

Guns Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131178
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	315741
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Krishan Sharma

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	483
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark White
Headteacher	B Samuel
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2004
School address	2 Hanbury Road West Bromwich B70 9NT
Telephone number	0121 5531427
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. The vast majority of pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups, the largest being those with Asian backgrounds. About two fifths of pupils are of White British origin. Nearly half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, a number that is well above average. The percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties is low. A large number of pupils start at the school at times other than the Foundation Stage. Since October 2006, the leadership of the school has been shared between the substantive headteacher working for three day per week and the deputy headteacher acting up on the remaining two days.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Overall, this is a good school where pupils achieve well. Children enter the Nursery with attainment that is well below the expected levels, they make good progress through the school and leave with broadly average standards in Year 6 in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. As children's literacy skills are low on entry, and given the high number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, achievement in English is particularly impressive. Standards are not as secure in science, but the school has already embarked upon building staff expertise in the subject. The rate of pupils' progress varies. It is good up to Year 2 and is at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, in Years 3 to 6. Parents are justifiably happy with their children's progress at school.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy being at school and most of them attend regularly. Their good behaviour ensures that they engage with their classroom work and make the most of the opportunities offered to them. They feel safe and know that adults in the school care about them. Because of good pastoral care and guidance in the school, pupils gain the self-confidence that enables them to form good relationships with others. Academic guidance, however, is not as strong, particularly in teachers' assessment and marking of pupils' work. Occasionally, pupils are unclear about their targets for learning and how to achieve them.

Teaching is good overall. It mirrors the rate of progress pupils make across the school. It is consistently good from the Nursery through to Year 2 and ranges from satisfactory to good between Years 3 to 6, with stronger teaching in Years 5 and 6. The curriculum is good and supports pupils' personal development. It is extended well through a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The senior leadership team is effective in ensuring that the school remains focused on improving pupils' academic achievement and personal development. The school has secured necessary improvements since the last inspection. All leaders have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The middle leaders lead with enthusiasm and regularly check the progress of developments in areas of their responsibility. Sometimes, the criteria used for evaluating the success of developments in the school lack rigour and so it is hard to see whether they have made a difference to pupils' achievement. Pupils' progress is tracked, but the rigour in the collection, analysis and the use of data is inconsistent. Occasionally, this results in a delayed response to emerging issues and means that pupils making slower progress are not picked up quickly. Governors are supportive of the school and are confident enough to hold it to account. Financial management is in a very good order and the school is resourced well. The school has forged good links with its community. Considering the broadly average standards by the end of Year 6 from low starting points on entry to Nursery and the school's good overall provision, the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress from a low start and, by the end of the Reception year, many get closer to the levels expected for their age in most areas. A small number of them make significant gains and reach higher levels. Good teaching and high quality planning ensure that children not only enjoy learning, but also achieve well. Children settle quickly because routines are clear and parents play their part by working with the school. Activities offered to children include a

good balance of those led by adults and those chosen by themselves. As a result, children have sufficient opportunities to learn to be independent. Although staff encourage children to discuss their work, occasionally there is further scope for extending the conversation. Staff regularly observe children at work and make detailed assessments to keep track of their progress and plan the next step in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve teachers' assessment and marking of pupils' work to set suitable target that pupils fully understand and know how to achieve.
- Develop leaders' skills in the consistent use of assessment data to raise standards and identify all pupils who would benefit from additional support, and in using robust benchmarks to check the effectiveness of improvement initiatives.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From attainment that is well below the levels expected at the start of Nursery, pupils achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, particularly in English and mathematics. This represents good achievement, but progress is uneven across the school. The earlier gains made in the Foundation Stage are successfully maintained through to Year 2. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Due to some inconsistencies in teaching, some pupils in Years 3 to 6 make mainly satisfactory progress. However, it is often better than this in Years 5 and 6. Achievement in English is particularly good, especially for those learning English as an additional language. This is mainly because of the school's strong focus on literacy, the subject knowledge teachers have built up over many years and the additional support pupils receive. Those with learning difficulties make good progress against their short-term goals. The school rightly considers achievement and standards in science to be an ongoing concern and has brought in external expertise to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is reflected in pupils' well-developed personal and social skills. Behaviour is good and effectively contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. As a result of the school's focus on promoting good health, most pupils make healthy choices when eating in school as well as taking part in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils are aware of the need to ensure their own and others' safety. A tiny minority of parents were concerned about bullying in the school, but pupils emphatically assured the inspectors that it was rare and, when it happened, the staff dealt with it effectively. Pupils find most of the lessons enjoyable. Attendance remains below average, but the school continues to work conscientiously with parents and welfare agencies to improve it. Pupils participate in decision making within the school through the school council and have had some influence in improving the playground and classroom environments. They make a considerable contribution to the wider community by attending local events and raising monies for worthwhile causes. Pupils' broadly average standards in the basic skills and information and communication technology (ICT) mean their preparation for the world of work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and ranges from satisfactory to good in Years 3 to 6, with more effective teaching taking place in the upper years. The senior leaders have already begun to tackle this inconsistency, with internal and external support, and have been successful in reducing it. In all lessons, adults establish good relationships, successfully foster pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning and manage behaviour well. As a result, pupils develop good personal skills. Where teaching is good, tasks are well planned, build on pupils' previous learning and thoroughly engage pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress. Teachers have high expectations and are particularly successful in challenging the pupils learning English as an additional language. In the mainly satisfactory lessons, teachers talk for too long and give insufficient opportunities for pupils to contribute to the lesson. Occasionally, these lessons are less demanding and, as a result, some pupils make only adequate progress. Marking throughout the school is inconsistent and does not always specify a focus for further improvement and how to achieve this. Setting of targets for learning is not fully secure and is yet to benefit pupils in every class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned. The current provision for literacy and numeracy takes into account the new frameworks. To raise standards in science, the school is now focusing on practical and investigative aspects of the subject. The provision for, and the use of, ICT to promote pupils' learning across the curriculum is extensive. Recently, the school has linked its curriculum into themes to add enjoyment to pupils' learning. The new arrangements have particularly assisted the school in improving pupils' progress in their literacy skills across the curriculum. There is a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities. The 'social and emotional aspects of learning' (SEAL) programme is effectively reinforcing the school's strong focus on pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Pupils feel safe and know that they can approach adults in the school for support. When appropriate, the school involves external agencies to assist it in supporting vulnerable pupils. Academic support and guidance are mainly satisfactory; it is particularly effective for pupils learning English as an additional language and contributes to their good progress. Pupils with identified additional needs are also supported well. Although the collection of assessment data is frequent, its use to track pupils' progress is inconsistent. This means, on occasions, the school's response is not as rapid as it could be in ensuring some pupils, particularly those with additional needs, receive the appropriate support. Guidance given through marking and individual targets, although generally adequate, is inconsistent and is not helping some pupils to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leaders and the governors are deeply committed to improving pupils' academic achievement and their personal development. In general, the school has the right priorities to guide its work. Senior and middle leaders have a good overall view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The middle leaders, particularly for the core subjects, regularly check the progress of developments they lead. Occasionally, the benchmarks used to check the impact of initiatives on pupils' achievement are insufficiently clear. This makes it difficult to evaluate success. Staff also monitor pupils' progress. A range of data is collected, but its updating and the rigour with which it is used to track pupils' progress is inconsistent. When this happens, pupils who would benefit from additional support are not always identified and it is more difficult to see any emerging trends. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are now sufficiently confident to provide challenge when it is needed. Parents are overwhelming supportive of the school and appreciate what it offers to their children. A parent captured this view well when she wrote, 'My daughter has had a good foundation at Guns Village Primary, which I am sure will stand her in good stead as she moves into her secondary school.'

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	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?	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?	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

6 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Guns Village Primary School, Sandwell, B70 9NT

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and listening to what you had to say. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

This is what we thought was good about your school:

- you all try hard with your schoolwork and most of you make good progress
- those of you who are new to English learn it well and become good at it by the time you leave school
- you behave well and get on well with each other
- you enjoy being at school – and some of your parents told us that you do
- you feel safe at school and know that someone in the school will listen to you if you have a problem
- you enjoy taking part in after-school activities
- your governors are fully committed to supporting the school
- most of your parents appreciate what the school does for you.

This is what we have asked the governors and the headteacher to do to improve your school:

- improve lessons in Years 3 to 6 classes to help all of you to make good progress
- improve the way teachers assess and mark your work to tell you how well you are doing and what you could do next to improve it
- make sure that teachers keep a regular check on the progress each and everyone of you make as you move through the school, and that leaders also keep a close check on how their plans for the school are working out.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma Lead inspector

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Lead inspector