

Goldthorn Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104331
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	324021
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Millett

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)	377
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	Nigel Whyte
Headteacher	Keith Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ward Road Wolverhampton WV4 5ET
Telephone number	01902 558730
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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

Goldthorn Park Primary School is a larger than average primary school, situated in a residential area of Wolverhampton. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided for children in the Nursery and two Reception classes. Within the school premises, there is a before and after-school club, which is managed by the governing body of the school and is run on a day to day basis by teaching assistants. The majority of pupils are of Indian heritage. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School Award, Financial Management Standard in Schools, Activemark and International Schools Award (Intermediate).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Goldthorn Park Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils enjoy being at school and are enthusiastic about their learning and the opportunities they are given. Parents are supportive and value the high standard of care. One parent commented, 'The staff at school are understanding and caring. I would not want my daughter to attend any other school.'

Leadership and management across the school are satisfactory but leadership roles and responsibilities of subject leaders are not sufficiently well-developed. The school now understands the main areas for development, and its self-evaluation is satisfactory. However, school improvement planning lacks a clear focus on evaluating the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning so that standards continue to rise. Based on the improvements made since the previous inspection, the capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and actively engaged in the school on a day-to-day basis. The school promotes community cohesion well at all levels, from the local community to its strong links with schools overseas.

Children enter Nursery with a range of skills below those expected for their age. They settle quickly and make satisfactory progress overall. Achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes is more rapid in speaking and writing than in other areas of the curriculum because this is the main focus of teaching. Opportunities to develop learning further are missed due to underdevelopment of the outdoor area and the teachers not sharing good practice. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average and pupils achieve well during their time in the school but their progress is not consistent from year to year. Progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, and the good progress evident in Key Stage 2 enables pupils to reach the expected standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well supported and they make good progress, but the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

Teaching overall is satisfactory, although effective strategies are not used consistently across the school. Where teaching is good, pupils' progress accelerates. The content of lessons engages pupils, although sometimes, when the pace of lessons drops, attention begins to wander. Pupils achieve particularly well when activities provide a suitable level of challenge. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Marking is carried out regularly and gives encouragement but often lacks clear guidance on how pupils can improve. The broad curriculum with a wide range of activities, visits and visitors significantly enriches pupils' experiences. There is a wide range of out-of-school activities that pupils enjoy, and the school works hard to extend the choice available. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning.

The provision for pupils' personal and pastoral care is good and underpins the effective promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being, which is a key strength of the school. Pupils are polite and have positive attitudes to learning. They are provided with many opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well established and pupils are very knowledgeable about the diverse cultures and faiths that make up Britain and the world today. The outcome of this strong development can be seen in happy pupils who behave well, feel safe and get on well together. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. They are willing to take on responsibilities and have been active in suggesting improvements to playtimes. Pupils learn how to look after themselves; they have good attitudes to learning and their ability

to work with others and their good progress in key skills mean that they are well prepared for their future education and the world of work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter Nursery with a narrower range of knowledge and skills than those expected for their age, particularly in their language skills and mathematical development. They leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with most having made good progress in these areas to reach expected levels while in other areas, progress is slower and standards remain below average.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. A range of procedures to help children become familiar with the school and to build links with parents are successful in helping children to settle quickly. Classrooms are stimulating, bright and welcoming, with a good range of activities which motivate children. Children are keen to be involved in the activities provided, and their enjoyment is obvious. In one Reception class, milk time was used as a 'show and tell' session, developing language skills and learning about taking turns. Later, a group equipped with magnifying glasses were having fun on a supervised bug hunt in the outdoor area. They demonstrated a high level of interest in the natural world and were keen to ask questions and show what they had found. However, the over-structured timetable and lack of an appropriately resourced outdoor area are a barrier to greater independence. While children work and play with members of their own class, opportunities are missed for children from the two Reception classes and Nursery to learn together and fully embrace Early Years Foundation Stage practice. Information from ongoing observations of children's development feed into assessment that helps staff to identify children's next steps. A clearer baseline, however, would help staff measure progress more easily in all areas of learning and identify what aspects need to be improved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all leaders and managers, including governors, clearly focus their monitoring and evaluation on raising standards and expectations for pupils' learning.
- Improve the sharing of good provision and practice between Nursery and Reception, including access to appropriately resourced outdoor areas.
- Ensure that learning is effectively promoted in all classes and that pupils know what they need to do next to reach challenging individual targets.

A small proportion of schools whose overall 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: 2

Pupils achieve well during their time in school to reach average standards by the end of Year 6, but progress is uneven. Good progress is evident in different year groups but it is at its strongest in Key Stage 2. From a low starting point, satisfactory progress is made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is consolidated in Key Stage 1, where pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily. In Key Stage 1, there have been dramatic fluctuations in standards year on year, due to the strengths and weaknesses of specific cohorts. Intervention strategies have been put in place to support reading and writing, and current data show that these are having a very

positive impact. An upward trend in standards is now emerging across the school. Recent assessments indicate that pupils are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for 2009 and so continue this trend. More able pupils are now more effectively challenged, and they often make the good progress expected of them. In 2008, a greater number of pupils reached the higher standard of Level 5 in both mathematics and science than in the past, showing a greater level of expectation and challenge, but this is not yet consistent. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because work is matched well to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a happy community where pupils have positive attitudes towards school. Relationships are good and pupils feel valued and benefit from opportunities to express their views and concerns. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to adopt a healthy lifestyle and readily participate in a range of opportunities to take physical exercise such as Year 4 Funky Dance and Year 6 Tai Chi, both of which take place before school. Behaviour around school is good and pupils show consideration to others and are polite and friendly to adults. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links with schools in Taipei and Germany encourage cultural awareness. Pupils contribute to the wider community through their involvement in fundraising for charities and special events such as singing in a local residential home. Although attendance is average, the school is working collaboratively with parents to improve this by reducing teaching days lost as a result of extended holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Across the school, teachers have established very positive relationships with pupils and manage them well. Pupils are attentive and respond to clear questioning. Good opportunities are given for pupils to discuss their work, particularly in pairs, and this develops their speaking and listening skills well. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of teaching styles which ensure that pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated. Some teaching, such as in a dynamic literacy lesson observed, encourages pupils to try out new ideas and take risks in their learning with exciting results. Although there is much good teaching, the quality is uneven. This has resulted in variations in how well pupils learn from year to year. Work does not always stimulate the interest of pupils where pace is slow and expectations are too low. While there are signs of improvement, particularly where pupils are set for mathematics and literacy, the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils is inconsistent. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and support pupils well, particularly those who find learning difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides an exciting and well-planned creative curriculum which stimulates pupils' interests and contributes greatly to their personal development. In lessons where it has been fully embedded, pupils make the most progress. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of additional activities which pupils thoroughly enjoy. For example, day visits, themed weeks and residential visits for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils add to the excitement of learning.

As one pupil commented, 'Lessons are not just lessons. Teachers make them fun so we learn and have fun at the same time.' Opportunities to develop speaking and listening are embedded well throughout the school. Meaningful links across different subjects are emerging through initiatives such as the 'world in an alphabet'. The confident use of ICT is a strength. The quality of artwork around the school is testimony to pupils' creativity. The curriculum also provides opportunities for pupils to understand cultural diversity through the learning of languages such as French, German, Spanish and Mandarin as well as learning about different festivals. An extensive range of after-school clubs also extends pupils' knowledge and skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a happy harmonious school where staff place a high priority on pupils' safety and well-being. They provide them with good pastoral care and guidance. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that their child is safe and well cared for at school. Pupils say that they feel safe and have confidence in their teachers. All safeguarding procedures are in place and regular risk assessments carried out. Substantial links with outside agencies support all pupils and their families well, including vulnerable groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Provision for academic support is not as robust as that for pastoral care. The tracking of pupil progress has improved significantly but assessment information is not used consistently well between year groups. Although a few examples of the good use of marking were seen, this practice is not consistent from class to class or subject to subject. Pupils receive insufficient guidance about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to school improvement. They now have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths of the school and what is needed to bring about further improvement. Recent and ongoing reorganisation of the management team is resulting in a more distributive leadership model. The improving analysis of data is beginning to identify need and consequently inform planning. The work of the curriculum director on the creative curriculum has had a strong impact upon teaching and learning throughout the school and this can be seen in the rising standards. Overall school improvement planning and self-evaluation are satisfactory but lack strategic direction. The school has recognised that the strengths of the middle managers are having an impact upon standards, particularly through identification and intervention, but this is not yet fully developed. The relatively new and supportive governing body are eager to train and ready to challenge the work of the school. Notably, a recent governor initiative led to the school establishing breakfast and after-school clubs as a result of requests from parents. Community cohesion is good, largely due to the strengths in the headteacher's leadership in the way he recognises and seeks out ways to develop and strengthen links with groups locally or further afield.

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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?	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?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	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	2

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?	2
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**

20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Goldthorn Park Primary School, Wolverhampton WV4 5ET

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we came to visit your school recently. We appreciate all the help you gave us. A special thank you to the pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to tell me what makes your school so special. Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.

What we liked most about your school.

- Mr Rogers and all the adults in your school work hard and want to make your school better.
- Children get off to a satisfactory start in Nursery and by the end of Year 6, you have made good progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory, and we agree with you that your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting.
- Adults look after you very well and make sure you are safe.
- You show a great deal of enjoyment and pay attention in your lessons.
- You are friendly and polite and behave well.
- You show a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and know how to stay safe.
- You contribute well to the life of the school and local community.
- You are well prepared for the next stage of your learning.

To make your school even better, this is what we would like the school to do now.

- We would like all the adults to work together to help you improve the standards of your work.
- We would like the Nursery and Reception classes to work and play together more, especially outside.
- We would like your teachers to make sure you all make good progress in your lessons, that they help you to understand how to make your work better and that you all have a challenge (You told me how much you like to have a challenge!)

Good luck in your studies.

Yours faithfully

Christine Millett

Lead inspector