



Rounds Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103980
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 296521
Inspection dates 31 October –1 November 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	Brades Road
School category	Community		Oldbury
Age range of pupils	3–11		B69 2DP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5521910
Number on roll (school)	304	Fax number	0121 5527332
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Janet Kendrick
		Headteacher	Mick Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2005		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 31 October –1 November 2006	Inspection number 296521
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a significantly disadvantaged area which includes a local refuge. A high proportion of pupils have emotional or learning difficulties. Nearly a third of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but only a small number are at the early stages of learning English. When the school was inspected in 2005, it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to achievement and standards and 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.

Changes, which began before the inspection in 2005, have now begun to bear fruit. Significant improvements in the way the school collects and analyses information about the pupils' progress have underpinned a turnaround in its effectiveness, which is now satisfactory. Standards remain below average but have risen considerably and the pupils in all year groups make at least satisfactory progress. There is still much to do, especially in reading and writing, to bring standards into line with what is expected nationally but the school has shown it has satisfactory capacity to continue improving. It knows its strengths and weaknesses and has a generally clear understanding of what it needs to do to achieve even greater success. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Planning for improvement is well established and the headteacher and deputy headteacher are passionate about continuing to take the school forward. They are supported by a new management team with high aspirations and an enthusiastic governing body with many new members. The local authority has played an important role in helping the school and knows that its work is not over completely.

Staffing in the Nursery and Reception classes has been disrupted during the year but provision remains satisfactory with elements of strength, for example, in the way activities are planned. The children make satisfactory progress but because their starting points are often low, overall standards at the beginning of Year 1 are below average. The sound start these young pupils make in adjusting to the demands of formal schooling are built on very well as they continue through the school. Their personal development is good because of the good care the school takes to support individuals, its consistently implemented policies, and its programmes for boosting self-esteem. The curriculum is satisfactory. Understandably, the school devotes much time to teaching reading, writing and mathematics but not all of this is used effectively and there are some inconsistencies in the way basic skills are taught. There is also scope to give more time to other subjects without prejudicing the quest for higher standards in literacy and numeracy.

The school has maintained and strengthened the satisfactory quality of teaching reported at the time of its last inspection. New teachers have made a good start and teaching assistants contribute extremely effectively to the quality of learning in all classes. There is some good and better teaching but also a significant amount which remains only satisfactory because it lacks variety.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards of literacy by ensuring there is a rigorous approach to teaching basic skills throughout the school.
- Redress the imbalance in the curriculum by giving more time to subjects other than English and mathematics.

- Use the expertise among the staff to help all teachers provide more stimulating teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory and have improved significantly since the last inspection. At the end of both key stages, the results of the 2006 national tests remained below average but were much higher than those of previous years. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils who achieved the nationally expected Level 4 rose in every subject. The greatest improvement was in science, where 78% of the pupils achieved Level 4 or better compared with 51% in 2005. In all subjects, a much greater proportion reached the higher Level 5 and exceeded challenging targets based on prior attainment. In Year 2, similarly, there were rises in all subjects, most noticeably in writing. At both key stages, these results represent broadly satisfactory achievement from the pupils' starting points.

The school is aware that many pupils still have much ground to make up, especially in developing basic skills in literacy. The school has implemented a range of strategies to target particular groups needing extra support. As a result, lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties are making good progress more frequently than before. New schemes of work to teach reading and writing are beginning to help all pupils make faster progress but, currently, achievement for all pupils across the school is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good because it is given a high priority by the school. Pupils have positive attitudes, behave well and feel safe. They enjoy coming to school and try hard to do their best. There are significant opportunities for them to influence decision making. As part of the school's strong focus on healthy lifestyles, the school council manages a budget and is planning to introduce after-school cookery lessons. Older pupils play an active role in the school community and their involvement, for example, in running the school bank and the healthy tuck shop helps prepare them for adult responsibilities and the world of work. Although attendance is just below the national average, it continues to improve. Good systems are in place to encourage full attendance, track absences and tackle lateness. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through daily acts of collective worship, pupils are encouraged to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and how faith and religion can influence their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and ranges from outstanding to inadequate. Lessons are calm and well organised. Teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to do and routines are well established. Lesson planning is generally good and identifies relevant objectives for different groups to enable all to make satisfactory progress. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of learning. In many classes, they confidently teach small groups and show good understanding of the pupils' stages of development. Several teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to make their lessons more interesting and most teachers give the pupils opportunities to discuss matters with a partner. In the best lessons, the range and pace of work are good and keep the pupils strongly motivated. In many lessons, where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is because activities lack variety and the pace of learning slows, leading to a loss of enthusiasm from the pupils. The value of some worthwhile and potentially stimulating activities is lost when they go on for too long.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory but there is a marked imbalance in the time devoted to literacy and numeracy compared with the number of lessons for other subjects. Plans to give more time to other subjects remain at an early stage of development. Nevertheless, the introduction of a science week each term has successfully introduced a more creative approach to teaching and learning. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good, enabling teachers to make lessons more interactive. The recent introduction of dance to the curriculum in Years 5 and 6 is proving to be very popular with pupils. The curriculum celebrates cultural diversity through events such as the Asian Arts Week and Black History Week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has maintained its strengths in these areas through the commitment of all staff to good quality care, guidance and support. Pupils and their parents agree that they are looked after very well. There are effective systems in place to check on the pupils' progress, and target setting and marking are satisfactory. However, the school is keen to involve the pupils more consistently in evaluating their learning. There are good links with parents and a range of local agencies. Pupils and families value highly the role played by the learning mentor in supporting vulnerable pupils. Risk assessments are carried out systematically and regularly reviewed. Child protection procedures are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management have ensured that the school's focus has remained on raising standards and improving achievement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are passionate about the school and its development and have enthusiastically pursued improvement. Their high profile around the school, very good support for staff, and excellent relationships with pupils and parents are important factors in the school's growing success. The gathering and analysis of increasingly good information about the pupils' progress in each year group has been of equal importance in driving improvement. It has provided leadership and management with a robust system for evaluating the impact of the school's work and identifying where more needs to be done. The school was able, for example, to devise a timely initiative to support a group of underperforming pupils in Year 2. Sometimes, however, the response to important issues, such as securing consistency in teaching aspects of reading, has evolved slowly rather than being assertively steered by either senior or middle managers. Nevertheless, the careful monitoring and thoughtful evaluation of progress against well defined success criteria have given the senior team a clear understanding of the work which remains.

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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?	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	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?	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

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we inspected your school. We are especially grateful to those of you who met with us in small groups to talk at length about aspects of the school.

All of you were in no doubt that you enjoyed coming to Rounds Green and we could see why this was the case. The adults take very good care of you and so you feel safe and well protected. In addition, many of your lessons are interesting and you told us that you felt you were learning what you needed to know. The standards of work are improving and there is lots of extra help available for those who need it. The school is getting very good at pinpointing which pupils are falling behind so that it can do something about it before it is too late.

We have said that the school has shown that it knows how to improve. Mr Murphy and all of his staff are working hard to make the school more and more successful. You are playing your part by behaving well and getting much better at attending regularly. There are three things which we have said the school should now concentrate on. These are to:

- make sure that its plans to improve the teaching of reading and writing are carried out fully by all the teachers as soon as possible
- see how more time might be given to lessons other than literacy and numeracy
- share with everybody the really good ways that some teachers make their lessons always interesting.

I wish you all the best in the future.