

West Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131153
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	315736
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Ashwell
Headteacher	Caroline Godfrey
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Devon Road Whitmore Reans Wolverhampton WV1 4BE
Telephone number	01902 558238
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

West Park Primary School is slightly larger than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and over half speak English as an additional language. About a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average. The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the normal time is high. Many new arrivals speak little or no English and have no experience of the English education system. Standards of attainment on entry to the Nursery are well below the expected levels.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Park is a welcoming school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has a number of good features, particularly the pupils' personal development and the quality care that the pupils are provided with. Pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds relate well to each other and to the staff. Their behaviour is always good. The pupils' journey through the school enables them to become courteous, respectful, helpful and mature. During the inspection, this was reflected in a delightful assembly taken by Year 6 pupils about the work they had recently undertaken on poetry. They were confident, entertaining and brought smiles to the faces of an audience of pupils, staff and parents.

Although standards are below average by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The pupils do well in English and the school's national test results for the last few years have indicated broadly average standards. However, this is not replicated in mathematics, where over the same period of time, standards have been below average. Parents are correct when they say that Foundation Stage children get a good start to school in the Early Years Unit. However, despite making good progress in most areas of learning, many children do not reach expected levels by the time they start Year 1.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a significant amount of good teaching but teachers do not always use assessment information accurately to match work to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers' marking is better in English than it is in mathematics. Occasionally, teachers' expectations are not high enough for individuals or groups of pupils. Pupils are keen about their learning and as one pupil said, 'Lessons are interesting and teachers are kind and generous.' The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. English skills are developed well in other subjects but this is not the case for skills associated with mathematics. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The quality of pastoral care is good and helps pupils to feel valued and safe at school. Pupils who arrive during the academic year settle in well because induction procedures are good. They quickly become valued members of the school community. Academic support is satisfactory. The effectiveness of pupils' individual learning targets for example, is variable and they do not always contribute to improving pupils' achievement.

The headteacher provides good leadership. This has ensured a good team spirit amongst the staff who work enthusiastically together. The school is good at making all of its pupils feel happy and cared for. They become confident and enthusiastic learners. Parents are very happy with the school and many describe it as 'special'. Middle managers are developing their roles, and the quality of provision, particularly teaching and learning, is regularly monitored. However, observations of lessons do not focus sufficiently on the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they are making. Although standards in English have improved well since the school's last inspection, strategies to improve mathematics have been less successful. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Early Years Unit is good. Children achieve well in most areas of learning as a result of good teaching and a range of interesting activities although standards are below those expected by the time they start Year 1. The children make the most progress

in their personal and social development. Good improvement has been made to the curriculum and learning environment since the last inspection. There is now a good balance between activities that adults lead and those children choose independently. The family groups led by key workers ensure that children's individual needs are well known to staff. This helps children feel safe, secure and cared for. Consequently, they enjoy learning and show increasing levels of confidence. There are good links with other schools and outside agencies. For example, visiting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all the activities taking place. The leadership of the Early Years Team is good because the staff are a cohesive group who work and plan closely together for the benefit of the children. The systematic teaching of letter sounds however, is underdeveloped, as a result of less confident teaching. Children do not make as good progress in this area of learning with the majority still well below the level expected when they start Year 1. The emphasis given to developing spoken language, however, is a strength of all the staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Drive up standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils make the same progress in the subject as they do in English.
- Ensure that teachers' marking, their use of assessment information and their expectations of what pupils can achieve, are consistent in all lessons and across all subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of lesson observations by focusing more on the progress that pupils are making.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

As a result of high pupil mobility, year groups often change over time. This has an impact on standards and the progress that pupils make individually. It is not unusual for pupils to join the school in Year 6 with little or no experience of school. Because of the school's welcoming ethos and well targeted support, new arrivals often make good progress. The school is also effective at developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. By the time they leave in Year 6, most pupils readily engage in conversation and listen to others carefully. Pupils make good progress in English. From below average standards in reading and writing in Year 2, standards in English are average by Year 6. Pupils' progress in mathematics is slower and standards are below average in Years 2 and 6. This has prompted the school to look closely at the teaching and curriculum for mathematics but this review has not had time to take effect. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties make the same progress as their classmates because of well organised support, particularly from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The cultural diversity in the school is used well to celebrate and encourage understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils of different cultural backgrounds enjoy working and playing together and there is a very good atmosphere across the school. Pupils are keen to express their views and opinions and through the school council have a say about how the school community operates. They also contribute well to the wider community by for example, raising money for a range of charities. Isolated incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are dealt with well. Pupils like coming to school because they feel safe and find the teachers and teaching assistants friendly and helpful.

Attendance levels are similar to those found nationally despite a number of pupils taking extended holidays. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to lead healthy lifestyles, for example, making healthy choices at lunchtime that include salad, fruit and vegetables. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well, establish good relationships and ensure a positive environment within their classrooms. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners who try hard in lessons. There are examples of good teaching, particularly in English, in most parts of the school but occasional shortcomings limit the progress achieved by individuals or groups of pupils. Assessment is used effectively to group pupils for activities but there are times when teachers do not expect enough of their pupils or work is not challenging enough. Teachers' marking is often good in English and guides pupils on how to improve their work and move to the next stage of learning. This is not always the case in mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils are properly supported.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Aspects of the curriculum support pupils' personal development well. For example, there is good provision for educating pupils about how to lead healthy lifestyles and adopt safe practices. The school is currently reorganising its curriculum so that more is made of the natural links between subjects and to ensure that important key skills are taught. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils spoke confidently of using computers to help them in subjects like English and history. English skills are developed well through other subjects but this is not the case for mathematics. The school is also improving its outdoor learning environment. The curriculum is enriched well and pupils talk enthusiastically about trips out, residential visits and the clubs and activities that take place after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral care. There are effective links with external agencies so that pupils with specific needs are cared for successfully. Staff know all of the pupils in their care well and cater for their needs sensitively. All of this helps boost pupils' enthusiasm and confidence. Health and safety procedures and safeguarding systems meet requirements. Academic guidance is satisfactory. All pupils have targets set for them in English and mathematics. However, these are not always defined precisely enough. Pupils are sometimes confused about their targets and how they should be supporting their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and staff have been successful in developing a calm and popular school. In moving the school forward, meeting the wide and extensive needs of all pupils has been central to everything. The school has continued to improve since its last inspection. There have been significant developments in the school's accommodation and the Foundation Stage practice. The school has been successful in improving standards in English. However, there is still work to be done with regard to pupils' achievement and standards in mathematics. Despite this setback, other improvements demonstrate that the headteacher and staff have a satisfactory capacity to improve the school further. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. Many of the school's systems and initiatives are being refined and developed so they become more effective. The headteacher has a clear view on the right sorts of focus that will make a difference. For example, staff are planning to work more closely together on developing assessment information, and the monitoring of teaching, particularly in mathematics, is being reorganised. Governors are supportive of the school and have a secure understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, they are not sufficiently involved in the school's strategic development.

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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?	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

17 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Park Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV1 4BE

Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the inspection. I especially enjoyed the assembly led by Year 6 about poetry and the discussions I had with some of you from Year 1 about your mathematics. Right now, your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are a number of things that are good and a few things that could be improved.

Your school is very welcoming, mainly because all of you behave well and are polite, friendly and respectful. You like coming to school because lessons are interesting, you feel safe and think that your teachers are friendly and helpful. You do well in English and most of you make good progress in this subject. Unfortunately, your progress in mathematics is not so quick so we have asked the headteacher and staff to improve this.

There is some good teaching that allows you to do well. On occasions, a few of you find your work too easy. The teachers' marking in English is good and helps you to get better at your work. It is not always as good in mathematics. We have also asked the school to improve these aspects of teaching.

The staff work well together and take good care of you. The headteacher has helped the school to improve since it was last inspected. She has worked hard with other staff to provide you with a school where you can happily learn and play with your friends. The staff regularly check how well the school is doing but do not always look carefully enough at how well you are learning and the progress you are making, particularly in individual lessons. This is something else we have asked the school to look at.

You can help your school improve by attending regularly, remaining positive and enthusiastic about your learning and continuing to behave well. Thank you again for all of your help.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead inspector