

Cradley CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103846
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	298524
Inspection dates	25–26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Janeen Slack
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2006
School address	Church Road Cradley Halesowen B63 2UL
Telephone number	01384 818230
Fax number	01384 818232

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cradley is an average sized primary school with seven classes. Most pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. After a period of significant staff disruption, when the school had a considerable number of temporary teachers, there is now a stable, permanent teaching staff. The school was given a Notice to Improve following the previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13 of the Education Act of 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a good school. It provides a well balanced education for its pupils that has a positive impact on all aspects of their development. Pupils make good progress because of good leadership and management, good teaching and the positive working environment. The school has recovered well from a prolonged period of significant staff turbulence which led to a decline in standards and, consequently, a Notice to Improve. Improvements made to the quality of teaching and staffing stability mean that all pupils now benefit from consistently good teaching. This has removed past fluctuations in pupils' rates of progress. Pupils are now making consistently good progress from the Reception Year through to Year 6. As a result, standards are improving as pupils move through the school and are above average at the end of Year 6. The recent focus on improving pupils' writing skills has been particularly successful in raising standards. However, pupils' speaking skills are often not as good as their reading and writing skills.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils learn how to be safe and healthy and to take responsibility for themselves and others. They enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by the good levels of attendance and good behaviour. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community. Relationships are very good and play a key role in the good progress pupils make in their personal development. They benefit from a good curriculum that includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities, a good emphasis on physical activities, and the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school as is evident in comments such as, 'Children are very proud and happy to attend Cradley and, of course, to parents, this is priceless.' The school has very effective and rigorous systems for the collection and analysis of data to monitor the progress of individuals. This information is used effectively to set targets and to plan intervention strategies rapidly for those slipping behind.

The school has worked hard and successfully to overcome the difficulties caused by significant staff upheaval and has responded very well to the issues for improvement of the previous inspection. It has the clear determination and a good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception Year with standards broadly as expected. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress in their language and communication, numeracy and personal skills. As a result, standards at the start of Year 1 are above average. Staff work together very well to provide an interesting and appropriate curriculum. Children quickly settle in to the Reception class, follow the clear class routines, and rapidly develop confident and positive attitudes. However, the teacher's ability to provide an appropriate outdoor curriculum throughout the day, freely accessible to the children, is limited due to the restrictions of the Victorian building. This hinders the development of children's independent learning skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision for the outdoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage.

- Improve pupils' speaking skills by devising a structured programme to develop their skills and confidence in talking to an audience.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their Reception Year so that the majority are working at early National Curriculum levels before they start Year 1. The rate of progress has improved throughout Years 1 to 6 and it is now good for all pupils. In the most recent (2007) national assessments, standards were above average in Year 2. Detailed school data indicate that Year 6 pupils made good progress from a very low starting point in Year 3. This was the result of disruptions to teaching which had a particularly deleterious effect on this group of pupils. Due to outstanding teaching, these pupils made very good progress in Year 6 and, by the end of the year, standards in English, mathematics and science were broadly average. The current Year 6 group is in line to achieve above the national average in these subjects, reflecting improvements made to the quality of teaching and to the school's assessment and tracking systems. Boys and girls achieve equally well and there is no difference in the progress and standards between pupils of different cultural backgrounds. Pupils who are gifted and talented make good progress. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils get along together well, they follow school routines well, and move around in a sensible manner. Pupils demonstrate their good understanding of what constitutes a healthy life by making good meal and snack choices and by their keen participation in extra activities and interests. Pupils want to come to school and this is evident in the high levels of attendance and punctuality. Pupils have good attitudes towards their learning, they listen carefully and participate well in lessons. They produce a good amount of well presented work and understand why it is important to have homework. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community by presenting their ideas to school councillors. They are also involved in initiating fund raising activities to help to improve the school and those in need. Many of the personal qualities that pupils gain equip them well as caring and responsible citizens and eventually for the world of work. However, pupils lack self confidence and are not always articulate when they try to express their views in discussion.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are typically lively and conducted at a good pace with a good degree of challenge. As a result, pupils are motivated and learn well. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are ably supported by experienced and skilled teaching assistants who make a good contribution to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties. Planning clearly identifies varied activities for all abilities of pupils, making the lesson content interesting and relevant. Lessons are well organised and managed and good use is made of resources to support learning. Teachers and other adults have good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour and work, which help pupils to respond well. Pupils know what is expected of them because teachers share with them what they need to do next to improve. Teachers assess pupils' learning

thoroughly and this information is used well in most lessons to ensure that work is appropriate and builds consistently on what pupils already know. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers do not always assess pupils' developing understanding and therefore miss opportunities to consolidate ideas or introduce the next step in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and offers pupils a broad range of learning experiences. In the Reception class the curriculum enables children to learn from first hand experiences, although opportunities for learning outside the classroom are limited. There is a good focus on basic skills across the school and all aspects of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda are central to the curriculum and promote pupils' emotional and physical health well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported in lessons. Improved opportunities to develop writing skills in subjects other than English have contributed well to pupils' enjoyment as well as to a rise in standards across the school. However, there is no structured programme for the development of pupils' speaking skills and opportunities are missed to extend these skills and boost their confidence as speakers. There is a good range of well attended extra-curricular activities and regular educational visits which support pupils' learning and personal development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements to ensure children are safe and healthy are good. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are all in place and systems designed to ensure pupils are safe on visits out of school are extremely thorough. Good links are made with other professionals and services to promote the care and welfare of pupils. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have improved significantly. All pupils are given targets for English and mathematics and these are known by them, frequently referred to by teachers, and reviewed regularly. Consistently high quality marking throughout the school further supports pupils' learning. However, with a number of teachers new to the school, there is an acknowledged need to ensure that assessment data is consistently used to ensure the best possible progress in all lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management ensure that the school offers pupils a good education which enables them to achieve well. The senior management team responded to the Notice to Improve with great energy and rigour. The result is a school with a very positive and warm ethos in which all staff work together well as an effective and enthusiastic team. The school's assessment and tracking systems have improved significantly. This means that staff at all levels have a very detailed picture of how each individual pupil is progressing on a termly basis and of the overall progress made in each class. Based on this, the school sets itself challenging targets and the improvement plan accurately prioritises the important areas for development. The methods for evaluating the school's work, the effectiveness of decisions, and the areas to be improved are rigorous. Governance is good and the governors use their clear understanding of the school effectively to check on how well it is doing and support it in improving. They successfully promote the well-being of all pupils with good regard for equality of opportunity. Good account

is taken of the views of parents and other stakeholders. As a result, parents are very satisfied with the school and the great majority are effectively involved in helping their children to learn.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

28 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cradley Primary School, Halesowen B63 2UL

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit.

Cradley is a good school. You are all making good progress in your learning. You clearly enjoy coming to school and your behaviour and your attendance are good. You told us that there are many things to do and enjoy. We know that you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do. This is because your headteacher and staff work together very well to help you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure you understand how to look after yourselves and what you can do to improve your work. They have worked very hard to make improvements to the teaching and the work prepared for you. As a result, things are good throughout the school.

We have asked your school to do two things to make it better:

- make sure that the Reception children have more opportunities to work and play outside the classroom
- help you to improve your speaking skills so that you are able to speak as confidently as you read and write.

We are confident that, with your help, the school will improve still further.

I wish you well in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis Lead Inspector

28 September 2007

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Lead Inspector