visibly happy; for example, they come to school with smiles on their faces. Most behave well in lessons, including in those which they find less engaging. Parents are generally satisfied with what the school provides. Pupils feel they can trust adults in the school and approach them with any problem; they feel safe and secure. The nurture group provides care for the most vulnerable pupils and successfully promotes their personal development. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community and the particularly strong link with the local church is of mutual benefit.

However, standards are too low and have been so for many years, and achievement is inadequate. Pupils come into the Foundation Stage with standards that are generally below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage; they often make good progress in their personal development but their progress in literacy-related skills is uneven. Although 2006 assessment results demonstrate that standards at the end of Year 2 improved last year, they are still low. In 2005, measures of pupils' progress placed the school in the bottom 1% nationally. Pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 is very uneven and this reflects weaknesses in the quality of teaching. The school's 'Big Write' project has had a positive impact on standards of writing and this was demonstrated by an increased proportion of pupils reaching the national standards in English by the end of Year 6. However, far too many pupils did not achieve well enough in reading and mathematics. Whilst the proportion of pupils gaining the expected levels in science improved in 2006, again, too many pupils underachieved. The quality of teaching is not of a high enough standard to arrest underachievement.

Leadership and management are inadequate because the senior management team do not have the strength in depth to tackle the school's weaknesses effectively. Checks on the school's work have not been rigorous enough. Although the school gathers a significant amount of information about the standards pupils reach, it does not focus sufficiently on the progress they make in lessons and over time. Senior managers and

co-ordinators do too little in this respect. This lack of rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress is highly significant because it impedes the school's ability to raise standards. The school has recently sought external support, which has led to intensive work on writing and basic mathematical skills, resulting in small pockets of improvement. However, there is still a great deal to be done in order to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress, improve their achievement and raise standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by using time more effectively, raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that guidance for pupils, including marking, is more precise.
- With the full involvement of senior managers and coordinators, implement rigorous monitoring and evaluation that focuses clearly on pupils' learning in lessons and their progress over time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are below average and achievement is inadequate. The rate of progress pupils make is far too slow. Pupils with learning difficulties are making satisfactory progress towards their individual targets because they receive appropriate support. However, many other pupils across the range of abilities make insufficient progress. Standards in writing have improved but spelling remains a significant weakness. In the 2006 national tests, no pupils in Year 6 reached the higher levels in writing. The school was close to meeting its targets for English but fell a long way behind its targets for mathematics. Many pupils leave the school not having reached acceptable standards in reading and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and cultural development, is satisfactory. Their social development is good. Pupils often work hard in lessons and most really want to learn. They become restless when they have to sit still for a long time, but nevertheless they maintain satisfactory levels of behaviour. Attendance is below average but is gradually improving, in line with the school's targets.

Pupils are aware of health issues such as the need for a balanced diet and exercise. They enthusiastically participate in physical education lessons and extra-curricular physical activities. They feel safe because they are confident that adults in the school will help them. Relationships are good; pupils are keen to help others by raising money for charity or acting as 'playground leaders'. Pupils have made a good contribution to the local community. They have taken some stunning photographs of the local church that have been sold to parishioners to raise school funds. Because many pupils do not acquire acceptable standards in the basic skills of reading and numeracy, they leave

the school with inadequate preparation for later life. However, their social skills are well developed and should stand them in good stead for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate. There is not enough good teaching. Teachers work hard and want to improve their practice. Their relationships with pupils are very good and they encourage pupils to gain confidence. Behaviour is well managed, resulting in a calm atmosphere around the school and in lessons. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage but sometimes there is insufficient adult intervention to support language development. Teaching is weakest in Key Stage 2 but in Key Stage 1 it is not always as good as it should be. Introductions are often too lengthy and pupils are expected to sit and listen to the teacher for too long. Sometimes introductions are so lengthy that pupils have insufficient time to engage in their own learning. They sometimes get restless and as a result they miss important instructions. Occasionally, the purpose of the activity is not clear and the teachers' directions lack clarity so pupils, whilst making good attempts to be busy, get their work wrong or do the wrong thing. Teaching assistants often provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties. Sometimes though, and especially during introductions to lessons, assistants are too passive and miss opportunities to enhance pupils' learning. Lack of organisation sometimes slows the lesson and simple things are not addressed effectively; for example, in one lesson a child remarked 'I can't see' and several more also had their backs to the board.

Teachers' expectations are too low. Teaching is sometimes not accurate, as was found in mathematics where imprecise mathematical language was accepted. Marking is inconsistent in quality and is not precise enough. Unfinished work and poor presentation are often accepted and important mis-spellings are not addressed. Work that is marked as good is, at times, not good enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, the school has recently introduced a programme that provides a wide range of practical opportunities for children to develop all areas of learning, but it is too early to judge its impact. National Curriculum subjects are covered effectively. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are mostly taught as separate subjects and opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in other subjects are limited. Extra-curricular activities, educational visits and knowledgeable visitors to school all enhance pupils' learning and their enjoyment. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to making decisions in the life of the school.

The school council is valued by pupils, as are the opportunities to take on class and school-wide responsibilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Whilst some aspects are good, overall the care, guidance and support for pupils are inadequate. Child protection arrangements are clear and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. There are good links with outside agencies which help the most vulnerable pupils to receive appropriate support. Risk assessments are completed satisfactorily. The school is good at assessing the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and at tracking their progress as they move through the school. As a result, teachers are able to provide adequate support for these pupils. However, for the majority of pupils, progress is inadequately monitored. Consequently, the school has been unable to identify early enough those pupils who are not making the expected progress and provide timely support to arrest the decline. Some of the targets set for pupils are not sufficiently clear to them, although they do go through the motions in completing them. This was confirmed when one pupil said, 'I had three (targets) in one ... I found them difficult' and another, 'I had already done that'. The targets set do not contribute to gradual and firm progress that pupils should be expected to make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher is fully aware of the school's poor performance over a long period but the school's management has not had the capacity to turn the school round. Actions taken to secure improvements are very recent and are not yet effective enough to correct a significant history of underachievement. Many of the checks on the school's work, including the monitoring of teaching, are descriptive rather than sharply evaluative and there is insufficient focus on learning. The previous inspection identified that there were too few opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor their subjects and this is still the case. Governors are supportive of the school but they do not provide the school with enough challenge. Progress since the previous inspection is inadequate. Although the school deploys resources and funding carefully, this has not led to sufficient improvement in standards and achievement.

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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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	3
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	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	4

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	4
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	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school. We liked talking with you and particularly enjoyed looking at the lovely photographs you have taken and our chat with the school council. We are pleased that you enjoy school and we know that most of you work hard. It's good that you are trying hard to eat healthily and enjoy exercise. We thought you made a good contribution to the school community through your work with the school council and the 'playground leaders'. You clearly enjoy your visits to interesting places and the sports and art club, and this is important.

However, there is a lot to do to make your school as good as it should be. We have asked your teachers to improve teaching and to help you do much better in your lessons and learning. We would like teachers to look very carefully at how well you are doing and to check regularly to make sure that you do not fall behind with your work.

We hope that you will do all you can to help your teachers when they are working hard to improve your school. We wish you all the best for the future.