

King Charles Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104175 |
| Local Authority | Walsall |
| Inspection number | 322230 |
| Inspection dates | 25–26 June 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Brian Cartwright 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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 144 |
| School | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mike Lee |
| Headteacher | Sue Machin |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 October 2006 |
| School address | Wilkes Avenue Bentley Walsall WS2 0JN |
| Telephone number | 01922 721368 |
| Fax number | 01922 646194 |

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools, and serves an urban area having higher than average levels of socio-economic disadvantage. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. About a quarter of pupils are recorded with some degree of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is higher than the national proportion. The school recently federated with Bentley West Primary School, creating a single governing body for both schools and a consultant headteacher with oversight of both schools. The federation provides a full range of extended school services, including an annex of the Bentley children's centre housed at King Charles. There is also a nurture group on site, meeting the needs of Key Stage 1 pupils with emotional, social or behavioural special needs from primary schools across the borough.

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 (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

King Charles Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education for all its pupils. Substantial improvements in teaching and learning since the previous inspection have resulted in rising standards throughout the school. Children are now making the expected progress for their abilities and circumstances, because teaching is always satisfactory and often good. The school has established good systems at all levels of management to monitor the quality of teaching, so that leaders and governors know which are working well and what still needs to be done. This rigorous accountability has been developed with the good support of Education Walsall consultants and advisors. The school is demonstrating a good capacity to improve. Federation has brought good governance with a clear and pragmatic vision for the future of the two institutions.

Children enjoy coming to school and speak enthusiastically about the increasing number of extra clubs and activities. Behaviour is good throughout the school, pupils feel safe and happy, and parents confirm that the school deals effectively with any worries should they arise. Pupils know how to eat healthily, and parents and the school are pleased with the increasing take up of healthy food available at lunchtimes. Attendance is improving, and the social and moral development of pupils is good, thanks to the many structured opportunities pupils have to work with one another and take on responsibilities in the school.

Academic standards are still lower than average, although not exceptionally so any more. The written work of pupils shows clear evidence of improving progress over time, and detailed assessments by teachers confirm that pupils are now achieving satisfactorily. Day to day marking provides good guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. Main lesson activities are well matched to the wide range of abilities of pupils in classes. In some lessons, however, teachers still spend too much time attempting to teach the entire class 'from the front'. This can lead to pupils not participating for much of this period, or not understanding the discussion when it is pitched above them.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with a good and continuing emphasis on literacy and numeracy in order to improve standards further. However, information and communication technology (ICT) provision is weak, with the limited resources of curriculum time and equipment for pupils being symptoms of a low priority given to it in the past. This restricts the development of some of the skills pupils will need in their future, and there are missed opportunities for pupils to use ICT for research and project work in other subjects. Teachers use ICT projection facilities in all lessons and now have shared access to electronic resources between the federated schools, which is helping with planning and developing good practice.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Teachers know their pupils well, and parents appreciate their commitment and support for their children. One pupil summarised the ethos of the school well by saying, 'This school is all about being fair.' The good tracking of each pupil's progress ensures that effective intervention for those falling behind is swiftly put into place. Teaching assistants play a key role in the learning of all pupils, and the school is developing effective training for these staff.

The recent federation has helped secure satisfactory leadership and management throughout King Charles Primary. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are founded on learning outcomes

for pupils, with all staff now confident in assessing pupils' progress and in sharing good practice. The school's learning environment is fresh and welcoming. Parents confirm the improvements in school effectiveness, and feel strongly valued and supported by the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

A well planned introduction to school ensures children readily settle in, and strong relationships are built with parents through home visits. Children enter the Nursery class with levels well below those expected for their age. They are taught well, through a wide and varied range of good quality activities that emphasise speaking and listening, personal development and independence. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning via regular letters with suggestions and ideas. The weakest areas of learning in the Reception class relate to children's linking of letters and sounds, and grasp of numbers. The strongest areas are physical development, communication and attitudes and dispositions. All children are making at least satisfactory progress, with half of them making the good progress needed to reach their early learning goals. There are strong links with the onsite children's centre, and a wraparound provision ensures children and their families receive good quality care. A large and well equipped outside area would be further enhanced with some all weather protection enabling free access on a more regular basis.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine lesson planning to take full account of learners' differing abilities in every phase of the lesson.
- Improve ICT provision for all pupils so that they can fully develop the necessary skills for their future.

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 enter Key Stage 1 with lower than average levels of attainment, although all abilities are represented in each year group, and year groups have very different profiles. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2007 were similar to the national average, with standards at Key Stage 2 lower than average although these did represent adequate progress when compared to pupils' starting points and with similar pupils in similar schools. Current school analysis and the scrutiny of work by inspectors confirm that standards are broadly average, and children are achieving as expected. The school has identified factors behind relatively weak standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Lessons are now organised to increase the confidence of pupils through emphasising word based problem solving. Many pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and these needs are met through careful intervention, support in the nurture group, and in class support by teachers and support assistants. As a result, these pupils make satisfactory progress alongside their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good because all school staff set out to ensure pupils are safe, happy and enjoy school. Pupils say they feel safe within school, particularly since the new gates and fencing have been in place. Any untoward behaviour is dealt with promptly, and pupils are very familiar with the high expectations for good behaviour and good manners. Pupils enjoy school and show good attitudes to their learning. The school is doing all it can to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory and rising. Behaviour around the school and within lessons is good. Pupils are complimented for their good behaviour on educational visits, reflecting their good social and moral development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, and could be more explicitly taught throughout the curriculum. Pupils know the meaning of healthy lifestyles and the importance of exercise, with the take up of healthy lunchtime food high, and rising. They support one another well and act as 'buddies' around the school. They take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy being house captains and school counsellors. Pupils know they make a difference to the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is consistently satisfactory throughout the school, with much good practice evident particularly in early years, and Years 5 and 6. The best teaching is characterised by brisk introductory sessions with all the pupils before they disperse to tackle well planned tasks at a challenging level matched to their abilities. In these lessons teachers are continually assessing how well pupils are learning, and adapting their teaching as necessary. Teacher pupil relationships are good in all years. In one French lesson children were thrilled to be learning new words, and they chuckled with pleasure as they spoke and acted out different words, emphasising their enjoyment of learning. Work is marked well, with comments that clearly engage pupils in their next steps of learning. The pupils say that they appreciate this dialogue with their teachers. However, their learning targets are not explicit enough as many were unable to recall them in detail when asked what they were. There are still some lessons that are not fully recognising the differing talents and prior knowledge of pupils, particularly in whole class discussions at the start and end of the lesson. These are sometimes too long, or pitched too narrowly to include every pupil.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with a growing number of additional clubs and enrichment trips. The emphasis the school has rightly placed on improving standards in English and mathematics is reflected in a relatively low volume of work in other subjects, but the 'project book' approach in some classes is a good feature, and allows pupils to extend their learning outside school. The school is capitalising on the talents of learning support staff by enabling some of them to act as instructors and coaches, for example in modern foreign language sessions. However, there is a significant shortfall in the opportunity for pupils to learn ICT skills and use ICT as part of their independent learning skill development across the curriculum. ICT facilities for pupils are limited and have been unreliable at a whole class level.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good pastoral care and there are robust procedures in place to ensure their safety. One outstanding feature is a formal, regular 'every child matters' meeting held between class teacher and headteacher, for each pupil, to evaluate progress and consider what more might be done to improve their progress. The school gives good care for the families of its children as many services attached to the school provide professional support, which parents appreciate. Support within class is good and most teaching assistants engage with pupils well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully monitored. They are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants, and the wide range of strategies they use ensures these pupils make the progress that is expected of them. Academic guidance is good, although pupils are not fully aware of how to reach medium term targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. A particular strength is the quality of monitoring and evaluation at all levels of management and, as a result, all teachers are reflective about their practice and capable of identifying their own strengths and aspects of lessons that could be improved. However, aspects of the curriculum, such as ICT, and some shortfalls of systematic teaching of spiritual and cultural aspects, have been missed. Strategic leadership, from the consultant headteacher and Education Walsall, has secured significant improvements in standards and the learning environment. In particular, federation has brought very strong governance to oversee improvement, and define the medium term development of both schools. The consultant headteacher has quickly improved the learning environment and ensured that displays of pupils' work and activities are fresh and up to date.

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

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| 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 | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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? | 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

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 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

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of King Charles Primary School, Walsall WS2 0JN

Thank you for your friendly welcome and positive conversation during our visit to your school. You will be pleased to know that the school is now providing you with a satisfactory education. It has improved a lot since the last full inspection, thanks to the hard work of your teachers and support staff. We agree with you when you say that 'this school is all about being fair'. The school is a nice place to learn in, with lots of extra activities for you to enjoy as well as lessons. Your personal development is good, thanks to the good care and support you receive during your time in school. We can see that you behave well and show kindness and consideration to each other and to visitors to the school. The school council is a great way for you all to contribute to improving the school.

Because the main lesson activities are matched well to your abilities, you are making satisfactory progress in your academic work. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start in school. The headteacher and her staff know what is going well, and also what could still be improved. The two most urgent things are to make sure those 'carpet time' or whole class discussions include all of you, and are short enough to allow plenty of time for the main work of the lesson. The school should also provide you with more ICT lessons, so you learn how to use ICT for your own research. This could happen in many subjects, not just a weekly ICT lesson itself.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright Her Majesty's Inspector

27 June 2008



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Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brian Cartwright'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'B' and 'C'.

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector