

Lyng Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103968
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	323935
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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)	350
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Tuck
Headteacher	Elaine Hill
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Horton Street West Bromwich B70 7SQ
Telephone number	01215 531480
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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 large primary school has a broadly average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those for whom English is an additional language, is well above average. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage unit which caters for 78 nursery children, who attend on a part-time basis, and 52 full-time reception children. The school also operates a breakfast club. There has been a considerable turnover of staff in recent years, including at management level. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2008 and two of the other three members of the senior management team came to the school in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The new headteacher's clarity of vision is providing it with the drive and direction needed to improve teaching and learning. The headteacher has successfully empowered senior staff to monitor and improve provision and progress in literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils' achievement, which is satisfactory, is beginning to accelerate. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Children get off to a good start and are making good progress in Nursery and Reception. Teaching and learning are improving because staffing is more stable than in the recent past and senior staff are providing good support to raise the quality. Overall, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Strong pastoral care ensures that pupils make good progress in their personal development. The school makes effective use of its good partnership with external agencies, such as the police and health professionals, to reinforce pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe. A small number of parents voiced some concerns about behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour good in lessons because it is well managed. During the inspection, it was also good around the school and in the playground. Pupils acknowledge that they sometimes 'let off steam' or 'mess about' in the playground because they 'wouldn't dare' misbehave in class, but they have a good understanding of right and wrong and of their rights and responsibilities. This was demonstrated well in an assembly led by Year 1 pupils.

Pupils from various cultural backgrounds work and play together well. In their words: 'We all get on well together, we don't really see there are any differences.' This demonstrates the school's effectiveness in promoting a cohesive community spirit that benefits all pupils. Attendance is satisfactory and the vast majority of pupils enjoy school and want to do well.

While teaching and learning are satisfactory, some lessons are good and occasionally outstanding. Senior managers are supporting staff well as they try to eliminate the remaining pockets of underachievement still evident in the school. Teaching meets most pupils' needs, but does not take sufficient account of information from teachers' marking of pupils' work. Marking is inconsistent and does not help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. The work given to the more able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging, and targets and learning objectives are not always in language that pupils can understand. This limits their impact on pupils' learning.

Subject leaders have responded well to the headteacher's request for a review of their subjects, and the curriculum is satisfactory. However, the action plans drawn up for subjects other than literacy and numeracy focus more on teaching and resources than on improving pupils' learning. The draft school improvement plan, drawn up at the start of this year, has a similar weakness. While it has measureable targets for improving attendance and the amount of good teaching, it does not take the same approach to raising standards or increasing the proportion of pupils on track to meet their predicted targets.

Governance is satisfactory, although governors are not as involved as they could be in holding the school to account for its outcomes. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the school's work, undertaken by the headteacher, is accurate and well founded and the clear priorities set from it have the potential to accelerate pupils' progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start Nursery with levels of attainment well below those expected for their age. Their good progress means they reach average standards at the end of Reception. Children are taught well and good attention is paid to their welfare and well-being. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Nursery and reception staff plan together, ensuring continuous progress for the children.

Children thoroughly enjoy school. They play and learn happily together indoors and out. They grow in confidence, as they share experiences with each other and with adults, including visitors. The good balance between teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves successfully fosters the children's independence. Their personal, social and emotional skills are promoted effectively. Their learning is constantly assessed and the information used effectively in planning.

In Reception, strategies to develop literacy and numeracy skills are effective. Most children can count accurately to 50 and beyond, and the more able children were observed doing so in fives. However, opportunities are missed to take children's learning further through effective questioning.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to accelerate pupils' learning, ensure that all teachers: mark pupils' work in accordance with the agreed procedures and give pupils opportunities to respond to the guidance given; make better use of assessment information in planning so that every pupil has sufficiently challenging work in line with his or her stage of learning.
- Sharpen the school improvement and other action plans by including clear criteria against which their impact on pupils' progress can be measured.
- Increase awareness among all leaders and managers, including governors, of their responsibility for ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress at all times. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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

Progress is satisfactory from Years 1 to 6 and standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6. Calculation skills are improving throughout the school as a result of the focus on developing rapid recall of number facts. However, pupils do not readily use and apply these skills to solve practical, everyday mathematical problems, because there are too few opportunities for them to do so. Changes in the school's approach to writing are successfully enabling pupils to write in different styles with due consideration of purpose and audience. Pupils are reasonably careful to correct spelling errors but they do not always pay as much attention to grammar and punctuation. They do not apply their literacy skills well when writing in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress too, including in their acquisition of the English language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils recognise the importance of working and playing amicably together and they care and support each other well. Older pupils look out for younger ones and talk enthusiastically about the 'buddy bus stop' and how it helps pupils who might be lonely. Pupils are well aware of the need to keep themselves safe and they report that bullying is very rare. They are confident that any concerns would be quickly resolved because 'teachers are really kind and friendly' and would 'sort it quickly'. Pupils understand why it is important to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They have a good understanding of various cultures and faiths and how people from around the world (past and present) affect our view of the world. Pupils make a good contribution to the community of the school, for example, as school councillors. They are also enthusiastic fundraisers and enjoy participating in community events. All of this, along with their satisfactory progress in basic skills, means they are adequately prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well and relationships are good. Pupils trust the staff, and staff and pupils show good levels of respect for each other. While some teaching is good or better, overall, the quality is still too variable to accelerate pupils' learning in all age groups. Teachers' planning is sound but does not always make a clear enough distinction between what different groups of pupils should learn. Pupils make good progress when lessons move at a fast pace and they are all fully engaged throughout. In some lessons, the lack of challenge leaves those that have finished, marking time while others catch up.

Despite the whole school agreement to implement the new policy, marking is variable. In the best examples, it gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve and teachers then allow them sufficient opportunity to do so. However, for example, in extended pieces of writing, teachers usually tell pupils what they need to do but they do not always give pupils time to tackle the weaknesses identified. Teachers rarely mark writing when it occurs in other subjects, and overall, they do not use assessment information well in planning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well, including their health and safety. Subjects are beginning to be linked together but this work is relatively new. The links are not explicit enough to guide teachers in helping pupils to apply what they learn in one subject to another. As a result, opportunities are missed to consolidate and extend pupils' writing and numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities available to them during and outside the normal school day. Through these, their learning and personal development, especially in relation to their health, safety and well-being, are greatly extended. They also thoroughly enjoy learning the different languages offered to them, for example, French and, most recently, Polish.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Good relationships throughout the school, along with effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour, ensure that pupils are safe and cared for well. The school works hard to promote good attendance. However, despite its best efforts, not all children are sent to school regularly and this affects their progress. The individual language plans for pupils with English as an additional language are helping to accelerate their ability to speak English fluently. The school is also improving the currently satisfactory individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and their progress too is improving.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. New procedures for marking, assessing and tracking pupils' learning have been introduced but are not yet fully embedded. Pupils know their targets but they do not always understand what these mean. Marking does not always help pupils see the small steps they need to take towards their targets. This limits the impact of target-setting as a means of accelerating progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully ensured that there are clear lines of responsibility throughout the school. On taking up post, she quickly identified inconsistencies in teaching and learning, and the steps she initiated to improve pupils' progress in all year groups are showing early signs of success. Senior leaders support her well in the drive to raise achievement. Together, they and the headteacher are raising teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Through their checks on teaching and learning, they point out very clearly to staff what they need to do to improve, and follow up observations with good support and guidance. This work is very new, however, and it is too soon to measure its full impact on teaching and learning.

Governors are beginning to improve their knowledge and understanding of the school and of their part in helping it to improve. However, they rely heavily on the headteacher for information and have very little first-hand evidence about the school's work. Nevertheless, they are fully behind the headteacher in her drive for school improvement, and they have recently become involved in setting challenging targets for the pupils.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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
The extent to which 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	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 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?	3

Leadership and management

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	3
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	3
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**

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lyng Primary School, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 7SQ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You go to a satisfactory school that has come through many changes in the past few years, some of which have affected your progress. We are therefore pleased to find that your new headteacher is successfully helping to improve teaching so that you can make faster progress.

You clearly enjoy school and get on really well together. It was wonderful to hear you say this and that you do not really see that there are any differences between you, no matter what background you come from. You clearly respect each other and understand the importance of behaving well in class, and you have a good understanding of how important it is to keep yourselves and others safe, fit and healthy.

Your teachers always mark your work and make sure you have targets to improve your learning in literacy and numeracy. However, marking does not always show you clearly enough how to improve and you do not always have enough opportunities to act on the comments made. You told us you do not always understand some of the words in your targets or in the learning objectives teachers share with you at the start of lessons. We have asked them to improve all of this so that you can see what it is they want you to learn at all times.

Those responsible for leading literacy and numeracy are doing a good job of helping teachers to improve their teaching and therefore your learning. We have asked the school to help other subject leaders do the same, particularly as this is something they have not been used to doing in the past. Governors want you to do better too, and we have asked them to play a bigger part in checking the school's work to make sure you all make the best possible progress at all times.

We hope that all of this will help to accelerate your progress and that you will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives.

Yours faithfully

Doris Bell

Lead inspector