

Yorkswood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104077
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	316611
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it 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	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Cobley
Headteacher	Deborah Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2005
School address	Kingshurst Way Kingshurst Birmingham B37 6DF
Telephone number	0121 7703144
Fax number	0121 7701139

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors. When the school was inspected in June 2005, it was judged to require special measures because it failed to give the pupils an acceptable standard of education. Since June 2005, the school has been monitored on a regular basis by HMI.

Description of the school

Yorkswood is a larger than average sized primary school with a Nursery. It serves a disadvantaged area in the north of Solihull. The majority of pupils are of White British background and almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly higher than that found nationally.

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.

Inspectors agree with the school that it now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory and many lessons are good. Teaching and learning have improved as a result of better planning, brisker delivery, and more effective monitoring of pupils' progress. Where teaching is less effective, but still satisfactory, lessons lack pace and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do in the time available. Accurate target setting and good quality marking provide pupils with clear guidance about how to improve.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good because it is well organised and the committed staff team know the children well. Children make good progress because their teachers and support assistants have clear expectations of what they can do. Pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The good progress made by many pupils has enabled them to plug the gaps in their learning. Standards attained by the majority of pupils in Year 6 are in line with national averages.

The curriculum is well planned for most subjects. The recent focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills has been successful in addressing areas of underachievement from the past. However, the science curriculum has suffered from a lack of leadership. As a result, teaching in the subject is not well planned and pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their practical and investigative skills. The good range of programmes of additional support for lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties is a strength of the school. Sensible targeting of this support has enabled many pupils to catch up in their learning.

Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and are well cared for. They behave well in lessons and around school. They are not afraid to regulate the behaviour of each other, through for example the 'squabble squad'. The school has implemented rigorous procedures to improve attendance which is now close to the national average. There are robust procedures in place to keep pupils safe.

The headteacher has a clear sense of educational direction. Leadership responsibilities are sensibly shared by a wide range of staff. Rigorous systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. As a result, the staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Effective strategies for improvement have been implemented leading to significant improvements in teaching and the progress made by pupils since the last inspection. However, the school has yet to make full use of the comprehensive set of assessment data that it has collated. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve in lessons to enable all pupils to make as much progress as they can and to raise standards further.
- Improve curriculum planning in science to enable pupils to develop effective practical and investigative skills.
- Make more effective use of assessment data to plan school improvement work with a greater sense of urgency.

A small proportion of the 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

Pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards similar to national averages. The majority of children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage and most reach standards close to those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1 and the majority of pupils reach standards similar to national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. The satisfactory progress continues through Key Stage 2 and standards in Year 6 national assessments in English and mathematics are in line with national averages. Progress in science is slower and standards reached in national tests in 2006 by pupils in Year 6 were below the national average.

The school's own assessment data indicates that the progress made by pupils has improved significantly this year. The majority of pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics in most year groups. A significant proportion is making good progress. However, the school's data indicates that there is still a significant minority of pupils in Year 4 who are making insufficient progress in mathematics. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books indicates that these pupils are now beginning to make satisfactory progress. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds do equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Nearly all pupils enjoy school and think their teachers are 'really good and look after us'. They feel safe at school and are confident to talk about any difficulties they have with the adults in school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate the frequent opportunities they have to celebrate the achievement of others and discuss everyday issues in their lives. Pupils in Year 6, for example, discussed the impact of graffiti in the neighbourhood, and also received awards for 'leadership' and 'overcoming fear' on a recent residential experience. The school council is well organised and provides a good opportunity for pupils to influence the life of the school. For example, it has been successful in improving the playground equipment.

Pupils cooperate well with each other and develop good team skills through opportunities in lessons and sports clubs. Although a few younger pupils talk about some bullying, they think that teachers 'nearly always' deal with incidents fairly. Pupils have a good understanding of the requirements of a healthy lifestyle and most of them put this into practice in their eating and exercise choices. Racial incidents are rare.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and many lessons are good. Where teaching is good, pupils enjoy a stimulating variety of activities. Teachers use questioning effectively to assess pupils' knowledge and extend their understanding. Lessons are planned well around clearly understood objectives which teachers emphasise and return to so that pupils are clear about what they are learning. As a result, pupils make good progress. Pupils know their targets well in English and mathematics and good marking provides clear advice to help them improve further.

In the less effective lessons, teachers frequently talk too much and provide too few opportunities for pupils to interact. As a result, pupils become restless. Too often, teachers do not set sufficiently high expectations of what pupils should achieve in the time available.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The focus on literacy and numeracy skills since the last inspection has resulted in better progress for pupils throughout the school. In contrast, the science curriculum is underdeveloped. There is an over reliance on worksheets which are too prescriptive. As a result, pupils' work frequently lacks challenge and there are too few opportunities to develop practical and investigative skills.

Pupils gain a good understanding about the importance of healthy lifestyles and personal safety in a developing programme of personal, social and health education. They benefit from a good range of activities including residential experiences, sports teams, and the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school gives good care, guidance and support to its pupils. Pupils enjoy their learning in a safe and secure environment, where they have good opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle and prepare for the future. The school has good procedures for identifying pupils most at risk, and the most vulnerable. Risk assessments and checks on personnel are rigorous.

Staff, support agencies and the majority of parents give good support to pupils with learning or physical difficulties. Improvements to the marking of pupils' work ensure that pupils now receive clear guidance about the next steps in their learning. The majority of pupils confidently identify their targets for improvement, often in considerable detail.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has set a clear educational direction and established a good team spirit. Leadership responsibilities are sensibly shared throughout the staff team who work effectively together to improve learning opportunities for pupils. Rigorous systems, involving an appropriate range of staff, are in place to monitor the work of

the school. Judgements are sensibly moderated both within school and by involving expertise from other schools and the local authority. Reports are evaluative and provide clear targets for improvement. The school has implemented a comprehensive programme to assess pupils and monitor their progress. This information is used well to enable teachers to provide appropriate support for individuals. However, the information has not been analysed in sufficient detail to fully address all the areas of underachievement.

The governing body has a very good understanding of its responsibilities and has set up an appropriate range of committees and meetings. It is effective in holding the school to account.

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

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Yorkswood Primary School, Birmingham, B37 6DF

Thank you for making Mr Braithwaite, Mr Lawley and me so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing so much of your work.

I have visited your school five times now and have seen how much better it has got. It is now a satisfactory school because of all the good planning and hard work put in by Mrs Wilson and all your teachers. You are now learning much more because your teachers check carefully what you already know and plan your lessons to help you learn quickly. In some lessons, you could learn even more by working harder and we have asked your teachers to help you with this.

Your teachers have been working especially hard to help you improve your literacy and numeracy. The special groups that a lot of you go to have really helped you to catch up. We don't think that you are learning as much as you could in science so we have asked your teachers to plan your science lessons more carefully and try to include more practical work and investigations.

We are very pleased that you think your teachers look after you well and we agree. You behave well in school and the 'squabble squad' does a good job too! The school council has worked hard to improve the equipment you have at playtimes – well done!

All of your teachers and the adults responsible for running your school are doing a good job. They make lots of checks to see how well the school is doing and they have made a lot of changes to improve things. There are still more things they can do and we have asked them to look carefully at all the information they have so they can do this more quickly.

We really hope that your school continues to get better and better. Good luck!

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools