

Pheasey Park Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104219
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	308545
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	716
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Raymond Wright
Headteacher	R Poyser
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Wimperis Way Great Barr Birmingham B43 7LH
Telephone number	01213 666183
Fax number	01213 250136

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pheasey Park Farm is one of the largest primary schools in the country. The headteacher and governors manage the Children's Centre on site that caters for 450 children and their families each week. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. There is a relatively small proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. Some families experience considerable hardship and others are more affluent. When children start in the main Nursery, their attainment is generally below that expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pheasey Park Farm Primary is a good school that, despite its size, retains a warm, family, caring atmosphere which parents and pupils value greatly. The school is well led and managed, and has maintained consistently good improvement for a number of years. Standards and pupils' achievement have risen and current results are above average. Pupils make good progress through the school. The Children's Centre gives the very young children and their families exceptionally good support and prepares the children thoroughly for their next steps. Because pupils in the main school are well taught, the curriculum is rich and rewarding and there are good procedures to ensure pupils learn well. Pupils have a consistently effective education from their first days in school to their last.

Pupils of all ability groups make good progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are encouraged and supported to do well. Higher attaining pupils also achieve well. Like their friends, they enjoy school immensely. The school has been working successfully to improve achievement in writing in Key Stage 1 following a period when results in this, although average, were lower than in other subjects. This year, achievement in writing is considerably better than during the recent past. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Their work is exciting and stimulating. Most children achieve their learning goals by the time they leave Reception.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. They are alert to the need to keep fit and healthy and know how to keep safe. They have good ideas for making their own lives and those of others better. Staff take their suggestions seriously and wherever possible put them into practice. Although the school is large, pupils feel part of the community. They look after each other, are proud of everyone's achievements and welcome visitors and new pupils with reassuring warmth. Behaviour is outstanding. As in any community of children, there are pupils who occasionally behave less well, but staff take very effective measures to improve their conduct. The very few examples of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils do not feel at all threatened by bullying and would rather talk of their many friends and the way they help each other. Pupils are happy in school, which is reflected by the above average attendance levels. Those in the Children's Centre settle to enjoy the adventures they meet and children in the Foundation Stage show good personal, social and emotional development. All in school are prepared well for their next stages of life and education.

Staff take great care of the pupils and younger children. There are robust systems to safeguard the welfare of everyone. The partnerships with parents and other agencies are first rate, which ensures pupils' needs are met well. Academically, pupils are given a good steer to help them achieve their best, although not every pupil knows what to do next to build from their existing levels. The programme of activities outside school time is second to none and makes a very strong contribution to pupils' chances of good achievement.

The headteacher has provided exceptionally good leadership to set the school on course for a very successful future. She has high expectations and sets very challenging targets, which other leaders support with enthusiasm. Senior leaders are growing in their ability to make rigorous checks on the quality of education and pupils' achievement. Governors have realistic insights into the school's performance and ask the necessary questions to ensure it is meeting its goals. School self-evaluation is outstanding because it involves all in school, including the pupils. Over the last few years, the school has established good or better procedures to ensure provision

and results improve steadily. Some aspects of the school's work and results are outstanding. The air of optimism, successful innovation and good management underpin the school's outstanding capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the main Nursery and Reception classes come happily to school in the knowledge they will have an exciting and interesting day. They work well because they are taught effectively. Their progress is good. Standards improve during children's time in the Foundation Stage and by the time they are ready for Year 1 most have reached the targets set for their age. The curriculum is good and is well focused on the six areas of learning. This helps prepare the children effectively for the next stage of their education. Facilities outside for children in Reception are not as good as for those in the main Nursery. The school has well judged priorities for the development of the available space into an area that is inviting to good learning. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed, which has resulted in good teaching by a dedicated staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils know what they have to do to build from their current targets for achievement, especially in the marking of their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the main Nursery with below average levels of skills and knowledge. They learn well and make good progress, so by the time they leave Reception most have reached their goals. The good progress applies as much to children who start with low levels of skills as it does to those who are well equipped for learning when they start school.

Achievement from the age of five to eleven is good. It accelerates for the older pupils because of some outstanding teaching. Higher attainers do well. Although in the past the school did not have as many pupils at Level 3 in Year 2 as might be expected, the proportion of pupils reaching this higher level has increased substantially this year. The proportion of Year 6 pupils gaining the higher Level 5 is considerably above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good strides with their learning. This is due to the precise learning targets set for them that enable them to take the necessary small steps in their work.

Standards in writing are improving well and there are some impressive examples of older pupils' writing on display. The school is working effectively to improve pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) by broadening the curriculum to include more opportunities for computer use in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. The behaviour of most pupils is exemplary; they thoroughly enjoy coming to school and have an excellent attitude to their work. This contributes significantly to their good progress.

In their questionnaires, a handful of parents expressed concerns about bullying, but pupils strongly express the opinion that when bullying occurs it is handled very swiftly and effectively. If pupils have any concerns, they first go to their friends for support and are equally happy to approach any member of staff. Playground buddies are very much appreciated by pupils who are lonely or upset at playtimes.

Assemblies make an effective contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as was seen in an assembly on the theme 'believe in yourself'. Pupils were given excellent opportunities to reflect on their own personal strengths, effectively building their self-esteem. Pupils have a good knowledge of a variety of religions but their understanding of Britain as a diverse society is rather less well developed.

The school council is proud of making a genuine difference to the running of the school. It was instrumental in changing the rules about bringing healthy snacks for playtimes and all pupils have a realistic view on what constitutes a healthy diet. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding social development and excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Good levels of basic academic skills and well developed personal skills, in particular the ability to collaborate, mean that pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are well taught, which stimulates them to make good progress. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of pupils of this age and they provide some exciting and rewarding opportunities for learning. Children in the Foundation Stage share this good teaching. Provision in the Children's Centre is very well focused on children's needs and all staff are committed to giving each child the best start in learning.

Occasionally, work for pupils in Key Stage 1 is too ambitious and progress slows. Year 1 pupils learning to calculate the time found this difficult because they needed more work to enable them to identify accurately the position of half-past the hour on the clock face. In other lessons, the pace of learning is good and pupils are purposeful in their work. There is some outstanding teaching, especially for the oldest pupils. Parents recognise that their children are taught well and they pay tribute to teachers' skills in encouraging good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well. Teaching assistants work effectively to support their different needs and they enthuse and encourage their pupils to improve their skills and knowledge steadily.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and rich. It meets pupils' needs very well. It is challenging for the higher attainers while providing effective support for those who find the work difficult. As a result, pupils make good progress. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good because it is firmly focused on children's development in their six areas of learning.

There are some good links between subjects, although these are less well developed. ICT is used appropriately to support pupils' learning. Senior leaders are working to strengthen the use of computers in, for example, writing lessons. There is very effective specialist teaching of

swimming and modern foreign languages due to innovative planning. As a result, pupils achieve very high standards in swimming and are becoming confident German speakers. One parent was most impressed with her Reception age child's awareness of German.

The curriculum is extended very well by the programme of visits to local places of interest, and this, together with visitors to the school and a wide range of popular after school activities, ensures that there are opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences and improve their achievement.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, because teachers know the pupils well and expect them to achieve. Work to develop pupils' basic skills and their personal and social education is good, which leads to effective preparation for their futures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides excellent pastoral care that results in pupils feeling safe and secure and encourages them to enjoy their education. There are excellent induction procedures for children as they move through the Children's Centre and the main Nursery. These are hugely appreciated by parents. Safeguarding procedures are robust and risk assessments are carried out thoroughly, so accidents are rare. The school's emphasis on health and safety results in pupils adopting excellent safe practices.

Whilst the school has introduced excellent procedures for assessing pupils' work, tracking their progress and setting individual targets for improvement, the marking of pupils' work is not fully effective. It shows pupils how well they have worked and what levels they have achieved, but it is not consistent in identifying the next steps that should be taken to improve further. This is especially so for mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding. She has set very high expectations for the continued development of the school based on an effective analysis of the school's performance data. Her aspirations are shared by other key leaders. As a result, teaching, learning and pupils' achievement continue to improve. School leaders have a totally accurate and reliable understanding of the school's work. They link their self-evaluation carefully to the good quality school improvement planning. Based on their robust evaluations, school leaders agree on the need to improve marking to help pupils take the necessary next steps in their learning and to check that this is consistent in all classes.

Governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They carry out their work effectively and monitor the impact of initiatives carefully. They ensure the school gives good value for money.

School leaders have managed the complex process of creating the Children's Centre most effectively. This work has not been allowed to stand in the way of improvements within the main school. As all the building stages for the Children's Centre were being completed, pupils' achievement was being built well in the school as a whole. Everything of importance is in place to ensure the school has every chance of maintaining successful improvement in the future.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

3 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pheasey Park Farm Primary School, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7LH

You must be very pleased that you go to a school that gives you such a good education. We enjoyed spending some time with you and finding out why your school is a good place to learn. You helped us to do this by sharing your ideas and thoughts and by giving us such a friendly welcome. Thank you.

Your parents and carers agree that there are many good things in school. We have identified the main ones in our report. I hope some of you will read it.

- You are making good progress and reaching above average standards.
- This is because you are taught well and your work is well matched to your needs.
- You are becoming good people to know because you behave well, enjoy being with other people and help each other.
- Your teachers look after you well and help you to do your best.
- Mrs Poyser has high expectations of what you can do and she makes sure that the staff and governors carry out their work successfully.
- The Children's Centre is a real asset* and gives the youngest children a great start.
- Children in Nursery and Reception enjoy learning new things and they do well.

There is one area where the school can make improvements.

- When your work is marked, teachers could tell you more often how to improve what you have done.

We think that you will soon notice this improvement in your books. You can help by telling your teachers how well you think you are doing. Good luck for your future learning.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector

* We think a lot of you know what this means, but if you are not sure, we know you will find out.

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