

Wheelers Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134099
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	328829
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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)	590
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	John Tennant
Headteacher	Sharon Knight
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wheelers lane Kings Heath Birmingham B13 0SF
Telephone number	0121 464 255
Fax number	0121 464 4026

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 large school. The majority of pupils come from different minority ethnic groups; currently about 40 pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The main first language is English and others spoken are Punjabi, Urdu and Mirpuri. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to average and has increased in recent years. Most children enter the school at the start of Nursery, and a large minority join at the start of Reception, most having attended other nurseries. On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage children have lower than expected skills for their age, but there are considerable variations between different years. A privately managed before and after-school club, catering for approximately 50 children aged three to eleven at a time, operates on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is improving and pupils' progress becomes better each year. Parents are generally pleased with how the school works and supports their children. Typical comments are, 'We have been very happy with the education of our children,' 'The school has some really great activities involving parents,' and, 'Children have many opportunities to take part in additional activities.'

Standards are above average and pupils' performance in writing and numeracy has improved considerably recently. In addition, pupils who have reading difficulties are supported effectively and rapidly gain confidence and their progress accelerates. Pupils' achievement is generally good and the most able pupils do well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, and some make good progress, which is acknowledged by parents. However, occasionally some make slower progress because the quality of support is inconsistent or work is not challenging enough. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make good progress because the support they receive is effective and also because support is provided to help their families speak and write English.

Teaching is good. Relationships are excellent and pupils enjoy learning. Lessons are challenging, especially in Year 6, with a wide range of activities and opportunities for pupils to work together to develop their social skills. Marking plays an important part in helping pupils improve their work. The curriculum is good and improving, and provides well-planned activities to meet the needs of most pupils. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, but resources for outdoor are underdeveloped at present. Opportunities for pupils to find out about the values and beliefs of other cultures are wide. The range of activities to enrich the curriculum is good and participation in the wide choice of out-of-school activities is high. For the most part, work is well matched to pupils' learning needs.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils behave well and take on responsibilities readily. Their contributions to the community are excellent. The school council, for example, has made significant contributions to establishing and ensuring the effectiveness of anti-bullying policies. Pupils behave safely and are fully aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils are actively involved in the local community. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. All safeguarding requirements are fully met and the school takes good care of pupils. Links with homes, other schools and nursery settings are effective, helping pupils settle readily and transfer to the next stage of their education well. Academic guidance is good and pupils know how well they achieve and what their targets are. The range of activities involving parents is very wide and the school keeps parents well informed of its activities.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher gives outstanding direction for improvement and she is well supported by other leaders. Leadership at all levels is good, and improving. The school has a clear picture of its own strengths and weaknesses. It is acting successfully to deal with any weaknesses and is well positioned to make further improvements. Governors provide an excellent level of challenge and support for the school, contributing effectively to the school's improvements. The school promotes community cohesion well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

By the end of their Reception year, standards are above average, representing good achievement from children's starting points. Children settle well because arrangements for transition into Nursery and the Reception class are well managed and sensitive to the needs of children and their parents. Children form trusting relationships with adults and arrangements to promote their welfare are good. Learning is promoted well. The introduction of phonics is having a very positive impact on children's language development. This is enhanced by well-managed opportunities for pupils to work with partners, which develops listening and speaking skills well. Children at the early stages of learning English make rapid progress, because provision is well matched to their needs. Occasionally, however, support for less able children is not as well managed as for others. Personal development is good and children learn to present their work confidently to the whole group, take turns and show care for each other. They quickly learn to become independent, through well-established routines, such as registering themselves, deciding when they want drinks or snacks, and taking responsibility for tidying up their toys. This is further re-enforced by an interesting programme of activities, which provides a good balance between activities the children initiate themselves and those which are directed by the teacher. Activities are mostly well matched to children's needs and interests because they are based on careful assessment of pupils' progress. The school is aware that outdoor provision is not as well developed as indoor provision, owing to a lack of resources following a recent move. Leadership and management are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by ensuring consistent support and challenge in lessons.
- Ensure children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to all areas of learning in the outdoor area.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

End of Year 6 assessments were a little lower than in 2008 but pupils achieved well from a low starting point. The pace of progress has improved constantly over the last three years. The most able pupils especially are now making better progress than they were. The school's focus on providing increased opportunities for pupils to write and to practice numeracy skills has been effective and standards have risen and progress has accelerated significantly. Standards in science are above average and particularly good in investigative skills. Some pupils, not always the least able, have specific reading difficulties and where these pupils have had one-to-one support their progress and growth in confidence have been good. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other pupils and where English language skills are limited, support is effective in aiding good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Some of these pupils make good progress. Some make less progress because they do not receive enough support or challenge, or the quality of support varies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils enjoy learning and all other aspects of school life. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory overall, and for the great majority of pupils is good. It is improving as the proportion of persistent absenteeism falls. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know right from wrong, are tolerant of one another, show enthusiasm in working together and recognise the value of cultural diversity within the school. 'Everyone is welcome,' said one pupil, and another added that 'opinions are tolerated'. In assemblies pupils observe the time for reflection responsibly. They make excellent contributions to the community. The school council is particularly active, and other pupils initiate activities, such as to support the possible extinction of endangered animals and to encourage energy efficiency. The oldest pupils take responsibilities as peer mediators or reading buddies. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be healthy and safe. Overall, pupils' preparation for the next stage of education is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, motivating children to learn well. Pupils' behaviour is managed well and lessons are characterised by a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Lessons have clear learning objectives and success criteria are made plain, so that pupils know what is expected of them. Planning is good and incorporates a good range of activities which engage pupils' interest. There are frequent well-planned opportunities for collaborative work, which develop pupils' social skills well. Explanations are clear, but occasionally questioning does not deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently, although the school is working to improve this. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and provide a good level of challenge for the most able pupils, especially in Year 6. However, in a minority of lessons, support and challenge are less effective for less able pupils. Marking in English and mathematics generally provides specific guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to the needs and interests of pupils and there is an improving range of activities to keep pupils engaged and interested. Links between subjects are increasing and there is good use of writing across the curriculum to help improve English and to develop interpretation and analysis of evidence. The increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) is aiding creativity, helping widen pupils' independent research skills and to develop pupils' confidence as independent learners. Opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of other cultures are extensive. Displays around school are excellent in portraying pupils' work and reinforcing learning. There are many extra-curricular activities, the number having increased in response to pupils' requests. Links with a secondary school enable pupils to enrich their experience of music, drama and mathematics. Lack of resources for outdoor play present constrains opportunities for learning in the otherwise effective Early Years Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is safe and secure. Supervision of the playground is good and recently improved, and incidents of poor behaviour at lunchtimes have reduced considerably. Procedures to help reduce persistent absence are slowly having a positive impact and other procedures are effective in reducing, bullying, racism and poor behaviour. Support for vulnerable pupils is good. Despite accuracy in identifying the specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, sometimes these needs are not fully met. The school has good assessment procedures to track pupils' progress so that teaching can be closely matched to pupils' needs. As well as this, assessment information is used well to set pupils' academic targets. The majority of pupils know how well they are doing, what their targets are and what they need to do to reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has an effective team of senior leaders and together they work well to identify how the school can improve further. They keep a close watch on how well subjects are taught and aim to extend this so that subject leaders can play their part in observing and evaluating teaching and contributing to school improvement. The school has addressed the issues from the previous inspection. The priorities for improvement are clear, challenging and realistic, and pupils' progress is steadily improving. The capacity for improvement is good. Governance is excellent. Governors review the school's progress frequently, and set challenging targets based on extensive knowledge and comprehensive links with the school. They hold the school, and headteacher, to account effectively. The school promotes community cohesion well. Within the school and local community there are excellent links to develop pupils' understanding and respect for the wide range of cultures represented in the school and in Britain. The school is developing its international links to further promote community cohesion. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. While it has very effective policies to counter discrimination, support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies in quality.

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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	2
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	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	1
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?	2

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?	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	1
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**

9 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wheelers Lane Primary School, Birmingham B13 0SF

You made us feel very welcome when we visited the school for its recent inspection! Thank you. We spoke to many of you around school and you told us a lot about why you like your school so much. I am now writing to tell you what we think about your school.

These are the main things we found out about your school:

- You are at a good school. Nearly all of you make good progress and you reach above average standards.
- The headteacher leads the school extremely well. She and all of the other adults work successfully to make sure the school continues to improve.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make sure you learn well and provide really interesting activities for you.
- You enjoy being at school and learning. You work hard and behave well.
- You know a lot about how other people around the world live. You are considerate and thoughtful to all people, whatever their backgrounds.
- You make an excellent contribution to your community.
- You know it is important to eat healthily and take exercise.
- The school is very safe and adults take good care of you.
- The school works very closely with your families and keeps them well-informed about what happens in school.

To improve things, we have asked the school to do the following:

- Make sure that those of you who find learning difficult always receive the support you need and that work matches your learning needs.
- Make sure that the children in the Nursery and Reception classes are able to fully use the outdoor area for their learning. Once again, thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school. Yours faithfully

Ted Wheatley

Lead inspector