

# Fallings Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104294
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308563
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	295
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Glen Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon Hopkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Old Fallings Lane Low Hill Wolverhampton WV10 8BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558375
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 558376

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Fallings Park is a large primary school. It serves an area that has high levels of disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is slightly below the national average. Pupils start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills and knowledge well below those expected. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is above the national average. There is a small number of pupils with disabilities. A new headteacher took up post in April 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is thereby given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement in mathematics.

When the school was last inspected, standards were exceptionally low but achievement was judged satisfactory. Since then standards and achievement of pupils from all backgrounds have risen in English and science, but in mathematics there has been no corresponding improvement and achievement is now inadequate. This dip is a consequence of a review of the school's curriculum, which benefited English but was less successful at developing understanding and knowledge in mathematics. Other factors contributing to the fall were ineffective leadership of the subject and weak subject knowledge amongst the teaching staff. The recently appointed headteacher has added impetus to work initiated following disappointing results in national tests in 2007, and the issues resulting in the pupils' inadequate achievement have largely been resolved. However, in mathematics, the legacy of inadequate provision is still evident in the exceptionally low standards seen in lessons and in pupils' books, and in the slow progress pupils make over time. Achievement is satisfactory in the EYFS. Children begin Nursery with attainment significantly below that expected for their age and enter Year 1 with standards below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and the small number of pupils with disabilities also make satisfactory progress and benefit from the additional support they receive.

Pupils' personal development is good. The strong emphasis in the curriculum on developing social and emotional skills has a positive impact and behaviour is good. Pupils are well aware of what they need to do to stay safe and healthy and they enjoy a wide range of sporting activities. They make a good contribution to their school community. Although pupils develop confidence and mix well with each other and adults, they are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education because of their low level of basic skills, particularly in numeracy.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Whilst there is evidence of an increasing proportion of effective teaching, there is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils make up lost ground. In mathematics, this is because challenge is not high enough and work set does not consistently match the needs of pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory. Recent changes ensure that pupils receive an appropriate balance between lessons that teach basic skills and those that promote personal development and creativity. The pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes reflect the school's strong systems of care and support. Attendance, though rising, is below average and there is a relatively high number of pupils who are persistently absent. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have the capacity to make the improvements needed. The steps taken to raise achievement in mathematics are appropriate and good teaching was evident in almost half of the mathematics lessons observed. There is now a clear focus on raising standards based on a candid self-evaluation of present performance. The governing body works closely with the senior leadership team. Governors have a strong commitment to the school and a satisfactory awareness of their responsibility to secure a high quality standard of education for all pupils.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are well below those expected. With satisfactory teaching and support from classroom assistants, children of all abilities and backgrounds make satisfactory, and sometimes better, progress in all the areas of learning for children of this age. However, most do not attain the levels of skills expected for those entering Year 1 because of their low starting points. The good quality of care helps children to settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes. All children are happy to approach staff for assistance or support. The indoor accommodation is organised effectively to promote interest, exploration and excitement but the outside fenced area is dull and unimaginative. The leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory. All staff are fully aware of the new statutory requirements to safeguard these young children and the required documentation is in place. Little evaluation has been made of data collated from the child profile assessments and so leaders are not sharply aware how they could improve provision to accelerate children's learning. Parents are very pleased with the start their children make and appreciate how friendly and approachable staff are at the beginning and end of each session.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress across the curriculum but particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure teachers provide challenging work in mathematics and use assessments to match work accurately to individual pupils' needs.
- Improve overall attendance by reducing the level of persistent absence.
- Improve the outdoor environment so that it promotes high quality learning in the EYFS.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Achievement in the EYFS is satisfactory in relation to children's start points. Standards across the school are low, but, in English and science, there are signs of improving progress for pupils in Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 6 standards in reading and science are closer to the national average. However, progress is inadequate in mathematics. By the time the pupils start Year 6 there is too much ground to make up; just over half of pupils attained the expected level at the end of Year 6 in national tests. Mental arithmetic skills are particularly weak and even older pupils have gaps in their knowledge of the multiplication tables. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. The additional support they receive, particularly in reading, is helping them catch up with their peers. Pupils with disabilities make sound progress and benefit from the school's accurate understanding of their needs and strong links with parents.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well both in class and around the school. They enjoy school because the curriculum interests them and the numerous after-school clubs cater for a good range of interests. Nevertheless, efforts by the school to improve attendance have been only relatively successful; it is below average because there is a comparatively high number of pupils who attend school less than 80% of the time. Pupils are confident that staff will help them if they have a problem and their knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy is

good. The pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and the local community through the school council and environmental projects. In discussions with the pupils, it is clear that they have plenty of enthusiasm and ideas to improve their school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand well how their fund raising helps communities around the world. However, their awareness of Britain as a culturally diverse society is quite limited despite appropriate links with schools serving predominantly minority ethnic communities. The pupils' preparation for the future is inadequate, because the level of basic skills needed to succeed at the next stage of their education is too low.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There is evidence of an increasing proportion of good teaching, ensuring that teaching is not inadequate, but too much teaching is just satisfactory and not helping pupils improve their standards quickly enough. As a result, though progress in lessons may be satisfactory, they are not making up lost ground and, for the older pupils, longer term progress remains unsatisfactory. Many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding but although the school collects a wide range of assessment information, it does not use it consistently to match work closely to pupils' needs. For example, in a minority of mathematics lessons the higher attaining pupils spend too long consolidating skills they have already mastered, whilst lower achievers work at tasks that occupy them but do not improve understanding. In these lessons, there is a focus on obtaining correct answers rather than dealing with misconceptions and there are few opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning or openly share their difficulties. The new subject leader in mathematics has rightly identified that continuing to improve the subject knowledge of all staff remains a high priority.

Good teaching was evident in some mathematics and English lessons. For example, pupils made good progress in an English lesson where the writing task selected enabled them to work towards their individual writing targets. A particular strength of the lesson was the time given to the pupils to evaluate their work against the learning objectives and their own targets. The pupils were understandably pleased with the noticeable improvements they have made since the beginning of term.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Following disappointing results in national tests in 2007, the school moved away from a theme based curriculum to ensure that the pupils have sufficient time to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This change ensures that all pupils, from Reception onwards, have daily mathematics lessons where they can build on earlier learning. However, inconsistencies in the methods taught to solve calculations limit progress in mathematics. The increased priority given to teaching phonics is improving the writing skills of pupils in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum still contributes well to the pupils' good personal development, promotes creativity and helps them to stay safe and healthy. A good range of visits, visiting speakers and performers ensures that there is a variety of curriculum experiences and pupils particularly enjoy the musical shows and concerts they perform for the local community. There are high levels of participation in the many after school clubs.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The school cares well for all its pupils. Child protection procedures are very well established and safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Health and safety arrangements, including risk assessments, comply with statutory requirements. Through the Parent Partnership and links with other agencies, the school provides a wide range of support for families and pupils. It runs a successful breakfast club to give pupils a healthy start to the day. Family learning programmes are contributing well to the school's drive to promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination. Appropriate links with external agencies support pupils with learning difficulties and those with disabilities. Attendance is improving now following a dip in 2006 and 2007. However, it is still below average because of the high number of persistent absentees. Academic guidance is not as effective as the care and support provided. Pupils are not fully aware of their learning targets and too many are unsure of what they need to do to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The senior leadership team demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve the school's effectiveness. Effective leadership in English and science has secured a trend of improvement in these subjects greater than that seen nationally. The recently appointed headteacher has added impetus to the school's drive to raise standards. There is an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the systems for tracking pupils' progress enable the school to set challenging targets and hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils. Crucially, the actions taken to raise standards in mathematics, including the appointment of a new subject leader, are starting to have a positive impact. The school is satisfactorily meeting its duty towards promoting social cohesion. Its work with parents and local agencies helps to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups. However, its work to increase pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom and global communities is less effective.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	4

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fallings Park Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV10 8BN

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave Mrs Robertson, Mr Evans and myself when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed joining your lessons and were very interested to hear about all the things that you do and what you thought about your school. We could see that the school council works hard on your behalf and that all the adults in the school look after you well. The Harvest assembly was both interesting and enjoyable. We all hope that the Welly Fundraising Day is successful and helps people like those shown in the video.

It was pleasing to hear from you how much you enjoy lessons and that you feel safe and happy in the playground. You certainly look very smart in your school uniforms.

However, we are concerned that you are not making as much progress, particularly in mathematics, as you need, so your school needs to improve. The people who run your school are working hard to make this happen. We have asked your school to make sure that:

- you do much better in all subjects but particularly mathematics, and reach higher standards
- teaching in mathematics consistently challenges you to think hard, so that you all learn as quickly as you can
- all pupils attend school regularly
- the children in the Nursery and Reception classes have good opportunities to learn outside the classroom.

Inspectors will visit your school again to check on how well it is doing.

You can help by working extra hard and making sure you know what the teachers are asking you to do to reach your targets. You can also remind your parents how important it is for you not to miss any lessons, so that you can achieve as well as you can.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Anthony O'Malley Her Majesty's Inspector