

Elston Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104351
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	316485
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Rob Hubbleday HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	559
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Len Kruczek
Headteacher	Kevin Grayson
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
School address	Stafford Road Fordhouses Wolverhampton WV10 6NN
Telephone number	01902 558866
Fax number	01902 558868

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2007
Inspection number	316485

© 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Elston Hall is a very large primary school close to one of the main routes into the city. It serves an area with some degree of deprivation. Around a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but nearly all speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average. The headteacher took up a full time post at the school in April 2007, having previously been the acting headteacher on a part time basis from January 2007.

When the school was inspected in October 2006, it was judged to require special measures because it was not providing an acceptable standard of education and had not demonstrated the capacity to improve. It had particular weaknesses in some of its procedures for ensuring the safety of the pupils, the progress made by pupils and the rigour and effectiveness of its monitoring of teaching. The school's progress has been monitored by HMI.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. It is now a satisfactory and improving school.

Achievement is satisfactory as the pupils are making satisfactory, and increasingly good, progress through the school. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards which are broadly average. Standards in English, however, are higher than in mathematics, which reflects the difference in levels of confidence the teachers have in teaching these subjects. In nearly all subjects and at each key stage, the school has identified that girls often reach higher standards than the boys and tend to make faster progress.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is satisfactory. There is particularly strong teaching in Year 2 and Year 6, and there is some good teaching in all year groups. The teachers plan lessons effectively to take account of the pupils' levels of understanding and they include many more practical and stimulating tasks for the pupils to carry out than previously. There is now very little inadequate teaching.

The pupils behave outstandingly well, which has helped the school remain on an even keel during a year of significant changes in staffing. They want to learn and are very enthusiastic about all that the school has to offer. They like taking on responsibilities and are looking forward to the revival of the school council. Attendance is improving and is broadly average.

The school's rapid improvement would not have been possible without good quality leadership and management to coordinate efforts. The headteacher tackles issues directly but is measured and calm. He quickly identified the essential actions the school needed to take and has ensured that nothing has diverted attention from these priorities. He has effectively developed the capacity of his senior leaders and subject coordinators, all of whom are playing an important part in the school's improvement. In a recent survey of the parents' opinions carried out by an external consultant, the parents identified significant improvements in the quality of leadership and management. The impact, they reported, was to be seen in better behaviour from the pupils, more effective teaching, a closer relationship between school and home, improving standards and a growing reputation in the community.

The school knows itself well, plans accordingly, and monitors suitably to check whether its policies are implemented consistently. It is well on the way to making its analyses of data more accessible to those beyond the leadership team. It has emphatically tackled its key issues from the previous inspection and is demonstrating good capacity for further improvement. The local authority has played an important part in securing the school's improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school has maintained the strength of its provision since the previous inspection. The staff team is largely the same and it continues to be led effectively. The pupils benefit from a well organised curriculum and an appropriate balance of independent and teacher taught activities. Considerably more emphasis is now given to teaching literacy and numeracy in a structured fashion and teachers at Key Stage 1 report that this is having a significantly beneficial impact. Standards in all the areas of learning at the end of the Reception Year are a little below average

but the pupils have made good progress because of the consistently good teaching. They are well equipped to begin more formal schooling in Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in mathematics by developing the teachers' subject knowledge and confidence.
- Raise standards across the school by improving the achievement of boys.

A small proportion of 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 broadly average and are rising securely throughout the school because of stronger and more consistent teaching. The pupils are beginning to make good progress in several year groups and in English and science in particular. Achievement is satisfactory overall.

At the end of Key Stage 2, the results of the national tests in 2007 were considerably higher than those of 2006 and were broadly average. Standards were slightly below average in mathematics and science but were slightly above average in English. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5 in English was particularly noteworthy as it exceeded the national figure. Girls did better than boys in English and science. The pupils made satisfactory progress overall from their starting points in Year 3, but achievement in mathematics was a little behind that of the two other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made similar progress to their peers. The numbers of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds were too small to draw firm conclusions about the relative progress of different groups. Broadly speaking, however, these pupils achieved slightly better than their White British classmates.

At Key Stage 1, the 2007 results were similar to those of 2006 except in writing, where there was a sharp rise. Overall, standards were a little below average and in reading were significantly behind the national figures at the higher levels. Girls markedly outperformed boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Outstanding behaviour is contributing to very positive personal development and well-being, as well as rising standards of achievement. Pupils are very eager to learn and there are many instances of them supporting each other, sharing resources, and cooperating well. They are thoughtful, exceptionally polite and very considerate.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with pupils of a wide ethnic mix getting along very well. Pupils really enjoy learning and like school because 'we have lots of fun here'. Wide eyed enthusiasm and well controlled excitement, for example, were seen in science lessons in Year 2. Older pupils have extra responsibilities and jobs, but all pupils are helpful, friendly and welcoming. The school council is being re-established this term and some pupils say they are keen to get involved. Very good relationships are evident across the school and so pupils

feel safe and settled. There are now good systems in place to track absences and tackle lateness. Many pupils say they do not like to miss a day. Attendance is satisfactory overall and improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have strengthened considerably since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. The proportion of teaching which is good has increased and there is very little which is inadequate. The strongest teaching is at Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2. Training and consultancy have sharpened teachers' skills so that lessons are planned with greater attention to the intended learning. Lessons build systematically on what the pupils have learnt previously and there is a good focus on setting appropriate challenges for pupils, whatever their stage of development. The most marked improvement is in the extent to which teachers provide livelier, more practical tasks as a routine part of their teaching. Assessment information is used effectively to group pupils. Where lessons were satisfactory rather than good, the teachers did not set their expectations high enough about the quality or quantity of the work they required.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance, with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. The pupils appreciate the school's stronger focus on providing interesting practical tasks, for example, in science. Recently, the school has implemented a wide range of extra teaching arrangements in small groups to help pupils who have been underachieving to catch up. It is too soon for the school to evaluate the impact of these programmes, but there is a coherent structure of intervention based on accurately assessing where the pupils have weaknesses. Displays show a good emphasis on the range of work undertaken to promote social, emotional and personal development. There is a good range of lunchtime and after school enrichment activities, including a residential visit. Theatre groups are much enjoyed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Leaders have rectified the weaknesses identified in the previous report and pupils now benefit from good quality care and support. Procedures and arrangements to ensure health and safety requirements are met. Risks are assessed regularly and action is taken to resolve problems. Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are effective. This good quality of care is ably demonstrated by the encouragement given by all adults to all pupils to achieve and to enjoy their days in school.

Improvements to assessment mean that targets are challenging and work is now well matched to individual needs. Pupils have a good understanding of their literacy and numeracy targets. Significantly, progress is now monitored very carefully and action put into place to enable all pupils to make steady and sometimes good progress. Teaching assistants are well deployed and are an important part of the team which supports and guides pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides clear and effective direction to the school. His strong leadership has quickly identified priorities and inspired confidence in the school community. He took swift and vigorous action to establish suitable plans to take the school forward. A key part of his success has been the opening up of communication about the school's position and the sharing of information. Senior staff were given important responsibilities and have risen to that challenge. Subject coordinators were empowered to make changes based on an accurate assessment of what was needed. As a result, the senior leadership team has become more confident in pursuing common goals. A comprehensive programme of monitoring is helping to bring greater consistency to all aspects of the school's work. Planning for improvement is suitably focused on raising standards and the school has set extremely challenging targets for the end of the year. The system for drawing together assessment information is still developing and consequently, some aspects of action planning lack measurable success criteria. The leadership team knows the school's strengths and weaknesses, but the process for capturing its self-evaluation more formally is at an early stage.

The governing body has responded enthusiastically to training. It now has the confidence to challenge the school effectively and is helping to steer its future direction.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
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?	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	3
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	1
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?	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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

5 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elston Hall Primary School, Wolverhampton WV10 6NN

Thank you for telling me and Mrs Roberson about your school. Your comments were an important part of the inspection.

Here are the main strengths we found.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you really enjoy learning.
- All adults take extremely good care of you.
- The headteacher has made sure that the school improves quickly and all of the teachers are giving him good support.
- Lessons are interesting because the teachers plan lively activities.
- The standard of your work is getting better, especially in writing.

Your school has improved so much and is now satisfactory that we have decided it no longer needs inspectors to visit each term. We have said it should concentrate on two areas:

- making sure that you do as well in mathematics as you do in other subjects
- helping the boys to make better progress.

You can play your part by continuing to behave so impressively and trying your very best to come to school every day, as many of you already do.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely Rob Hubbleday Her Majesty's Inspector

5 December 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Elston Hall Primary School, Wolverhampton WV10
6NN**

Thank you for telling me and Mrs Roberson about your school. Your comments were an important part of the inspection.

Here are the main strengths we found.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you really enjoy learning.
- All adults take extremely good care of you.
- The headteacher has made sure that the school improves quickly and all of the teachers are giving him good support.
- Lessons are interesting because the teachers plan lively activities.
- The standard of your work is getting better, especially in writing.

Your school has improved so much and is now satisfactory that we have decided it no longer needs inspectors to visit each term. We have said it should concentrate on two areas:

- making sure that you do as well in mathematics as you do in other subjects
- helping the boys to make better progress.

You can play your part by continuing to behave so impressively and trying your very best to come to school every day, as many of you already do.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely



Rob Hubbleday
Her Majesty's Inspector