

Ley Hill Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103297
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336050
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Barbara Atcheson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sylvia Dicker
Headteacher	Marilyn Hull
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
School address	Rhayader Road Northfield Birmingham
Telephone number	01214644302
Fax number	01214642811
Email address	enquiry@leyhill.bham.sch.uk

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

T: 08456 404045
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at pupil progress tracking data, the quality of monitoring, improvement planning and other key documents. The outcomes from 59 parent questionnaires were also evaluated.

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

- attainment, learning and progress, particularly, reading in Key Stage 1 and English and mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the success of senior and subject leaders' monitoring and impact on areas of weakness, especially
- interventions to remove learning barriers and improve rates of progress
- the school's work to lower the rate of absence
- the effectiveness and reliability of the safeguarding of children
- the development of international and, especially, the national dimensions to the promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school. Three quarters of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, the remainder are from a mixture of other ethnic backgrounds. A growing minority of these speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is well above average. A quarter of the pupils have special educational needs, which is just above the national average. Their needs mainly relate to medical problems, speech, language and communication difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or autism. A significant number of pupils are admitted to school at times other than the usual time of entry. Many of the pupils who come to this school, including those who start to school at times other than the usual time of entry have complex barriers to learning. The Nursery and Reception classes are joined to form the Early Years Foundation Stage. The deputy headteacher has been on secondment to another school since October 2009.

A privately run playgroup is sited within the school grounds. This setting is not managed by the school's governing body, so it is inspected separately.

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****2**

Main findings

Ley Hill Junior and Infant School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. However it does have some good and some outstanding features because it is committed to do 'whatever it takes' to raise attainment and improve the opportunities for its pupils. These are the key factors which have enabled the school to do this.

Under the inspired leadership of the headteacher, the skilled and determined staff have worked hard to improve their practice and as a result the school is improving steadily and securely across a range of its work.

Achievement is satisfactory and improving steadily. Overall, attainment is average at the end of Year 6. Although attainment in English is not below average, English is the weakest area because pupils do not have sufficient strategies to overcome their lack of language skills, particularly in writing. Many are reluctant readers.

Teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good or better teaching throughout the school. The school has a wealth of data about individual pupils' performance, which is now in a format that can be easily used by teachers to fine-tune their planning to accelerate learning further. Although the use of assessment for learning has led to an increase in the proportion of good teaching and learning in some year groups, the quality is not yet consistent across the school. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and this limits pupils' opportunities for independent learning. Marking in mathematics does not always help pupils understand how to improve their work.

The school has worked hard with pupils and parents to improve attendance, which is now average.

The care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school has been successful in making and sustaining improvements which have ensured that all pupils feel secure and able to make the best of the opportunities that are available to them.

Pupils' learning benefits from the highly positive relationships that the school has built with parents.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from well below expected levels of skill and knowledge on entry. Nonetheless they fall short of the goals expected of them by the time they move to Year 1.

Pupils behave well; they have good relationships with adults and other pupils and respect each other's achievements. They say that they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has secure procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils and successfully promotes equal opportunity.

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Although senior leaders regularly monitor and evaluate the school's work they recognise that their procedures need to be more rigorous. Teachers must have more opportunities to work together to model and share good practice in order to ensure that the quality of teaching improves at a faster rate than at present.

This school has a secure view of its own strengths and weaknesses based on sound self-evaluation. Staff and governors share the headteacher's passion for improvement and are united in a drive to raise achievement and standards. Targeted improvements have ensured that all pupils with complex barriers to learning have the right support at the right time so that they are settled and secure enough not only to learn, but to reach the challenging targets set by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress in English by:
 - using talk to explore the creative aspects of writing
 - increasing pupils' interest in reading.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - eliminating the few occasions when teachers talk for too long and increasing the opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment accurately
 - improving the quality of written feedback in mathematics.
- Accelerate the rate at which teaching moves from satisfactory to consistently good by:
 - ensuring that all leaders are focused on rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of initiatives
 - modelling and sharing good practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Well targeted support and an interesting curriculum enable all pupils to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. Consequently the majority make the expected rate of progress, or better, in all classes and are meeting their challenging targets.

Previous test results show that attainment has been significantly lower than average in English and mathematics. However, detailed and accurate performance data supplied by the school indicate that pupils are now well on the way to attain standards that are broadly in line with national average. This is due to the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, and the analysis of the performance of groups of pupils. Most pupils are appropriately supported and their learning tailor-made, except on the few occasions where teachers' assessment is not accurate enough. Pupils who have been at the school longest make the most progress. Newcomers with complex special needs make least progress because there has often not been enough time to fully assess their needs and implement accurately targeted support. However, those pupils with special educational

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needs, particularly those who have been at the school the longest, benefit from the outstanding support they receive. For example, a boy who had been disaffected and had difficulties controlling anger was observed working independently, totally absorbed in successfully interpreting data from a bar graph. As a result of one to one tuition he had made huge gains in his learning and was working at the same level as his classmates. English is the weakest subject. Pupils' low level of language skills affects the quality of their writing. Many lack the motivation to read books in order to deepen their powers of comprehension and improve their vocabulary. An improved rate of attendance has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils enjoy the success they achieve in lessons. For example a Year 2 pupil rushed up to give a teaching assistant a 'high-five' because he was so delighted to be able to double numbers. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a wealth of knowledge about how to stay safe, for example when using the Internet, and say they feel safe in school. A well planned curriculum means that pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and make sensible choices at the school canteen. Their work in the school and wider community is outstanding and has strong links with the curriculum. The pupils enthusiastically promote a broad range of activities which have not only improved their school but also the wider community. They have improved the school grounds to achieve 'Bird Friendly' status for the RSPB garden, they have grown herbs and gift wrapped them to sell in their award winning business enterprise. In the wider community they have produced puzzle books to support the air ambulance, and are currently actively involved in a debate centred on the proposal to build in the local park.

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	1

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships, enthusiastic teachers and an innovative curriculum based on pupils' interests ensure that pupils enjoy their learning. The curriculum is driven by the needs and interests of the pupils. Rich experiences, such as the link with an inner-city, mainly Muslim, school, have very successfully deepened pupils' understanding of cultural, faith and socio-economic diversity. In an intergeneration project, older members of the community talked to pupils about their experiences in World War 2 and compared them to pupils' experiences of conflict, such as bullying in school.

Literacy came alive for pupils in Year 5 as they explained the 'green' features of their own New York taxi cab of the future. However, pupils' interest wanes and the pace of progress slows when occasionally, teachers talk for too long. Where teachers use assessment well, individually planned learning reduces the learning barriers for different groups of pupils and skilled teaching assistants give pupils well structured support. However this good practice is not yet consistent across the school. More able pupils do not always have enough scope to tackle their tasks independently and at their own pace. Teachers are starting to encourage pupils to check their own and their peers' work. Pupils find marking in English helpful, as it suggests ways in which they can improve. Marking in mathematics is not as thorough in this respect. Pupils enjoy a good range of clubs and opportunities to participate in competitive sport. They also enjoy and learn a lot from visitors, such as the older residents from the community who readily share their first-hand memories of the war.

Parents appreciate the excellent care, guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs that enable their children to enjoy the opportunities provided. The flexible role of the learning mentor ensures that there is daily contact with pupils who have difficulties and that matters are dealt with immediately. Problems for pupils with behavioural difficulties are pre-empted by providing special support and exciting activities at lunch time. There is a club to help the quiet pupils raise their self-esteem. Links with parents are very good and strengthen the support provided at home. Strong links with external agencies provide pupils with expert help and advice, such as physiotherapy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's passion to find the key that unlocks every child's potential provides the drive, ambition and inspiration that has enthused staff and governors to adopt, and continue to support, her agenda for improvement. The school is ambitious to raise standards despite the complex barriers to learning exhibited by some pupils, who need to become settled and secure before they can begin to make progress. The governing body is knowledgeable, works hard and provides the school with an appropriate level of challenge and support. The senior leadership team share the headteacher's commitment. Although the deputy headteacher is currently on secondment, the remainder of the team works hard to drive the school's well-considered development plan which sets out challenging targets for all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability, thereby ensuring equality of opportunity. It provides a clear focus on raising standards. However, the school recognises that there is still more to do to ensure that all teaching is good. This means that the level of monitoring and evaluation must be accelerated and the extent to which good practice is modelled and shared must be increased.

The school's outstanding partnerships with parents play a pivotal role in its programme to support pupils in their learning. The school goes out of its way to encourage any parents who find it difficult to work with the school. Parents find the school a friendly, welcoming place which provides user-friendly information. This helps them to understand how to provide the best support for their children. Parents are exceptionally well informed. The school makes sure that information is parent-friendly. Talking to parents and keeping lines of communication open are of particular importance. Many parents have returned to learning and proceeded into employment through the school's endeavours.

Safeguarding procedures are securely in place. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. All staff have a comprehensive knowledge of processes and procedures and receive regular training. Consequently, all pupils know that they are safe.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Work to produce puzzle books to support the air ambulance, lobbying of the city council and learning from older citizens is only part of the school's plan for action. Much of the curriculum is centred around an agenda of respect and providing real opportunities for pupils to promote engagement. A link with an inner city school has given all pupils the opportunity to have a Muslim friend and to realise that 'my friend likes pizza too!' However, the school recognises that more provision is needed if pupils' understanding of other communities within Britain and across the world is to be maximised.

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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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Nursery and Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below the expected level. They make good progress in most areas of learning because:

- relationships are good and children are happy and feel secure
- accurate assessment ensures that teachers have a good understanding of the learning and development needs of the children, so activities are planned which build upon what children already know, understand and can do
- exciting opportunities, such as exploring the different properties of dry and wet cornflour, consolidate language development effectively
- teaching assistants are well informed about children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so they are able to provide focused support
- leadership and management are effective, and partnerships with parents are excellent
- children are very well cared for, and safeguarding procedures are good.

Children achieve well in all areas of learning but attain levels below those

- expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year, particularly in their language skills.

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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

The majority of parents have positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with the caring, friendly and welcoming ethos. Evidence from the inspection supports parents' views that children enjoy school, that care for children's health and safety is good.

A small minority of parents expressed the view that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. However, behaviour during inspection was found to be good. The team's view concurred with that of the pupils who said that the school sorted out any problems quickly and effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ley Hill Junior and 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	66	19	32	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	64	20	34	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	56	24	41	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	54	25	42	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	61	23	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	59	23	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	58	23	39	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)	28	47	26	44	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	51	27	46	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	36	26	44	7	12	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	39	30	51	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	39	31	53	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	48	32	48	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



11 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ley Hill Junior and Infant School, Northfield B31 1TX

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting

- your lessons and talking to you. You really helped us. We think your school gives you
- a satisfactory standard of education and there are quite a lot of good and some outstanding things about your school. These are the main things that helped us come to this conclusion.

Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a good start.

You enjoy school, behave well and are coming to school more regularly. Well done!

Teaching is satisfactory. It is improving because teachers are using what

- they know about how well you are doing to plan future work.

You achieve the levels expected for your age.

The school provides interesting lessons and a wide range of extra activities.

You have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe.

The school works very well with your parents so that they can help you.

The teachers look after you very well.

You do lots of exciting work in the community.

Your headteacher and her staff work hard to make learning better for you.

We have asked the school to do three things.

Help you to do better in English by making sure that:

- you use talk to help you make your writing more interesting
- you read more books and get more help to increase your language skills.

Help you to make better progress by making sure that:

- teachers do not talk too much and allow you time to do your work
- teachers' marking in mathematics really helps you improve
- all teachers keep accurate checks on how well you are learning and use them to help you to do your best.

Senior leaders make sure that all teaching is good by:

- checking to see that improvements have been carried out
- sharing the things they do well.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest

- so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector

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