

Wren's Nest Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103823
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336170
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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

The registered childcare provision, 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 of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Lacey
Headteacher	Ruth Wylie
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
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Age group	3–11
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons, observed 15 teachers and spent the majority of their time observing learning. Meetings were held with governors, staff, parents and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, key policy documents, assessment information, governors' minutes and pupils' books. Safeguarding procedures were also checked. In addition, 216 parent questionnaire responses were received and analysed, together with questionnaire responses from staff and from pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- how well the school's plans to raise attainment in mathematics and English are working
- how consistently assessment is used by teachers to plan for different groups and set targets for individuals
- the effectiveness of the additional support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- whether there is sufficient emphasis on developing basic skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a large primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in a Nursery and two Reception classes. The large majority of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Just over a third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs mainly relate to moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. In every year, a few pupils have severe and complex special educational needs. The very large majority of pupils are from White British families with just over a tenth from a variety of ethnic groups. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The governing body manages the children's centre and an after-school club. The school has held the Healthy School award since 2005. In 2009, the school achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award. The school's new building programme was completed in January 2010.

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

This satisfactory school is improving rapidly because the headteacher is highly effective in sharing the school's vision with staff, pupils and parents. Her leadership of the building of the new school, with the children's centre at its heart, has motivated all members of the school's community. Staff, parents and children are all very proud of the new school, and as a result, everyone is on board in carrying out the school's plans. Many aspects of the school's work are already good and some are outstanding. The quality of the care, guidance and support provided for pupils is excellent. The school builds excellent partnerships with other agencies to support this. The school knows its children and their families exceptionally well, so support is well-targeted and enables a wide range of groups to make the best of their education. Parents receive excellent help, enabling them not only to increase their own levels of knowledge and understanding but, more especially, to help them support their own children.

Achievement is satisfactory because attainment is still low at the end of Year 6. However, pupils make good progress across the school from their very low starting points. The strategies introduced over the last three years to raise attainment in English and mathematics are working. There is improvement across all years, but those pupils currently in Year 2 show the greatest benefit from the school's initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy. Although they started with exceptionally low skills and abilities, their current standards are much closer to national expectations. Across the school, the most able pupils make good progress, but they could achieve more. They do not always have clear guidance on how to reach the highest levels in their work.

Attainment is rising because the quality of teaching and the curriculum have improved since the last inspection. There is a clear focus throughout the school on learning through activities and experiences. An excellent enrichment programme of visits and visitors widens pupils' experiences and stimulates learning. Pupils' awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles is good. The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community is satisfactory because there are fewer opportunities open to them.

Plans are based on thorough evaluation of the school's work and are effective in driving improvement. The views of children and parents are taken into account in forming these plans. As a result, leaders have enhanced the quality of provision. This has resulted in rapidly improving attainment throughout the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage, improved attendance and behaviour. It has happened at the same time as leaders have planned a new building and then moved into a new school. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve. Pupils are now making good progress and the school continues to focus on the areas which it correctly identifies as in need of development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics and English so that more pupils reach their challenging targets at the higher level by:
 - - increasing expectations of what the ablest pupils can do
 - - giving the more able pupils clear guidance in assessments, marking and feedback on how to reach the higher level in their work.
- Develop the extent to which pupils take on responsibilities and play a part in the school and wider community, so that they develop a good understanding of the spiritual, moral and cultural values of their own and other communities.
- 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

Although attainment at the end of Year 6 is low, the large majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress when working in classes or in small groups because assessment is used to plan appropriate activities which enable pupils to make small steps in their learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress benefiting from the emphasis on developing speech and language for all children. The school's use of the 'Talk to Write' strategy is having considerable impact on the quality and length of writing which pupils are producing across the school. The quality of learning in lessons is good, and pupils have positive attitudes to their work. In most lessons, the learning begins straight away. Children are engaged quickly, and all are expected, not just to listen to the teacher, but think carefully about answers to questions. This was done very effectively during the inspection in a Year 2 mathematics lesson on money problems. The teacher used a range of strategies including number fans, whiteboards and talking partners, to ensure that all pupils were engaged in the learning during the whole-class part of the lesson. The pace of learning was fast and enjoyable.

Pupils have a good understanding of what being safe means. They understand a range of risks, including those associated with the internet. They feel free from bullying and harassment in school, and are clear about the help they can find in school should they need it. Behaviour in lessons is good and supports good learning. Around school and in the playground, children treat each other well. The take-up of healthy school meals is good. Children take part in regular physical education and a wide range of sports activities offered by the school. Pupils understand why they need to stay fit and healthy and have a range of ideas on how to do this, resulting in the award of Healthy School status every year since 2005. Children willingly take on the responsibilities they are given, so the school council and eco-council are involved in improving the environment. Large numbers raise money for charity. There are not, however, enough opportunities

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for most children of all ages to make a significant contribution to the school and wider community or to learn about communities beyond the immediate locality. These limitations mean that the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral and social development are the stronger elements, as demonstrated by pupils' good behaviour. Despite low attainment overall, children use their literacy and information communication technology skills well in other subjects. This, and children's average attendance, means they are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

In the large majority of lessons, teaching is good or better. Good relationships exist between staff and children, and classrooms are effectively managed. There is particularly good practice in using a range of activities to engage learners during whole-class sessions. Teachers plan lessons carefully and resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used well. Support staff are used effectively and are an integral part of lessons, promoting learning for all as well as the groups they support. Teachers

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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encourage pupils to work independently. This works well when teachers use previous learning to plan activities so that there is a good match of challenging work to pupils' skills. Occasionally, pupils struggle with independent work because the task has not been carefully matched to their understanding of the skills to practise. Assessment and marking of children's work is regular and thorough. Although it almost always tells children what they have done well and sets a target for improvement, this does not always relate to the lesson's learning objective or challenge the ablest children to stretch themselves.

The curriculum is appropriately focused on English and mathematics to support raised attainment in literacy and numeracy. Pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects, but there are fewer opportunities to practise numeracy skills. The curriculum is well-matched to the wide range of pupils' needs although there is sometimes a lack of challenge for the high ability pupils. There is an outstanding range of enrichment activities aimed at providing pupils with a wide range of experiences which they might not otherwise have.

Excellent attention is given to the care of all pupils. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils make the best of all the opportunities presented to them. The care, guidance and support given to those pupils who are vulnerable or at risk are extremely effective. Transition to secondary school is carefully planned for all pupils. The strategies used to improve pupils' attendance have been effective. The well-attended breakfast club is an excellent, free facility which gives pupils a very good start to the day and encourages regular attendance. It illustrates well the high quality of care provided by the school, as does the excellent provision in the children's centre. It is custom-made to meet the needs of younger children, offering a wide range of facilities and options for parents. It is fully integrated with the school and it provides strong support to parents and children alike.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Senior and middle leaders provide good leadership of their areas within the school. They go to considerable lengths to ensure that all children have as many opportunities as possible. Thus the school successfully promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination should it occur. Leaders use rigorous tracking systems to ensure that the performance of individuals and groups is even. Where gaps in performance are

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identified, prompt action is taken to close them. Good strategies are in place to ensure that all pupils can participate in activities regardless of cost.

Governors are a committed group who are fully involved in the work of the school and in planning its future. They are thorough in ensuring that pupils and staff are safe and that all procedures for safeguarding meet government requirements. They know the school well from their work with staff, pupils and parents and make a particular contribution through their understanding of the school and its neighbourhood. The school works very closely as a cohesive unit within the locality. Parents and other members of the community benefit from the well-planned courses and services which are offered. However, the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is satisfactory because the opportunities for pupils to benefit from work with communities outside the local area are planned but not currently in place.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery with abilities which are exceptionally low in all areas of development. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes. Despite this, standards are still well below the expected level, when children move to Year 1. This is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Progress is particularly good in personal development because there is a strong emphasis on establishing routines and clear expectations of behaviour. Progress is good because the provision is well led. Teachers know children well and provide stimulating activities to engage them in learning. The programme of

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developing understanding of letters and sounds and numbers, introduced since the last inspection, is well taught and having an impact on improved attainment. The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is stimulating and motivates children to learn through play.

Staff carry out assessments thoroughly. They use these to review regularly the progress of children. Planning is thorough but does not include reference to next steps for individuals, so there are occasionally missed opportunities to reinforce learning, particularly during free choice sessions. Adults establish good relationships with parents and children through the induction process and the strong connection with the children's centre. Parents are very happy to come into the unit at the start and end of the day and get to know staff well. They value these contacts. As one nursery parent says, 'The school is a friendly welcoming place where my child loves to come every morning.' The key worker system ensures that children have a regular reference point and good relationships develop between adults and children. All staff work well as a team, with a shared commitment to continue improvements and raise attainment.

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 overwhelming majority of the parents' and carers' questionnaire returns were positive. This comment from one parent is typical of those received, reflecting the high level of satisfaction: 'The headteacher enthuses all of her staff, with the child being central to all the decisions and activities within the school. The school provides so many experiences for the children at minimum cost to the parents. The children always seem happy and calm when I have visited the school. The staff seem genuinely concerned and helpful.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wrens Nest Primary 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 216 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 400 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	138	64	69	32	2	1	6	3
The school keeps my child safe	149	69	62	29	1	0	4	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	155	72	57	26	1	0	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	141	65	68	31	2	1	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	153	71	59	27	0	0	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	133	62	76	35	2	1	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	132	61	78	36	1	0	4	2
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)	122	57	83	39	1	0	5	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	120	56	86	40	1	0	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	112	52	91	42	6	3	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	104	49	99	46	4	2	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	138	64	70	32	1	0	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	152	70	58	27	0	0	4	2

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.



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wren's Nest Primary School, Dudley DY1 3NQ

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome on our recent visit, and for sharing your views on the school in discussions and through questionnaires. These have been very helpful. Now I would like to share with you what we have found out.

We were very impressed with your beautiful new school and all the lovely things in it. We were pleased that your ideas had been used to help design it.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.

You make good progress in your work. The standards which you reach are below average by the time you leave, but these standards are improving.

You have a good understanding of how to keep yourself healthy, and it was good to see so many of you making healthy choices at lunchtime. We know many of you attend out of school sports clubs to keep fit.

Your headteacher and all the staff look after you very well. You told us that you feel safe in school, and that there is always someone to listen to you if you have a difficulty. You behave well in lessons and around school and treat each other well.

You enjoy lessons and it was good to see that teachers plan many activities to keep you interested and make learning fun.

Your school plans many opportunities for you to visit other places and have lots of experiences which help you to understand about the world around you.

We are asking staff and governors to do two things to make the school even better. We have asked teachers to help some of you to gain higher levels in your English and mathematics by telling you what you need to do to reach them. We would also like the school to plan more opportunities for more of you to take on responsibilities within school and beyond and to help you find out more about communities beyond your local area. We hope that you will do your best to help your headteacher and staff to put these things in place, and help the school to continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook

Lead inspector

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