

Starbank Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	103258
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323785
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	748
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	207
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lal Khan
Headteacher	Gerry Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Starbank Road Small Heath Birmingham B10 9LR
Telephone number	01214 642638
Fax number	01214 642568

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger in size than other schools and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The majority of pupils belong to minority ethnic groups, the largest of which are of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Black African heritage. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than typically found. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly behavioural and emotional difficulties, is higher than average but very few pupils have a statement of educational needs. The school has five part-time Nursery classes and three Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A new headteacher was appointed in April 2006 and two new deputy headteachers in January 2007. The school gained Healthy School status in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Starbank Primary is a good school. It is moving rapidly in the right direction and has many outstanding features. Parents endorse this. They attach a high priority to education, and encourage and support their children. As one parent said, 'This is a warm, friendly school that gets the best out of my children. They are very happy here.' Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy it greatly. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very ably supported by a talented senior team. The headteacher inspires and supports staff and pupils to get the best out of themselves and others.

When children start in the EYFS, their skills are well below the levels expected. They make good progress because there is a very strong focus on developing their social skills and their ability to communicate with each other. This results in standards that are just below the expected levels at the end of the EYFS. By the end of Year 6, standards are at the national average. This represents good progress by all groups of pupils. Staff have created a school in which all pupils get on well together. In addition to the very strong leadership, there are many features that contribute to pupils' good achievement. Teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan their lessons well. They use assessment criteria skilfully to promote learning, to analyse and improve pupils' performance, and to set challenging targets for individuals. Teachers and support staff work very effectively together to meet pupils' specific needs. All pupils, at whatever level of ability or need, are very well guided and cared for. The carefully planned curriculum ensures that learning is meaningful and fun. There is an emphasis on celebrating aspects of the wide range of cultural traditions in school. This makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is excellent. It also supports community cohesion, which is promoted excellently. A very positive atmosphere permeates the school and relationships are exceptionally strong.

Pupils play their full part too. They come to school ready to learn and are eager to contribute to lessons. Their exemplary behaviour means that lessons are rarely disrupted and can be conducted at a good pace and in a positive climate. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Very good relationships and outstanding care, guidance and support result in happy learners, who overcome any difficulties quickly.

While there are many significant strengths in the quality of provision, not enough is done to make links between subjects clear. This sometimes holds back the development of pupils' independent learning skills as, for example, it restricts opportunities for them to use initiative in pursuing lines of research and enquiry that cross subject boundaries. It also means that writing skills are not promoted fully through subjects other than English. This is a main reason why pupils' writing skills, particularly at Key Stage 1, are not as well developed as their reading and number skills.

The headteacher and his senior team rigorously monitor all areas of the school's work, which results in improvements to teaching, learning and the standards attained by learners. Governors hold the school to account well for its work. The school uses its resources and accommodation imaginatively and efficiently and offers good value for money although parts of the accommodation are cramped. This prevents some teachers planning even more effectively for activities that fully involve pupils, such as group work. There is a strong sense of teamwork and pride in what has already been achieved. The school knows exactly what to do further on its journey to excellence and so the capacity to further improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children love coming to school and parents are very appreciative of the good start that their children receive in the EYFS. They particularly commend the way their children are helped to settle into school. Children usually enter the Nursery with skills and capabilities well below those levels expected for their age, particularly in language, communication and basic numeracy. Children make good progress because the teaching is good. Standards are just below those expected in most areas of learning by the time they leave Reception.

There are many good opportunities for children to practise and develop early literacy and numeracy skills. They respond with great enjoyment to the stimulating learning environment and the very good balance of activities led by adults and those from which they can choose. Very good use is made of the outdoor area for learning as well as for developing physical skills. Children are developing very good social skills because they are making choices and gaining independence through working with others.

Teachers ensure parents are fully involved in their child's learning and hold regular meetings and workshops in order to develop parents' skills. The EYFS is well led and managed. The leadership of the EYFS has an excellent understanding of the Early Years Curriculum and constantly reviews practice to ensure that all children receive high quality care, education and support. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of provision and have identified appropriate priorities for further improvement. They have rightly identified that more needs to be done to improve children's writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the focus on developing pupils' writing skills across the curriculum.
- Strengthen the links between subjects, in particular to enhance pupils' skills of independent learning through research and enquiry.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' standards as shown by their results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been rising. The 2008 results were much higher than those of previous years. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom observations, as well as the school's tracking of pupils' progress, confirm that the improvement is being sustained and that standards are broadly average. Nearly all pupils are currently making the expected two National Curriculum levels of progress through Key Stage 2.

Progress is faster in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. This is because there is a higher proportion of outstanding teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. There is no difference in the progress made by the various groups of pupils in the school. This is because the school works effectively to support groups such as pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially those with behavioural and emotional difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school tremendously and are excited by all that it has to offer. This is reflected in their great enthusiasm for learning, good attendance, and their keen involvement in a wide range of activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding so that by Year 6, pupils are mature young citizens who care for and help each other. Pupils from a range of cultures behave and cooperate very well with each other and adults, and work and play together well. They reflect upon wider issues in lessons in religious education and in assemblies. Pupils report an absence of bullying and racism and relish their involvement in many cultural activities. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy living and enjoy healthy lunches. They make an excellent contribution to their community. They help raise funds for charities such as Seeds for Africa, Red Nose Day, the Lord Mayor's Charity and Children in Need. They are developing well their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and so are well prepared for their future lives and careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the good teaching. Sustained challenge and high expectations enable pupils to make good progress and achieve average standards by the end of Year 6. Teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained and activities are carefully designed to challenge the pupils to learn at a swift pace. Skilful questioning is used by the most effective teachers to draw out ideas from pupils. Typically, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and their planning ensures that a good range of activities keeps pupils' interest during lessons. Pupils' levels of enjoyment and motivation are high because there is mutual respect between teachers and pupils. Praise is used extensively to motivate pupils.

Teachers take care to ensure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them and what they need to do to improve. Good partnerships in classrooms between teachers and teaching assistants lead to effective support for pupils who find learning hard. All pupils, whatever their learning needs, are fully included in the activities and this has a positive effect on achievement and personal development. In the less effective although satisfactory lessons, teachers tend to talk for too long, which restricts the opportunities pupils have to take a more active part.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' learning because the needs of all pupils are well met. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language receive good support. Learners achieve well because there is good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT across the school in the specific lessons for these subjects. The school has introduced effective strategies for improving reading and recognises the need to improve the quality of opportunities for writing and recording across the curriculum.

The curriculum strongly supports pupils' personal development through effective personal, social and health education, and imaginative and thought-provoking assemblies. There is an excellent focus on using visits to widen pupils' life experiences. The school provides pupils with a wide variety of sporting activities as part of the school day. These, together with well supported

creative and educational activities outside the normal school day, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, their levels of enjoyment and their personal development. However, the school recognises the need to plan carefully themes with strong links between subjects in order to make learning more meaningful and to encourage more independent learning through research and enquiry.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The value placed on each pupil, and the attention paid to meeting each one's individual needs, underpin the school's success in supporting and developing pupils' personal and academic achievements. Pastoral care is excellent and makes a huge contribution to pupils' welfare. Child-protection procedures are very secure and sensitive. The school makes good links within the local authority and other agencies to help and support pupils as necessary. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified very effectively and excellent support and guidance are allocated to meeting them. Targets set for these pupils are effective in helping them make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The guidance given to pupils whose first language is not English is very effective and they learn English at a quick pace. Staff know the pupils very well and make effective use of assessment information to track and check their progress, so that extra support can be provided if it is needed. As a result, pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work and so make good progress in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has effectively focused the staff on raising standards and meeting pupils' needs. Supported very well by a dedicated and versatile leadership team, he engenders loyalty amongst staff who work with clarity and enthusiasm in aiming to meet the school's high expectations for pupils' success. Teamwork has created an ethos of inclusion that has enabled all pupils to flourish. The school improvement plan shows richness in its aims for developing confident, skilled and successful young people. Governors hold the school to account well for its work. All statutory requirements are met and governors are fully involved in checking the work of the school and act as critical friends. However, some middle leadership posts have until recently been unfilled and important areas of the curriculum are currently being led by members of the leadership team. The school has worked hard to successfully fill these vacancies and recognises the need to develop more fully the roles of middle leaders.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Starbank Primary School, Birmingham B10 9LR

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. What a lovely two days we had! We enjoyed meeting and talking with you. Starbank is a good school and is getting even better. You told us many interesting things about your school and we know you are very proud of it.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- You make good progress in your lessons and results in tests are getting better and better.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you get on well with your fellow pupils. You are developing into confident, mature young citizens who care for and help each other.
- Teaching is good and your teachers are very concerned to make sure that you do as well as you can.
- The care, support and guidance that the school offers you are excellent.
- Your headteacher and your teachers know exactly how to make Starbank Primary School an even better school.

We have asked your school to do two things to make it even better.

- Give you more opportunities to write in different subjects to make standards in writing even higher.
- Make sure that you understand how all the subjects you study link together so that you can do more learning for yourself in school.

I hope that you all continue to work hard and do well at Starbank Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector