

Warren Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103197
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308246
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Conway

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	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Jones
Headteacher	Margaret Goodwin
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Aylesbury Crescent Birmingham B44 0DT
Telephone number	01213 733885
Fax number	01213823409

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Warren Farm Primary School is of average size. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than in other schools of a similar size. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Warren Farm is a good school. It has a few outstanding features as the headteacher is uncompromising in her commitment to ensuring that all children receive the best possible care. She has created a harmonious school in which staff and parents work together to achieve the very best for the children. The exceptional improvements in recent years were the result of raising the quality of teaching and ensuring that the well-being of all children is secure. Recent staffing difficulties meant the school struggled to sustain exceptional rates of progress made by the children in 2005 and 2006. Parents are particularly supportive of the school, with several commenting that they would not send their children anywhere else. They recognise that the children's high level of enjoyment of school is due to the 'wonderful support' provided by the staff, particularly the headteacher, who 'always goes the extra mile to resolve any concerns about your child'. Parents' high regard for the school is such that many are employed in the school or are engaged in voluntary work on behalf of the school.

Overall, pupils currently make good progress. This is because of the exceptional standard of care they receive and good quality teaching. They leave the school with broadly average standards, having entered it with very low levels of attainment. By Year 6, pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics. In Year 2, standards in reading and writing are broadly average and are just below average in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the very good targeted support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants alike. Teaching is good across the school and is outstanding in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 where teachers know exactly what to provide to meet pupils' needs. Elsewhere, work is not always challenging enough for the most able pupils.

Effective academic guidance ensures pupils make good progress in acquiring satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are highly appreciative of what staff do to help them settle and make good progress. They have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles because there is a strong focus on this aspect. This, coupled with their very good personal and social skills, prepares them well for the next stage of their learning. Staff ensure children are safe from harm. The introduction of the International Primary Curriculum, with its focus on developing basic skills, contributes to the good quality curriculum.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has been relentless in driving up standards, initially focusing on securing the involvement of parents and the well-being of pupils and improving the quality of teaching. Leaders have a good awareness of what needs to be done to bring about improvement. The governing body offers appropriate challenge but is not fully involved in checking progress and holding the school to account. The recently introduced tracking system is having an impact on sustaining the good progress most pupils make. Following a difficult staffing situation, which affected pupils' achievement, an effective middle leadership team is now in place so that the capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start when they arrive in the Nursery. The school offers enjoyable, stimulating experiences that meet the needs of all learners in a safe, secure environment so

that from very low starting points children make outstanding progress. By Year 1, children's knowledge and skills are broadly average.

From the moment they enter the Nursery, the school focuses on supporting children to develop skills to help them learn. The close relationship that the school has with parents begins here through pre-school visits as well as involving parents in their children's learning by providing them with a training programme to support their children's learning and to develop their own skills. The children are well behaved and polite. They take turns, share and listen attentively to adults and each other.

Activities are varied, with staff knowing exactly what to provide to meet children's needs. Children show high levels of concentration and engagement because of imaginative use of limited outdoor space and purposeful use of indoor space. Children are given many opportunities to develop their speaking skills, and writing opportunities in abundance, which support them to make rapid progress in this area of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work is appropriately challenging for the most able so that they achieve as highly as they can.
- Improve the involvement of school governors in checking the school's work so they can hold the school to account more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2007 were well below average. This year pupils have made good progress and standards have improved, particularly in reading and writing, so that they are now average.

In 2007, the national test results in Year 6 were just below average in mathematics, and well below average in English and science. The progress made by these pupils was satisfactory, a contrast to the previous two years where achievement had been exceptional. Improved teaching and increasingly well focused monitoring of standards and achievement have addressed concerns about this drop in performance, partially explained by turbulence in staffing and the behavioural difficulties created by some pupils in this year group. As a result, current standards are broadly average, and pupils' progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2 is good.

In some classes, more able pupils do not always receive work that offers them sufficient challenge to allow them to make as much progress as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because work is well matched to their needs and teachers and teaching assistants provide exceptionally effective support. Likewise, the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language do well because of the specific attention they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, which enables them to be thoughtful about themselves and others and to contribute to the school's central values of care and respect. All pupils know how to stay safe. They appreciate their teachers enormously and are insistent about how much they enjoy being at a school that offers them so much. This

is reflected in their good attendance. Teachers treat their pupils with warmth and courtesy, and these qualities are seen in turn in the children's excellent behaviour. Older pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the school community and beyond. They take on responsibilities from Year 4 onwards. For example, substantial numbers are involved as playground friends, on the mediators' team, or as members of the school council. Younger pupils would benefit from and would welcome the opportunity to contribute and take on further responsibility. Because pupils learn how to cooperate and be genuine team players, they are prepared well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ensure that they cater for the different ways pupils learn. As a result, pupils are always ready to learn and keen to do their best. The planning of lessons is thorough, and accurate assessments are used to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of most learners. In lessons where the teaching is brisk, most notably in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6, the needs of all pupils, including the more able, are met well. Elsewhere, this is less consistent and the more able pupils become bored and their attention wanders.

The very effective relationships between staff and pupils are a key factor in the good attitudes pupils show towards their work. There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to work independently, especially in younger classes. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to enhance their teaching and to engage learners. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a considerable contribution to the quality of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it is responsive to the needs of pupils. The adoption of the International Primary Curriculum has allowed the development of a coherent, activity-led curriculum. Pupils are provided with a range of activities that help them to learn by doing, leading to high levels of participation, enjoyment and achievement. Statutory requirements are met by the addition of focused subject teaching, especially in science and within jointly planned topic work. French has been introduced in both key stages. The provision for ICT is satisfactory and set to become a strong resource for the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from well trained support staff. Classrooms are inviting and well organised with displays reinforcing the school's focus on fostering children's excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. There are many opportunities for enrichment through cross-curricular activities within and outside of the school day. These are popular with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very safe and stimulating environment in which pupils work well together. A significant factor for pupils' development is the outstanding provision for personal, social and emotional development in the shape of the 'Emotional Literacy' programme which underpins

the whole school curriculum. From the moment children enter the school, they quickly acquire skills that enable them to learn effectively and work well together. The school's relentless focus on the importance of attendance has led to improvements so that it is now good. A significant strength of the school is its exemplary work with parents and outside agencies to support both the academic and social development of pupils.

The school sets individual and challenging targets and tracks progress against these targets. Once they are reached, they are not always revised which is inhibiting the progress of pupils, including those who attain higher levels. Pupils know their literacy targets and know what they need to do to achieve them but they are not as clear about other targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear focus on the need to drive up standards and is not content to stand still. She keeps provision under constant review, determined that the high levels of deprivation experienced by many pupils will not prove a barrier in securing the best outcomes for all pupils, a commitment she has inspired all other staff to share. The school has a clear understanding of what it needs to do to improve and is focusing on the right priorities. Whilst governors are supportive and involved in the life of the school, they are not fully involved in checking the school's progress and holding it firmly to account.

Tracking systems to monitor the progress made by pupils against challenging targets are improving and used effectively by teachers to plan next steps. Greater use is being made of this information to identify where improvements are needed in teaching and in the curriculum.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1

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	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

8 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Warren Farm Primary School, Birmingham, B44 0DT

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and helpful during our recent visit to your school. We were particularly struck by how much you care for one another and how much you appreciate what your teachers do to help you learn. Your good levels of attendance show how much you enjoy school. Here are some of the things we found about your school.

- Warren Farm is a good school.
- You are taught well and are making good progress.
- The youngest children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception class.
- By the time you leave Year 6, you reach average standards.
- Your headteacher leads the school very well and all staff are keen to help her make the school an even better place for you to learn.
- Your school has excellent partnerships with your parents and people outside the school who all offer very good support to help you learn.
- Teachers and other adults look after you very well.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You enjoy helping to make improvements in the school and younger children would like more opportunities to do this.

We have asked the headteacher and staff to do two things to help the school get even better.

- Ensure that work is hard enough for you, so that those of you who find work easy can make better progress.
- Involve the governors more in knowing what the school needs to do to improve.

You can help your teachers by continuing to attend regularly and by always being ready and eager to learn.

Best wishes for the future.

Sarah Conway Lead inspector

Annex B

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Lead inspector