

Perry Beeches Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103164
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336024
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maureen Bowyer
Headteacher	Mrs Ghislaine Beeson
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
School address	Beeches Road Birmingham West Midlands
Telephone number	0121 360 4222
Fax number	0121 366 6361
Email address	admin@perrybeeches-inf.bham.sch.co.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited twelve lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment data, individual education plans, monitoring and evaluation documents, policies and procedures. In addition, 50 parental questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of different groups of pupils
- how well assessment is used to promote pupils' progress
- the impact of the thematic curriculum on raising pupils' standards
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels on standards and on raising the quality of teaching and learning
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Perry Beeches is larger than most infant schools. It shares its campus with the local nursery, junior, secondary and special schools. This group of schools, together with two neighbouring schools, form an extended cluster of schools, designed to provide an increased range of opportunities for pupils' learning. Most pupils at Perry Beeches Infants live locally and come from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. Approximately half the number of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. About one third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and a similar proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage through three Reception classes. An increasing number of children from outside the immediate locality, with no pre-school experience, start school in these classes. The school holds a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark and Artsmark (Silver).

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Perry Beeches Infants provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The school's strengths with regard to the older pupils derive from the good quality of its pastoral provision. This ensures that pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, settle quickly and enjoy school. The school's successful strategies for promoting pupils' well-being are reflected in several positive outcomes for pupils' personal development.

A further strength of the school is the good provision in Reception. Children adapt quickly to the routines and most become confident, inquisitive and self-reliant learners. This promising start is not built on as well as it should be in Key Stage 1. Pupils' starting points on entry to Year 1 are in line with national expectations in all areas of learning, except numeracy, which are below. Thereafter, pupils go on to reach broadly average standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 1. Attainment in mathematics has been consistently below average for some years and not enough sharp attention has been given to improve pupils' standards in this subject. By contrast, a strong drive to raise standards in writing secured the best results the school has had for several years in the Year 2 national assessments in 2009. The curriculum promotes pupils' awareness of healthy living and how to stay safe well. Satisfactory teaching, coupled with pupils' positive attitudes, ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged or stretched in lessons. Booster sessions in Year 2, for example, in writing, enable these pupils to catch up some lost ground. Some lessons do not move at a brisk pace and teachers miss opportunities to question pupils fully.

The school reviews its work accurately in some respects. This is demonstrated in the improvements it has made to provision in Reception and in pupils' standards in writing. It has not, however, reviewed the data it holds on pupils' attainment rigorously enough in relation to national standards. Consequently it has acquired an over-generous view of pupils' progress and the school's overall effectiveness. The main reason for this is that responsibilities for monitoring standards in detail are not shared effectively enough across senior and middle leaders. This means that despite some improvements to aspects of provision since the last inspection, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory, rather than good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 by ensuring, in particular, that pupils have better opportunities to use and apply their skills in the subject.

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- Ensure that the overall quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 rises from satisfactory to good by:
 - ensuring all lessons move at a good pace to enable pupils to work more productively
 - ensuring teachers check pupils' understanding more effectively through probing questions and encourage them to answer fully
 - by consistently providing the more able pupils with sufficiently challenging work.
- Develop the roles of senior and middle managers in supporting the headteacher so that they play a more effective part in checking the school's performance, setting its goals and securing improvement.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they start Reception are below those expected for their age. When pupils enter Year 1 they have made good gains in learning in almost all areas of learning, particularly in their personal and social development. Standards were below average from 2006 to 2008, but rose to broadly average in 2009, largely due to good improvement in writing. Mathematics, however, continued to lag behind. Lessons seen during the inspection confirmed a picture of satisfactory progress.

Pupils do better in writing, because daily lessons in letters and sounds have helped them gain a more secure command of basic spelling and they now have more opportunities to develop their skills in writing independently. For example, good use of role-play sparked off Year 2 pupils' recall of a theatrical performance and many pupils were able to write imaginatively about 'George's Marvellous Medicine'. Pupils made satisfactory progress in developing their comprehension and reading skills in guided reading sessions. Pupils underachieve in mathematics, because fewer initiatives or detailed plans have been implemented to accelerate their progress in the subject. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are satisfactory. The development of their oral communication skills is hampered by teachers' tendency to accept very brief answers in lessons.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support and this enables these pupils to move on in their learning at a similar rate as their classmates.

Pupils have a good regard for their school. They enjoy playing with their friends and find school a welcoming place to be. Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and show positive attitudes towards their learning. Despite their young age, pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe, including on the internet, as shown in a Year 2 lesson. The school places a successful emphasis on promoting good behaviour through a careful mix of rewards and sanctions. Consequently, the vast

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majority of pupils behave responsibly, and show consideration for their classmates. Pupils make good use of opportunities as monitors, playground friends, school councillors and eco-warriors to contribute to the school community. Some pupils demonstrate their growing maturity and cultural awareness by willingly representing the school in extended cluster activities and other city-wide initiatives, such as children's conferences. Pupils' satisfactory achievement combined with their average attendance, means that they are set up adequately for the next stage in their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There are some common strengths in the teaching. Teachers explain clearly and make sure pupils know what they are expected to learn. They establish constructive relationships with pupils which has a good impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. While there is no teaching which borders on inadequate, there is not enough teaching which is good. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher's lively approach ensured that pupils worked hard and made good progress in their writing as she pinpointed areas where they could improve their work. The pace of learning in other

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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lessons is sometimes less brisk, because pupils have to sit and listen for too long. This reduces, for example, the time pupils have to use and apply their skills in solving mathematical problems. Teachers do not always question pupils fully and accept short answers, including from the more able pupils. They do not make consistently good use of the assessment information they hold about their pupils. Consequently, support in class is not always targeted to best effect to promote the progress of either the slower or the faster learners. The school has taken effective action to raise the quality of marking, which now tells pupils whether they are meeting their targets. Marking also provides pupils with clear guidance as to how they can improve their work.

Provision for pupils' language and literacy skills is sound. Recent school actions have promoted pupils' writing effectively, including by giving them more varied opportunities to develop this skill through work in subjects other than English. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in solving simple mathematical problems and this is restricting their standards. However, a recent emphasis on improving pupils' subtraction skills is beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils have ample opportunities to use new technology and to use its applications in different subjects. Special theme days excite pupils and enhance their learning. For example, when an 'alien spaceship landed on the school grounds', the pupils' enthusiastic response was reflected in an interesting range of writing, art and design technology work.

The school's good induction procedures ensure that pupils who start school with little or no command of English are rapidly identified and closely supported. These pupils quickly overcome their initial difficulties with English and catch up with their classmates. The school's pastoral systems have had to adapt to accommodate the changes in the school's population. These good systems support vulnerable groups well, and are supplemented effectively through links with a range of external agencies. The school keeps careful, detailed records on attendance and promotes it well through incentives and assemblies, so that pupils are well aware of their attendance target. The new nurture group has had an impact on improving emotional well-being, children's access to the curriculum and preventing exclusions. The parent support worker has provided the school with some effective new routes for involving parents more actively in supporting their children's learning. Cluster group initiatives, such as art club, have worked well in engaging some pupils better in their learning. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are secure and fire assessments are particularly comprehensive.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>2</p>

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher keeps detailed records on pupils' performance and conducts regular lesson observations which clearly identify strengths and areas for development in teachers' work and contribute to their professional development. While other key staff are beginning to monitor aspects of the school's work, their accountability for pupils' performance and for initiatives to improve standards is not fully developed. This dilutes the school's capacity to make a real step-change in pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Arrangements for safeguarding are rigorous and regularly reviewed. These ensure that careful checks are made on adults who work in the school. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory as the good outcomes for pupils' personal development are not matched by similar outcomes for the academic achievement of all groups. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Respect and tolerance are promoted strongly and pupils from different ethnic groups get on well together. Useful links have been established with schools abroad and with another school of a different ethnic profile in the city which have enhanced pupils' cultural and global awareness.

Governors are highly committed and supportive and regularly visit the school to see it in operation. They have a sound overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but sometimes miss opportunities to ask suitably challenging questions to hold the school to account on standards.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Children make good gains in their learning and development from entering Reception with skills which are below those expected for their age. They quickly settle in their new environment as relationships between staff and children are excellent. Vulnerable children are identified early, their needs are highlighted consistently in teachers' planning and one-to-one support by teaching assistants and other adults ensure that they make good progress in their learning. Children soon grow into curious and responsible learners. They engage willingly in collaborative play and nearly all share and take turns well. Children demonstrate high levels of independence in the Reception leader's classroom, as the rich learning environment gives children exciting experiences to extend their learning. The vibrant hum of learning shows just how well children make use of this opportunity. For example, one boy fished for numbers in the tub and his helper correctly identified them upside down or reversed and both accurately interpreted symbols before agreeing to place them in the correct number box. Children develop their motor skills well and produce interesting paintings on jungle animals and careful geometric drawings based on 'all about me'. Teachers arrange the groups in the setting creatively so that children get frequent opportunities to mix, work and play with others. This arrangement also helps staff target particular groups of children for intensive work, for example, to improve their calculation skills. Children find this aspect of numeracy the most difficult, but focused lessons are starting to have some impact on improving children's aptitude for this skill. Care and welfare arrangements are good. Daily assessment procedures are effective in promoting children's progress. The new Reception leader has quickly acquired a good overview of the quality of provision and has accurately identified the main priorities for future improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Less than one quarter of parents returned a parental questionnaire. The responses indicate a good degree of satisfaction with the school, for example, with regard to its capacity in promoting healthy lifestyles. Virtually all parents agreed that their children enjoyed school.

Common positive features of the responses referred to the welcoming nature of the school, the good extra-curricular range of activities and the new courses the school has set up to involve parents in their children's learning. Inspection evidence endorses these positive views. A very few concerns were expressed regarding the school's management

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of the challenging behaviour of some children. Inspectors judged that staff put a lot of effort into this aspect of their work and managed pupils well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Perry Beeches Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	50	21	42	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	44	24	48	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	36	28	56	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	48	21	42	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	48	22	44	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	56	19	38	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	54	21	42	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	32	24	48	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	38	24	48	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	48	21	42	1	2	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	28	29	58	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	40	25	50	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	48	21	42	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



07 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Perry Beeches Infant School, Birmingham B42 2PY

Thank you all for making us so welcome in your school. We will remember how friendly you were and how keen you were to talk to us about your interests and your school.

Perry Beeches Infants is a satisfactory school. It does some things well and these include:

- you get off to a good start in Reception. You learn well there, find out interesting things and make good progress
- the staff care for you well and work hard to make sure you settle in well and enjoy school
- you know what to eat to keep you healthy and what you should do to stay safe, for example, on the internet.

We have asked the school to do some things better. These include:

- helping you to make faster progress in mathematics. For example, by giving you better chances to use and apply what you learn in the subject
- making sure that those pupils who find learning easier are always stretched to do their best
- making sure that lessons keep you really busy without too long spent sitting and listening
- getting all school leaders involved in keeping a close check on the school's work.

You can help by making sure you attend school as often as you can and not missing some days without a really good reason.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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