

Hall Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103977
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	323936
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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)	310
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	Jules Donaldson
Headteacher	Kim Heng
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Westminster Road West Bromwich B71 2JQ
Telephone number	01215 882080
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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

Hall Green is a larger-than-average school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. One fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and four fifths are from White British families. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language at home is below the national average and a few of them are at the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hall Green is a satisfactory school. Although standards are low, achievement is satisfactory. The achievement of children in the Nursery and Reception classes is also satisfactory. The school has been through a difficult few years during which staff turnover was high. As a result, standards fell and pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, were not achieving as well as they should. The school has now secured a stable staff team and is improving under the good leadership of the headteacher whose unrelenting drive to raise standards, especially in English and mathematics, is shared wholeheartedly by staff. In the past year, underachievement has been successfully tackled by accelerating progress and improving attendance.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Typically, one parent wrote, 'My daughter loves going to school. Her work improves every day thanks to the help of the friendly teachers.' Another said, 'I am more than pleased with the progress my son is making. Staff provide good advice to parents so that home and school work in partnership.'

Pupils' attitudes have also improved and their personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school and try hard in lessons. Bullying is rare and pupils feel very safe. They are polite and behave well in lessons and around the school and pupils are developing into mature young people.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In lessons, relationships between pupils and with adults are positive. Teachers make work interesting and pupils are keen to learn. There is an increasing number of lessons in which pupils work hard and make good progress. Occasionally in lessons, the tasks pupils are given do not provide sufficient challenge to accelerate the progress of all pupils in the class. This is because the work is either too easy for some or too hard for others. The satisfactory curriculum extends aspects of pupils' personal development well. One lesson each week is devoted to studying unusual subjects such as fencing and gardening, which widens pupils' horizons and raises their aspirations. The school provides pupils with a good standard of care. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who do not speak English at home as their first language receive sensitive support that enables them to take full part in all that the school offers. The school works well with a wide range of outside agencies to promote pupils' learning and well-being. The quality of academic advice pupils receive is satisfactory overall, although inconsistent. For some pupils it is good, as it is in Year 2, and is helping to accelerate progress. Elsewhere, the advice is not detailed enough and this means care, guidance and support overall are only satisfactory.

Subject leaders provide the headteacher with enthusiastic support. However, not all of them are taking full responsibility for standards and guiding improvements in their areas of responsibility to secure consistently good progress. This means leadership and management overall are satisfactory. The record of recent improvements in pupils' progress shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity to become better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter school with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. Their learning moves on at a satisfactory pace and, by the time they start Year 1, they attain levels that are well below the national average. Children make good progress in their personal development. They really enjoy school and behave well. They work and play together happily

and readily share toys and learning resources. Children are cared for very well and are very safe in the supportive and stimulating atmosphere. Parents are pleased with the effective induction arrangements that ensure children settle quickly into school routines. The growing number of opportunities provided for parents to work with their children in lessons is providing them with valuable advice on how they can support their child's education at home. Teachers and adults plan interesting work that children really enjoy. For example, they develop children's understanding of letters and their sounds well through exciting games, lively singing and appealing computer programmes. However, the school is correct when it says that teachers do not always take sufficient account of assessment data to ensure that children's next steps in their learning are really challenging. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities in all classes. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The well-resourced outdoor learning area is underused in the mornings to develop children's gains in independence. Staff receive regular training to sharpen their Early Years Foundation Stage teaching skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring pupils are challenged well in lessons so that they make better progress.
- Improve the consistency of academic advice given to pupils so that they better understand how they can improve their work.
- Ensure subject leaders take full responsibility for standards and improvements to secure consistently good progress in the areas for which they are accountable.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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' achievement, including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with skills and experiences well below those expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage to attain well below average standards by the time they start Year 1. Progress is good in Year 2 and satisfactory in other years. However, progress is accelerating and is enabling pupils to catch up. This means that standards are rising, although they still remain well below average overall. The progress of girls, which was especially slow last year, has rapidly improved and girls now make similar gains to the boys. This is because the school has worked successfully to improve girls' self esteem. Pupils' reading standards are above those in writing. Their skills in writing sentences and using vocabulary to express their ideas clearly are rapidly improving but spelling is still not accurate enough. In mathematics, pupils have made significant gains in their speed in mental arithmetic and the accuracy of their calculations. The ability to solve mathematical problems remains a weakness for many pupils. Better practical skills are helping to accelerate pupils' progress in science. Standards in information and communication technology are average. For example, many Year 3 pupils can write successfully a simple programme to guide the movement of a screen icon.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were thinking carefully about what made them happy or sad and making good progress in their consideration of the feelings of their peers. A secure understanding of right and wrong supports their good behaviour although occasionally pupils fidget when they spend too long listening to the teacher. Pupils readily help each other and work productively in teams. They have a well-developed understanding of the diversity of British culture and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils take care to ensure the safety of others and understand clearly how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet. They know the school deals quickly and effectively with the rare cases of bullying and this means they feel very safe. They understand why they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and do their best to eat a balanced diet and take plenty of exercise. They enjoy all aspects of school, including the lessons, meeting friends, clubs and educational visits. This is reflected in their improving attendance, which is average overall. Pupils collect generously for charity and are keen to take responsibility as members of the school council. Pupils are becoming more active within the local community, for example through the recent adoption of an allotment. Although pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning, well below average standards means that their preparation for secondary school and future employment is only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are many signs that teaching is improving. Teachers use resources such as the interactive whiteboards well to engage pupils and develop their learning. They plan work that pupils find relevant and interesting. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their ideas in pairs and this is promoting their understanding and speaking and listening skills well. In most lessons, progress is improving because teachers use test results and other assessments effectively to plan work that really stretches them. Occasionally lessons do not offer this level of challenge and pupils' progress is slower, although satisfactory. This happens when the work planned does not accurately match the needs of higher or lower attaining pupils or when the teacher talks for too long and learning becomes passive. In most lessons, teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Interesting assemblies and health education lessons promote aspects of pupils' personal development well. Pupils' experiences are broadened considerably by the wide range of short courses provided for one lesson each week in such subjects as German, British Sign Language and judo. The school recognises that there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their spelling in English and problem solving in mathematics. The curriculum is extended satisfactorily by popular sports and other clubs and a growing number of educational visits to such places as museums, which add to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils receive a good standard of pastoral care. For example, pupils confidently approach an adult with a worry knowing their concern will be quickly resolved. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and regularly reviewed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English receive sensitive support and have learning programmes that enable them to make similar progress to that of their peers. The school's wide use of outside agencies is especially effective in helping children most in need to succeed in school and avoid exclusion.

Marking and other feedback is providing many pupils with clear advice about how to improve their work. However, this quality of academic guidance is not consistent across the school and occasionally pupils are unsure of what specific steps they need to take next to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Rigorous checking of standards by the headteacher and deputy headteacher provides the school with an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for improvement. This leads to effective improvement plans that are raising standards, for example in teaching and attendance. The school sets challenging targets and checks pupils' progress towards them very regularly. If progress slows, the school has effective procedures to help pupils catch up. Subject leaders also regularly check standards in their areas of responsibility and are helping to raise them by sharpening the staff's teaching skills. However, they are not all taking full responsibility for ensuring that challenging targets are met in their subjects and that progress is consistently good. The school is a harmonious society and its plans to promote community cohesion within the local area and to develop international links are satisfactory.

The governors work hard on behalf of the school. Their understanding of data is developing and they are not afraid to hold 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

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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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 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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

7 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hall Green Primary School, West Bromwich, B71 2JQ

- Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. We enjoyed sharing your successes with your families in the Year 3 assembly. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think Hall Green is a satisfactory school. We also think it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.
- You make a sound start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Satisfactory teaching helps you make sound progress in your lessons.
- Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science, although they are rising.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You behave well and most of you attend very regularly.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits out of school that you enjoy.
- Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.
- You have a sound understanding of how you can improve your work.
- The headteacher and adults are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Make sure teachers keep you working hard in lessons to help to raise standards, especially in English and mathematics.
- Show you exactly how you can improve your work.
- Make sure the headteacher gets plenty of help from the other leaders to check how well you are learning in different subjects.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well, trying your best in lessons and attending regularly.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector