

Wilkinson Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104325
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	324018
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Krishan Sharma

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)	342
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	Bert Turner
Headteacher	Tina Gibbon
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Walter Road Bradley Bilston WV14 8UR
Telephone number	01902 558971
Fax number	01902 558972

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is steadily growing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average and their number has risen recently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in one Nursery class, catering for different cohorts in the mornings and the afternoons, and two Reception classes. The school provides breakfast and after school clubs.

The school has gained Sport England Charter Mark, Investors in People Award, Extended School Award and Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wilkinson Primary is a good school. Most parents appreciate what it does for their children. One parent spoke for many when she said, 'The school is a great opportunity for success and learning.' Pupils also recognise many of the school's strengths and think it is a good school. The headteacher, ably supported by her senior staff, provides clear and thoughtful leadership. The school has sustained and built on many of the achievements recognised during the previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. The highly effective tracking of pupils' progress and other checking measures in place serve the school particularly well. Effective use is made of local partnerships to improve pupils' learning and their personal development.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their low levels on entry. They enter Year 1 with below average attainment, but the proportion of pupils who are closer to the average is rising. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly at the national average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, this level of achievement points to all groups of pupils making good progress and the school adding substantial value to their learning. The provisional results for Year 6 pupils in 2009 confirm this picture of progress and achievement. The school experiences occasional dips in standards, but these are linked to variations in pupils' skills on entry. Standards of work in art are particularly good. Throughout the school, some pupils' speaking skills are insecure and they display a lack of confidence in discussing their work.

In addition to the effective leadership, it is the good quality of teaching that accounts for the school's continuing success with sustaining pupils' good achievement. Pupils benefit from enjoyable lessons and a good, carefully planned curriculum which rightly focus on improving pupils' basic skills. In general, pupils' skills in assessing their own work are insufficiently developed. Occasionally, the formal schemes being used across the school, particularly in literacy, restrict opportunities for pupils to exercise independence and initiative in their own learning.

Pupils' personal development is good and it is fully reflected in their positive attitudes to work and excellent behaviour. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Despite the school's persistent efforts, attendance remains just below average because a tiny minority of parents do not respond well to its advice. Pupils enthusiastically contribute to the community through their involvement in local events and by raising money for worthy causes. Academic and pastoral support and guidance are outstanding and this high level of commitment stems from the school's caring ethos.

The wider links that are being established and pupils' growing awareness of multi-faith and multicultural issues form part of the school's good contribution to community cohesion. Governors have improved their monitoring role since the last inspection, but they fully realise that the level of challenge they provide to the school could go up a notch. Exceptionally close monitoring of pupils' welfare and progress makes an outstanding contribution to ensuring that all have equal opportunities to succeed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's overall achievement is good. This is because they make good progress from their low starting points and shows that children benefit from consistently effective teaching. Their

development in creative and physical areas of learning is excellent. It is less strong in their early numeracy and communication skills, particularly speaking. This is because opportunities for children to express their ideas more fully are not always taken. The very positive relationships within the school and between the school and home ensure that children settle quickly. As a result, their confidence grows, and the development of their personal and social skills is outstanding. Children enjoy a well balanced programme of activities, including those chosen by the children themselves and those that are led by adults. Adults take extremely good care of children and ensure their safety and welfare. In this caring environment, children quickly begin to learn to work independently. The outdoor provision for learning is used well across all areas of learning. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and reflect strong team- work. Children's progress is regularly assessed and the information is suitably used to plan the next steps in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities in lessons for pupils to work independently and to use initiative in their learning.
- Improve pupils' skills in discussing and assessing their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good from their starting points at the beginning of Nursery. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are broadly average, although year-on year there is an occasional dip or rise. The latest provisional results in the national tests show that in 2009 standards are close to the 2008 national averages for English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. At the end of Year 2, the 2009 results show an overall decline, from the school's strongest showing in 2008, particularly in writing. The school's tracking of this cohort's progress shows that, despite standards being below average, they made good progress from their starting points. Currently, most pupils make at least good progress. Pupils with additional needs make equally good progress because of the school's effective identification of their needs and the successful interventions that are made as a result. Pupils' speaking skills steadily improve as they move through the school, but some find it difficult to talk about their work with clarity.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave extremely well in and around the school. Bullying is rare and when it occurs, the school deals with it promptly. Despite attendance being just below the national average, pupils enjoy being at school. The small amount of persistent absence is limited to a very small number of families. Pupils know what makes a diet healthy and they enthusiastically participate in a wide range of physical activities to keep fit. Pupils willingly take on a range of responsibilities in their classrooms and in the whole school. Their contribution at the school council has resulted in improving the school's physical environment. Pupils' well developed social skills are reflected in the good relationships they enjoy with peers and with adults. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils are generally well aware of the cultural diversity present around them and respond to it with sensitivity. They make a positive contribution to the community, locally and further afield, by raising funds to support good causes. Good progress in the basic skills and information and communication technology (ICT), together with their secure personal and social skills, prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and they make good progress as a result. Teachers make it clear what they want pupils to learn. However, pupils are not always taught how to judge for themselves how successful they have been with their work. Interactive whiteboards are used well to explain ideas, particularly during introductions to lessons. In most lessons, teachers ask searching questions and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Work planned is well pitched as a result of the regular tracking of pupils' progress and it ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to succeed. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with additional needs. Excellent behaviour and pupils' positive attitudes make classrooms happy and busy places for pupils to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy contributes to their good achievement. Even so, when teachers follow published materials too closely, pupils enjoy only limited opportunities to work independently and to take initiative in their own learning. Pupils' written work in mathematics, although showing good progress, indicates that they have had limited opportunities to explain the method they use in solving problems. The provision for personal, social and health education successfully promotes pupils' personal development, including their awareness of staying healthy and safe. Pupils with additional needs are well served by the curriculum because it responds to their identified learning needs. Ample opportunities to link subjects together and the use of ICT add significantly to pupils' interest in their learning. An extensive range of enrichment activities, including educational visits, and visitors invited to school, together with the specialist provision for Spanish, effectively contribute to pupils' learning and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes extremely good care of its pupils. Arrangements for their pastoral care and guidance are excellent and ensure pupils' welfare and safety. Clear guidelines promote excellent behaviour. The school works closely with parents and readily seeks support from a wide range of agencies to ensure that pupils' welfare needs are effectively met. Although the impact of the school's actions in reducing the rate of absenteeism has been patchy, it is continuing to make strenuous efforts to reduce it further. Academic guidance and support are very good. Pupils find the targets set for them helpful in achieving better results and personal goals. Most of the marking is informative and gives clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve their work. Links with parents are used very well to support their children's work at school. Provision in the pre-school and after-school clubs is excellent and builds pupils' personal and social skills in a safe and secure environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the determined leadership of the headteacher, the school continues to focus on improving pupils' academic achievement as well as their personal development. The school's monitoring systems, particularly the collection and analysis of assessment data, are in a good shape, and give it a clear view of its key strengths and weaknesses. As a result, challenging targets are set and mostly achieved. Occasionally, monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' written work, insufficiently focus on the progress pupils make. The school's exceptional commitment to ensure that all groups of pupils get a fair deal and succeed is evident in all that it does. Currently, pupils benefit from a range of planned activities to help them gain insights into the multi-faith and multicultural nature of the local and wider communities. Even so, the school recognises that it needs to do more to find out how effective its efforts have been. The governors are supportive. Although their monitoring of the school's work has improved since the last inspection, they realise they need to go further and act as 'critical friends' of the school more often.

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

10 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wilkinson Primary School, Bilston, Wolverhampton WV14 8UR

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited to your school. We enjoyed watching you working in your classrooms and looking at your work in your books and on display. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your work and your school. We held meetings with some of your school councillors, your teachers and the chairman of the school's governing body.

This letter tells you what we found out. The best things about your school are:

- Your school gives you a good quality of education.
- You make good progress in lessons because your teachers make sure that the work they give you interests you and they encourage you to do your best.
- You enjoy coming to school, work hard and your behaviour is excellent.
- You enjoy taking part in a good number of extra-curricular activities.
- You willingly take responsibility for doing small jobs in your classroom and in the school.
- Adults take extremely good care of you and you feel safe and supported as a result.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are fully committed to making the school even better than it already is.

To improve things further, we have asked governors of the school to:

- Make sure that in lessons your teachers give more opportunities for you to work independently.
- Make sure that you are taught how to assess your own work so that you know how to improve it.

On behalf of the team, I send you and your friends our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma

Lead inspector