

Windy Arbor Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104071
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308501
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	N J Stephens
Headteacher	Kay Luther-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Woodlands Way Chelmsley Wood Birmingham B37 6RN
Telephone number	0121 7704964
Fax number	0121 7793622

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Inspection number	308501

© Crown copyright 2007

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

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Windy Arbor is a larger than average-sized school. Most of the pupils are of White British origin. On entry to the Nursery and Reception, pupils have levels of skills below those expected for their age. The school has an additionally resourced centre, known as the unit, which caters for up to six pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties from across the local authority. There are currently four pupils on roll, who are mainly supported within mainstream lessons. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is much higher than is usually found. The socio- economic circumstances of the area in which the school is situated are below average. The acting headteacher was appointed six weeks ago, following the resignation of the previous longstanding headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Windy Arbor School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Parents have long appreciated the school's caring ethos and partnership approach. Over the last year, the school has built on this solid foundation of good relationships to focus much more purposefully on raising standards and improving achievement. In this, they have been supported well by the local authority.

Standards have now risen to below average across the school, including in Nursery and Reception classes. This represents satisfactory achievement from pupils' below average starting points and is a considerable improvement on previous years. There is still more 'catching up' to do, especially for pupils of average ability in Years 3-6. Writing remains an area of particular weakness, especially in Year 6. The improvements are partly due to satisfactory and improving teaching. Assessment information is now used to plan work that more closely matches pupils' needs. However, teachers do not provide enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and reach their targets. Progress is most rapid in Years 1 and 2, because the curriculum stimulates pupils' interest. The curriculum overall is satisfactory, but occasionally does not match the needs and interests of older pupils. There is insufficient focus on developing pupils' independence.

Pupils in the unit make satisfactory progress in their academic studies and personal development, because of very high levels of support. However, because planning to meet their needs is insufficiently precise, these pupils do not always reach their full potential.

Pupils' satisfactory personal development supports their improving achievement and the growth of self-esteem. Whilst the overall quality of care, support and guidance is satisfactory, parents appreciate the high level of commitment staff show towards their children. Pupils enjoy lessons, and attend regularly. They develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. They make a satisfactory contribution to the community and are adequately prepared for secondary school. Despite occasional disruptions, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and the previously high level of exclusions has fallen.

Satisfactory and improving leadership and management have been major contributory factors to rising standards. The acting headteacher provides a strong sense of direction and purpose for the school, and is determined to raise standards. She has led the drive to transform the learning environment, which is now attractive and safe. She is supported effectively by a committed staff team whose skills have improved rapidly over the last year. Self-evaluation is sound. Following recent improvements, governors provide a satisfactory level of support and challenge. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, the planning of support for pupils in the unit and the evaluation of their progress is not sufficiently rigorous.

A small proportion of the 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.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards, particularly for older pupils of average ability, especially in writing.
- Improve teaching by ensuring pupils know what their learning targets are and how to reach them.

- Ensure that the curriculum fully meets the needs and interests of all pupils and develops their independence.
- Ensure that work for pupils in the unit is more rigorously planned and evaluated. A small proportion of the 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

Standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils reach realistic targets. This represents a considerable improvement over recent years, when pupils did not achieve as much as they should. This improvement is because work is better matched to pupils' needs. On entry to Nursery, children have levels of skills lower than those expected for their age, especially in relation to communication and social skills. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they go into Year 1 standards are slightly below average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 now make fairly rapid progress, because they find the curriculum more interesting. Progress, whilst satisfactory, is slower for older pupils, especially those of average ability, and they have more ground to make up. Writing remains an area of relative weakness throughout the school. Standards in mathematics, previously an area of considerable weakness, have improved as a result of well planned extra support for pupils experiencing difficulties. Pupils with learning and emotional difficulties make satisfactory progress because of very high levels of support. More able pupils make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

In Foundation Stage, children learn to work together and develop independence. Throughout school, pupils like and trust their teachers, and enjoy their learning. This is reflected in decreased numbers of pupil exclusions from their previously high levels. Despite occasional disruptions by vulnerable pupils, attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance is broadly average. The school council has recently introduced play zones for different activities and 'playground pals' for those who feel lonely, resulting in improved behaviour. 'Bullying is a thing of the past, we feel safe in school,' said one pupil. Pupils' satisfactory social, moral, spiritual and cultural development provides a sound foundation for their improving achievement and growing self-esteem, especially for vulnerable pupils.

Pupils have good knowledge of healthy eating and one of the members of the 'Looking After the Environment Gang' said, 'The birds are hungry because we eat healthily and there is no litter in the playground.' Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities, like the popular 'Cheer Leaders Club'. They support an orphanage in Sri Lanka and their contribution to the wider community is satisfactory. Pupils have limited opportunities to demonstrate skills of independent learning and research. Satisfactory progress in basic and social skills prepares pupils adequately for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

From their start in Foundation Stage, staff really care about the pupils and establish good relationships with them. As a result, pupils feel more confident as learners. Expectations in relation to behaviour are made clear and therefore most pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Teaching has improved because better use is made of assessment information to plan lessons and to provide support for those who are experiencing difficulties, although there is further to go. Teachers give clear explanations so pupils understand what they are expected to do, but do not provide sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. There is not enough high quality teaching to move pupils forward at a rapid pace. One-to-one support enables pupils from the unit to make satisfactory progress, but is not sufficiently focused on their specific learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The environment in Foundation Stage is suitably organised to encourage children to be purposefully engaged in a range of activities. Improvements over the last year have ensured that the curriculum in Years 1–6 is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the needs of most pupils. It does not yet provide a sufficiently rich and varied experience, especially in relation to developing creativity. However, it is improving, especially in Years 1 and 2, where interesting and well planned visits, for example, to Tamworth Castle, have engaged pupils' enthusiasm and improved their learning. More flexibility is now provided to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils and the learning environment is now bright and orderly, following a thorough 'clearing out' of classroom 'clutter'. Information communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support learning in other subjects. There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to develop their independence across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff are strongly committed to the pupils' well-being. A variety of support, such as the learning mentor, enables pupils to feel cared for and safe. Good links are in place with external agencies to ensure that those pupils who are particularly vulnerable get the support that they need. However, individual plans for pupils in the unit are not based on a careful analysis of their specific needs. The procedures for safeguarding pupils are secure. Systems to vet staff and child protection procedures are in place, but all staff have not had recent training. The guidance given to individual pupils as to how they can improve their learning is not as strong as the care provided. Pupils often do not know their own targets and how they are to be reached.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and have contributed to the rise in standards over the last year. The acting headteacher's strong focus on improving pupils' achievement and the

learning environment is appreciated by staff, parents and governors. Planning for improvement is sound and is based on an accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, the evaluation of provision for pupils in the unit is not sufficiently rigorous. Subject and Foundation Stage coordinators have a clear understanding of how to improve standards within their areas. In this, they have been supported well by the local authority. There have been considerable recent improvements to governance. Governors now have the information and skills to monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively and they have addressed the budget deficit. All of this ensures that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Good links with a number of external agencies enhance pupils' well-being. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

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

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
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?	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	3
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	3
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 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

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Windy Arbor Infant and Junior School, Chelmsley Wood, B37 6RN.

- We enjoyed meeting with some of you during the recent inspection and hearing what you think about your school. Quite a number of your parents and carers completed a questionnaire so we hope you will discuss the inspection report with them. We found that the school provides you with a sound education which is improving steadily. Here are some of the positive things we found:
- You make satisfactory progress throughout the school. It is more rapid in Years 1 and 2, because the teachers work hard to make the curriculum more interesting for you.
- Standards throughout school are rising. This is largely because teachers are matching work more closely to your needs.
- Adults within the school provide you with a high level of care, especially when you are particularly troubled or upset. This helps you to feel safe and more confident about yourselves.
- Teachers and other adults in school help you to develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy and you know all about the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- The acting headteacher and other staff are very determined to make sure the school carries on improving. They have sound support from governors.

We have asked the school to;

- improve standards and achievement, especially for those of you who are of average ability and are in Years 3 to 6. It is especially important to improve standards in writing
- make sure you all know what your targets are and how to improve your work to reach them
- make sure that work is interesting for you and is set at the right level
- make sure that work is more carefully planned and progress checked for those of you who are in the unit, so that you do as well as you can.

We hope you will continue to make progress and enjoy your learning.

Best wishes

Marion Thompson Lead Inspector