

Yorkswood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104077
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	323957
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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	0–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	283
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	43
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Cobley
Headteacher	Deborah Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kingshurst Way Kingshurst Birmingham B37 6DF
Telephone number	0121 7703144
Fax number	0121 7701139

Age group	0–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Yorkswood is a larger than average sized primary school. It serves an area in the north of Solihull which is part of a national regeneration project. A much larger than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also larger than in most schools. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school during their primary education is greater than that found nationally. The vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds and there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school Nursery and Reception classes. The governors of the school also manage the Neighbourhood Nursery that provides for children from the local area aged 0 to 5 years. Yorkswood Primary is an extended school and provides a wide range of other services to support children and their families including before and after school care and a holiday club for children of primary school age. Also on site are facilities for parent support and adult education. The popular breakfast club is provided by staff of the school.

The headteacher has been seconded from school to work on other projects for the local authority and is away from school three days of each week. The deputy headteacher has been made acting headteacher for the term of this secondment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Yorkswood Primary is a good school. It is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of the headteacher and acting headteacher together with the strong commitment of all staff. The school provides excellent care, support and guidance for its pupils with the result that children feel safe and secure and are able to learn successfully. Many of the pupils have barriers to their learning but under the sensitive care of all staff their self-esteem is nurtured, they develop confidence in their own abilities and they achieve well.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age, especially in their language development, but they settle well into the two nurseries and make good progress, especially in their personal and social development. This prepares them well for learning and by the time they leave the school Reception class most are working within the areas expected for their age. Good progress continues across the school. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the effective range of interventions and support strategies used to promote their good learning. Standards across the school are rising at a more rapid rate than that seen nationally. In the current Year 2, pupils are reaching average standards in all areas of their work. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also making effective progress but for many, especially those in the current Year 6, this was from a very low base. Gaps in their learning have been addressed but, despite the accelerated progress of many, standards in Year 6 remain below average. In other year groups, standards are nearer to those expected for their age. Boys, however, despite good progress, are still not reaching the standards attained by the girls in reading and writing. Many effective strategies to support boys' progress are now in place but they are still fairly new and not yet having sufficient impact in raising their standards in English. Over the last three years, achievement in English and mathematics has been well sustained and, given the pupils' many difficulties, it has been significantly stronger than other similar schools. Progress in English is stronger than in mathematics, however, and so mathematics continues to be a focus for the school.

It is clear that pupils really enjoy school. Their concentration in lessons is very good and they obviously find their activities great fun. This is the result of good teaching and a stimulating curriculum that engages pupils' high levels of interest and motivation to learn. They tackle their activities with enthusiasm and under the encouragement of teachers and support staff they are developing extremely positive attitudes to their work. One boy, when asked if he was looking forward to going to secondary school, said 'yes' because he sees it as challenge and they are taught to welcome challenges. These attitudes prepare them well for their future education but this is at present hindered by their below average level of skills in English and mathematics. Despite pupils' enjoyment of school, attendance remains below the national average. Most pupils attend regularly and are well supported by their parents, but a small proportion of families do not send their children to school sufficiently regularly and this is slowing their academic progress. Despite the many efforts of the school, attendance remains of concern.

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and uses this information well to set the focus for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are comprehensive and pupils' work and progress are assessed carefully so that underachievement and specific difficulties are identified quickly. It is because of this well focused evaluation and the success of support strategies that pupils' standards, personal development and academic achievement

are improving. The senior leadership team and governors continually look for improvement and have identified that more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to work and play with others from a variety of other cultures. This will enhance the school's provision for community cohesion and increase pupils' awareness of the multicultural diversity of British society which is not particularly strong at present. The many improvements already made by the staff are testimony to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision made in the Neighbourhood Nursery is good and the children thrive in its lively and stimulating environment. Each stage of their development is promoted well and they are given many opportunities to experiment and to explore in a safe and secure setting. Most of the children will move on to other schools but those who also attend the school Nursery benefit from the different qualities and supportive environments provided by both settings. The welfare and safety of the children is of a high focus and children's personal development is well promoted in both settings.

Children make good progress in the school's Nursery and Reception class. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff have a good understanding of how these young children learn and provide a good range of resources to stimulate their interest in learning. Good understanding of the children's needs, through initial contact with the families by means of home visits and in observing children at work and play, ensures that activities meet their needs well. Sometimes, opportunities to extend the learning of the more able children in the Reception class are missed and these children are not sufficiently challenged to reach the standards of which they are capable.

Until recently, each section of the Early Years Foundation Stage has used its own methods of assessing and recording children's progress. This has caused difficulty in tracking children's progress and prevented a clear view of children's attainment as they transferred from one setting to the next. This problem has been identified correctly by the new coordinator, who has introduced a new method of recording to support all the staff, and a greater sharing of good practice is planned so that good learning continues at a consistent rate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further by enabling boys to reach the same standards as the girls in reading and writing and by ensuring pupils make continued good progress in mathematics.
- Work with those families who are reluctant to send their children to school regularly so that rates of attendance improve.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to work and play with people of different cultures and from a variety of ethnic groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 have risen steadily since 2006 and the gaps in pupils' learning have been addressed. Standards in Year 6 are still not high enough, mainly because of pupils' low standards when they were in Year 2, but also because of the many personal and learning difficulties experienced by the pupils. A quarter of the pupils were admitted into this cohort late in their primary career, most of whom have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this

has also affected overall standards. However, the progress made by all pupils in the cohort has been good. Standards in science have significantly improved in the last two years and are now on a par with English and mathematics at a below average level.

Good achievement can also be seen in other year groups because of the challenging targets set for pupils, the good teaching and successful strategies to support those with personal and learning difficulties. The result is that standards are much nearer to those expected for pupils' ages, as can be seen by those in Year 2 which this year are in line with the national average. Increasing numbers of higher attaining pupils are reaching their potential and attaining the higher levels expected. Throughout the school, however, boys are significantly behind the girls in their standards in reading and writing, despite their good progress. Standards in mathematics are similar to those in English but could be higher if the rates of progress were equally successful.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the staff and are polite and respectful. Their spiritual, social and moral development is good. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils show care and support for one another. Behaviour is good and pupils say there are no concerns over bullying. The 'squabble squad' is very effective in helping pupils to sort out arguments or problems and so pupils feel safe. They also have a strong awareness of the dangers that may confront them and are active in keeping themselves and others safe. One boy talked of how he looked for ways to keep his family safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy physical activities and enthusiastically participate in the energetic 'Wake and Shake' routine each morning. Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy diet and try to make positive choices. The breakfast club's healthy options, for example, were chosen by the pupils.

Pupils look for ways to contribute to the life of the school and to the wider community. One girl, for example, wrote to the local council pointing out the polluted state of a local pond which has been instrumental in its improvement. Their view of society, however, is rather limited. They recognise that people have different cultures, lifestyles and backgrounds but have little experience of them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to their advantage when explaining new activities to the pupils. Tasks are well planned to meet the range of abilities in the class and lessons are well structured so they move along at a brisk pace. Pupils are given time to think and to share ideas with others and this gives them confidence in their own understanding. Teachers are quick to praise those who offer their ideas and to reassure them if the answer is not correct, explaining that it is alright to make mistakes because that is the way we learn. Encouragement also comes from the many support staff who are well briefed in the pupils' activities and can give the support that enables the least able to participate successfully in lessons. Pupils are clear about what they are about to learn and what is expected of them. Marking shows pupils where they have been successful and sets targets for improvement. More could be done, however, to give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to be successful in their task. Lessons are often challenging and enjoyable, and there is a more

conscious effort to ensure activities engage pupils' good interest, This is motivating all pupils and having a particularly positive impact on the boys.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the learning needs of pupils well. It is adapted effectively to meet the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to challenge the more able. Considerable efforts are made to make the learning exciting and to provide meaningful reasons for pupils to use their reading, writing, mathematical and computer skills. The subjects to be taught are linked together to create themes that will engage pupils' interest, curiosity and excitement. A good number of visits are used to extend pupils' experiences and to give a context for pupils' learning. The science curriculum that had been of concern at the previous inspection is much improved and pupils' investigative skills are now well promoted. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social and health education which is having a positive impact, especially in the development of pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, but there are too few opportunities to experience a diversity of cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The personal, pastoral and emotional needs of all pupils are met extremely well. All staff are involved in this process but the work of the inclusion team is paramount in ensuring that the many difficulties faced by pupils are overcome. Relationships between the pupils and the learning mentors and family support workers are extremely strong and trusting, and this enables pupils to feel safe and grow in confidence. Good links with outside agencies provide additional support for both pupils and their families. Staff governors and the education welfare worker are working tirelessly with parents of children who do not yet attend regularly. Safe-guarding procedures meet current statutory requirements. The before and after school clubs show the same levels of care and consideration for the pupils, giving them time to relax and enjoy themselves after a busy day or to start their day in a calm frame of mind so they are ready for learning.

Academic guidance is good. Pupils are helped to understand how well they are doing and are given targets for their next stage of learning so they know how to improve. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a particular strength and the strategies provided are guided by the comprehensive systems of tracking pupils' progress and the identification of their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership at all levels is good and this is enabling the school to move forward and to continue to improve. Roles and responsibilities are structured effectively which ensures that there is a strong collegiate feel and all staff are committed to raising standards. Governors provide good levels of support and challenge under the effective leadership of the chair of governors. They are active in monitoring the school and holding it to account. The school has correctly identified the areas in which improvement is needed and is working to address them. Partnerships with most parents are good but there are some very hard to reach parents which the school continues

to focus upon in order to ensure that pupils' attendance continues to improve and their learning continues to accelerate. This care for families as well as the pupils is recognised by many. One parent wrote, 'Any problems myself or my children have encountered have been quickly resolved with a lot of care and understanding.'

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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?	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?	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?	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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?	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?	3
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**

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Yorkswood Primary School, Kingshurst, Birmingham B37 6DF

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Children make a good start in the Neighbourhood Nursery and in Yorkswood Nursery and Reception classes.
- You try very hard with your work and make good progress.
- Your behaviour is good, you are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You have an exceptional understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and you try to be healthy.
- You are taught well and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are fun.
- You have a good understanding of how you can get better in your work.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide good leadership for the school and the staff all want you to do very well.
- The before and after school clubs are fun. They are well managed and you are well cared for.
- All the staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and happy and you grow in confidence so you really enjoy school and your learning.

Even though Yorkswood Primary is a good school, there are some things it can do to make it even better. We have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- help boys get better at reading and writing and help all of you make better progress in mathematics so that you reach higher standards
- make sure all children attend school regularly
- give you more opportunities to meet people of different backgrounds and cultures.

Thank you again for helping us, and remember, you can help to ensure your school continues to be good by continuing to work hard and helping one another.

Yours faithfully Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector