

Olive Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103796
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308425
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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	338
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Brady
Headteacher	Teresa Jordan
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Springfield Road Halesowen B62 8JZ
Telephone number	01384 818855
Fax number	01384 818859

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Inspection number	308425

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

Olive Hill Primary School is a larger than average primary school situated in Halesowen, to the west of Birmingham. Just over 50% of the pupils are White British and the remaining pupils are from minority ethnic groups, including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean and Yemeni. The proportions of pupils whose first language is not English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above the national averages. The school has received the following awards in recognition of its work: the Healthy School Award; the Basic Skills Quality Mark; and the Geography Quality Mark.

Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of changes. The governors appointed a new headteacher in 2005. When the Holt Farm Primary School closed in July 2006, the pupils from the school joined Olive Hill Primary School. A small number of the former Holt Farm pupils remained on the Holt Farm site until September 2007. All pupils are now educated on one site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Olive Hill Primary School is a satisfactory school and it has some good features. Pupils feel safe and treat each other and their teachers with respect because of the high emphasis staff place on pupils' personal development. Staff make good use of the local environment and links with the local community. Pupils and parents appreciate the good range of clubs and the wide range of visits. One parent commented, 'The school runs many trips and clubs that provide children with many opportunities to extend their education.'

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are lower than those expected for their age, especially in aspects of mathematical development and communication, language and literacy. The majority of children make good progress and begin Year 1 with levels of attainment that are broadly similar to those expected for children of their age. Between 2005 and 2007, there was a steady decline in English and mathematics standards at the end of Key Stage 2. In 2005, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 dipped in reading, writing and mathematics and were below the national average. In response to this, the school introduced a number of initiatives to improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. These actions led to a relative year on year improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and more recently, halted the decline at the end of Year 6. Currently, pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress and some make good progress. Standards in reading and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, are better than in writing. Consequently, standards are below the national average in writing at the end of Year 6. They are broadly average in reading and mathematics.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is good in some classes across the school and a small amount is outstanding. When teachers set tasks that effectively match individual pupils' different learning needs, pupils make good progress. Pupils also achieve well when they have time in the lesson for practical activities that capture their interest and challenge their thinking. For example, in science, staff provide pupils with the opportunity to learn through practical activities that encourage them to apply and extend their scientific knowledge. As a result, progress in science is good overall and has been for a number of years. In Year 6, the majority of pupils make outstanding progress in science because they receive targeted support in addition to a well-structured science curriculum that places an emphasis on acquiring scientific knowledge and skills through practical investigations. Standards in science are similar to the national average. However, this effective practice is not consistent enough across the school and in all subjects. In too many lessons, teachers do not use assessment information to plan tasks that build on pupils' previous learning. Sometimes, teachers' expectations of what the more able pupils can achieve are not high enough. As a result, pupils' progress varies between classes and subjects and the majority of pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Assessment information is not yet used well enough to set challenging targets or to support and guide individual pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory. Staff increasingly making links between subjects so that pupils can practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons.

The collective leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher works hard to ensure pupils receive a good level of care and support. With the support of staff and governors, she has thoughtfully managed the expansion of the school. Together, they have successfully helped pupils who moved onto the Olive Hill site feel very welcome. The headteacher and senior leaders use a range of approaches to monitor the work of the school. However, they do not always rigorously check that initiatives are consistently implemented or follow up areas

for improvements with sufficient urgency. As a result, inconsistencies remain in teaching, there are variations in the progress made by pupils in different subjects and standards in writing remain below the national average. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children entering the Foundation Stage have below the expected skills and knowledge for their age. Because of good teaching and a good curriculum in the Nursery and Reception Years, children make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, providing children with well-structured sessions within which children work on focused adult-led activities but also enjoy good opportunities to choose activities for themselves. This creates a good balance between adult and child-initiated tasks. Behaviour is good and children work and play well together, enjoying their learning. The outside areas have a range of appropriate resources that effectively support learning. Staff use assessment well to plan appropriate activities for the children. However, on occasions, adults leave groups of children alone for too long and miss the opportunity to intervene, challenge and develop children's learning as they work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' rates of progress further so that they reach higher standards, particularly in writing.
- Increase the proportion of consistently good teaching by improving the use of assessment data so that activities better meet the learning needs of all pupils, including the more able.
- Further improve leadership and management by ensuring procedures for monitoring and self-evaluation are robust and rigorous, and lead to more rapid improvement in pupils' progress.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Between Years 1 and 6, pupils make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards overall, with variations in performance between subjects. Effective support enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language to make progress that equals that of others and is sometimes better. In reading and mathematics, some pupils are now making good progress because of the stronger focus on phonics and mathematical calculations. In science, teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to learn through practical investigations. Consequently, pupils make good progress in this subject. In contrast, writing remains the weakest area across the school. The school has introduced a more structured approach to teaching writing. However, it is still in its infancy and has not yet had a significant impact on progress and writing standards. This year, the majority of pupils in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress since Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are broadly average in mathematics and reading. They are below average in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good pastoral care contributes effectively to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils work collaboratively and are well behaved and polite. Assemblies and environmental visits promote pupils' good awareness of the natural world. Visits to places of worship and celebration of festivals such as Divali help pupils appreciate the cultural diversity of the world around them. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are aware of the need to take regular exercise and eat healthily. They regularly take part in a range of sporting activities and make full use of the healthy tuck shop. Pupils know who to go to if they feel worried or concerned and say that help is always available. Attendance levels are improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils make a good contribution in the school and local community by participating in a wide range of local events and fund raising activities. The school council manages its own budget and its members take a keen interest in further developing the school. The council has recently improved lunchtime facilities. Pupils' progress in developing key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Good relationships between teachers, pupils and teaching assistants promote a positive attitude to learning. Progress accelerates when the content of lessons matches well to pupils' individual learning needs, interests and abilities. Pupils are particularly motivated when they have the opportunity to use a range of resources to support their learning. In some lessons, teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and explain how they can use success criteria to evaluate their own progress. However, this good practice is not widespread. On occasions, teachers spend too long on whole-class sessions and leave insufficient time for pupils to learn independently or through practical activities. In too many lessons, tasks do not always challenge the more able. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of English receive effective support from teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Satisfactory provision in English and mathematics enables pupils to develop suitable knowledge and skills in these areas. Opportunities to develop and reinforce pupils' mathematical and literacy skills in other subjects are sometimes missed. A range of intervention programmes provide extra support for pupils in their basic skills and help them to make satisfactory progress. For instance, the 'All about Me' project is tailored to meet the specific literacy needs of pupils. It gives pupils the opportunity to learn and apply their communication skills in real life contexts, such as writing and posting letters to members of their family. Pupils enjoy attending the wide range of extra-curricular activities and talk about these with enthusiasm. Along with a good programme of personal, social and health education, these activities contribute to their enjoyment of learning. Good provision in information and communication technology, music and art enables pupils to make good progress in these areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils appreciate the good level of care that they receive. Procedures to safeguard pupils are all secure. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and some make good progress because the staff identify their learning needs early and gain the required support from external agencies. Academic guidance is satisfactory. This is not yet good enough to ensure consistently good progress across the school. Although teachers' marking is positive and recognises pupils' achievement, it does not identify the next steps pupils need to take to achieve their learning targets. Through valuable links with external agencies, the school effectively encourages parental involvement in their children's learning at home and school and offers a range of training sessions for parents and members of the local community. The school is piloting new ways of working with external agencies, pupils and families. These partnerships are enhancing pupils' well-being and gradually improving the overall quality of education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has created a strong sense of teamwork. With the support of senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants and governors, she has created effective links with others, including the community and outside agencies. These have led to a good level of care and support for pupils. The school improvement plan is satisfactory. The plan now needs to make more reference to pupils' progress, the quality of teaching or how monitoring information is used to evaluate progress. Self-evaluation is sound but sometimes too generous and as a result, inconsistencies remain in teaching, learning and pupils' progress. Governors make a satisfactory contribution to the collective leadership and management of the school. They are becoming increasingly involved in checking and evaluating the work of the school; for example, some governors have met with staff to discuss developments in different curriculum areas and reported these to the governing body.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
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	3

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 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	3
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	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?	3

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

10 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Olive Hill Primary School, Halesowen B62 8JZ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. We would like to say a special thank you to those on the school council who came to talk to us. It was good to hear how much you enjoy school and the improvements you have made to lunchtimes. Thank you also for inviting us to the assembly. We thought you spoke very clearly and helped everyone to think about the ways rubbish can be recycled.

- We decided that your school is satisfactory with some aspects that are good. Your school is helping you to make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics and good progress in science, music and art. This is what we liked most about your school.
- You are well behaved and kind to each other and the adults you work with.
- The youngest children in Nursery and Reception listen carefully, are good at sharing equipment and make good progress.
- All the adults who work with you help you to feel safe, take good care of you and encourage you to eat healthily.
- You are eager to learn and like it when your teachers give you exciting, challenging and interesting tasks to complete.

To make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to help you make even faster progress, especially in writing. We have also asked the teachers to share and use the good ways in which they can challenge all of you to do your best. Finally, we have asked the headteacher, senior teachers and governors to check how well you are doing even more carefully so that you are able to make the best progress you can.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome. We would like to wish the adults who work with you, the governors and you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi Her Majesty's Inspector