

Lickey Hills Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116773
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338888
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Southerton
Headteacher	Stephen Wallin
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and considered a range of documents including the school development plan, records of the schools' monitoring of lessons, and records of pupils' progress.

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

- the progress that pupils in Key Stage 2 make in writing
- the work of the language unit
- the school's contribution to community cohesion.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. This is because there is a unit within school that caters for pupils with speech and language difficulties. The school has achieved Eco Green Flag and Healthy Schools' status and a leading aspect award for its work with gifted and talented pupils.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Lickey Hills Primary School is a good school which provides well for its pupils, both in the main school and in the language unit. The headteacher and other leaders have worked well as a team to drive forward new initiatives and, as a result, the school has improved in many areas of its work. Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to make a good contribution to both the school and the local community, especially by promoting sustainability. They behave well both in and out of lessons and know how to keep safe. When children join the school either in the Nursery or Reception class their abilities are similar to those expected for their age. By the time they leave, at the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Pupils have achieved well because of good teaching and the way that they pay attention in lessons and strive to do well. The school has successfully focused on raising standards in mathematics and an above average proportion of pupils are now doing well for their age. Although pupils make good progress in reading, the school knows that more needs to be done to raise standards in writing in Key Stage 2. The content of older pupils' writing often contains engaging ideas and a rich vocabulary but can be let down by simple mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Pupils in the unit make good progress because of consistently good teaching. There are high expectations for these pupils in terms of improvement to their communication skills and their personal development. Consequently, parents and carers typically say they are 'thrilled' with the way their children blossom and gain confidence.

The majority of teaching is good and there are many lively and exciting lessons but, very occasionally, there are satisfactory lessons in Key Stage 2. In these few lessons teachers are not as explicit about what pupils are expected to learn and do not always thoroughly check learning at the end of lessons. In the great majority of lessons, work is very carefully matched to pupils' needs. Intermittently, pupils of different abilities complete similar work particularly where classes are arranged by ability in Key Stage 2. The school is aware that academic guidance needs to be strengthened. There are examples of good marking particularly in Key Stage 1 but occasionally in Key Stage 2 academic target setting and marking does not give pupils precise guidance about how to improve their work, especially in writing.

The school has carefully monitored the quality of teaching and kept a close eye on pupils' progress. As a result, leaders and managers have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and have been able to successfully tackle weaknesses. Since the previous inspection, the provision in Key Stage 1 has been much enhanced and this has led to much higher standards at the end of Year 2. Higher standards in mathematics

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have been secured in Key Stage 2 and there has been a more active approach to identifying and preventing underachievement by pupils. All this demonstrates the schools' good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of assessment in Key Stage 2 by:
 - - making sure that pupils always know exactly what they are expected to learn in all lessons and checking learning at the end of lessons
 - - making certain that marking and target setting are used effectively to give pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that pupils are able to spell accurately and use correct punctuation and grammar in their work
- Address minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that pupils learn at a good pace in all lessons
 - making certain that work is always planned carefully to match pupils' needs that have been identified by assessment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are make good progress in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2 they are reaching above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. The school has boosted pupils' progress in mathematics and recognises the need to raise standards further in writing. The proportion of pupils doing well for their age in writing was disappointing in 2009 but currently more-able pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with special education needs or disabilities, including those who are mainly taught in the unit, make good progress because they are well supported.

Pupils are polite, helpful and considerate and they make a considerable contribution to the calm ethos in school. They have a highly developed awareness of what is safe and unsafe. They acknowledge that there are some occasional minor fallings out but pupils are confident that these are dealt with appropriately by teachers. Consequently they feel safe in school. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep healthy and try hard to adopt a healthy lifestyle, although they know that they occasionally eat the wrong things. Topic lessons are helping to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, pupils were able to understand that in the past many children faced incredible hardships and they were able to empathise with their plights. They are starting to have a greater understanding of other cultures through a good range of visits and visitors but they have more limited opportunities to have direct contact with children from different backgrounds to their own. Attendance rates are usually above average. Last year they dipped to average but attendance is now recovering to its former level.

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Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of their education. Many of their academic skills are above average and they are confident in the use of information and communication technology. Pupils are self-assured individuals who are developing an understanding of enterprise and commerce while raising funds for those who are less fortunate than themselves.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and share this with students in a way that is easy to understand. Relationships are good and help teachers to manage behaviour in a very effective way. Many teachers have good questioning skills which they use both to check learning and to challenge and extend pupils' thinking. In the best lessons, work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities and often provides a good level of challenge to the most able. Occasionally, in Key Stage 2 pupils of different abilities within sets are given very similar work to complete. Pupils are usually made aware of what they are expected to learn and their learning is checked at the end of lessons but the school has correctly identified that this is not done in every lesson in Key Stage 2. Teaching assistants are

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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effective at providing support in lessons especially for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities enabling them to make the same good progress as their peers. Pupils are often given good oral guidance in lessons. Teachers regularly mark pupil's books but, sometimes in Key Stage 2, they do not give specific instructions about how pupils can improve their work. For example, more-able pupils are often congratulated about their writing but not told why it is so good or how it could be made even better. The school is starting to use academic targets but is aware that these targets could be refined and used more effectively to help pupils to improve their work.

The school has worked very hard on improving the curriculum. There is good development of pupils' skills through lessons that are based on interesting themes relevant to pupils' experiences. Pupils have good opportunities to write at length in different subject areas. Careful checks are made to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum while promoting good continuity and progression. Pupils' needs and interests have been taken into account and, as a result, provision for creative subjects such as art and music has been strengthened. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those who are taught mainly in the unit have access to a good curriculum further strengthened by opportunities to join mainstream lessons when appropriate. The school has not forgotten the needs of more-able pupils. As well as ensuring effective levels of challenge in the classroom there are extra activities for these pupils. The curriculum also successfully supports pupils' good personal development particularly through a wide range of enriching activities such as local and residential visits, and a very wide range of after school clubs. Partnerships are used well to extend the range of activities available ranging from music tuition for all in Year 4 to various after school football coaching sessions.

The quality of care is good and this is reflected in the way pupils feel at ease in the school. Vulnerable students and those with special education needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported. This well targeted support is enhanced by good links with external agencies. The unit works exceptionally well with a range of partners.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels have worked very hard since the previous inspection and have substantially improved provision and outcomes for pupils. There is now a clear sense of direction and the school is firmly set on an upward trajectory. Through rigorous

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monitoring of teaching and learning and very carefully tracking of pupils' progress, the school has recognised its strengths and ensured that weaknesses are properly identified and addressed. In particular, the headteacher has a very precise knowledge of the school and a quiet determination to raise standards even further. The way the school carefully checks the progress of different groups of pupils reflects its good commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

Governors have worked well with other leaders and managers to ensure that safeguarding procedures are of good quality. Governors are also very well informed about the school. They take their statutory responsibilities very seriously and are able to provide effective support and challenge. Parents and carers are provided with a good range of information, especially through the Parents' Forum and the school's website, and the school is currently developing a learning platform which has the potential to provide even more information. The school works well with a range of external agencies. For example, its work with speech therapists to promote pupils' listening skills has been particularly successful.

The school knows its own community well and is working hard to address each of the different strands of community cohesion. As a result, pupils have an increasing awareness of different religions and cultures. The nursery has a useful link with another nursery, where children come from different cultural heritages, and there are strong international links with a school in Africa. However, the school is aware that there is still more to do in ensuring that children have direct contact with children from a wider range of backgrounds.

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	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	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	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage, in either the Nursery and Reception classes, their levels of attainment are similar to those expected for their age. By the time they join Year 1, standards are above those expected and children have made good progress because of the good quality support they receive. Induction procedures are good; parents and carers are delighted, typically commenting about the way their children 'settle quickly and with confidence'. Staff are vigilant in meeting the needs of children and welfare requirements are met. Activities are planned that interest and engage children and quickly move their learning on. Staff use questioning effectively to challenge children and progress their thinking and they model language well. Leadership and management are good and this is reflected in the way that staff work well as a team and share a vision about what can be done to enhance children's access to the outdoors. The younger children in the unit often join the other children in the Foundation Stage. However, when they are taught within the unit there is limited space for learning through play especially in an outdoor environment.

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

Parents and carers are generally positive about the school. Those with children who have not always found learning easy, and those who have children in the language unit, are particularly pleased with the way the school has supported them. A very small minority expressed concerns about the information they get about their children's progress. Last year the school changed the format of the end-of-year reports in response to parents' requests but has realised that parents and carers would like more explicit information about National Curriculum levels and more regular written information about their children's progress. Plans are already in place to address these matters. A few parents and carers had individual concerns. These concerns were followed up in confidence by the inspection team. It was found that the school was already aware of the majority of these matters and was taking action.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at insert name of 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/inspector received 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	45	58	54	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	55	47	44	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	23	62	57	13	12	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	29	65	60	10	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	36	59	55	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	34	58	54	11	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	34	65	60	2	2	2	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)	25	23	71	66	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	28	65	60	9	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	20	65	61	11	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	19	75	69	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	24	62	57	12	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	45	42	45	2	2	1	1

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.



21 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Lickey Hills Primary School, Rednal B45 8EU

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The inspection team really enjoyed talking with you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a good school that is getting better all the time. It's clear that you have a good time at school because of all the fun things you get to do. The science demonstrations looked very exciting. We enjoyed listening to you talk about the good work done by the School Council, the Eco Committee and the Healthy Schools Committee. We thought you were very well informed about how to keep healthy and safe and were very impressed by your work on sustainability. Your behaviour is good. You have good manners and make visitors very welcome indeed. We think that you all make a really important contribution to your school.

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. You are all making good progress and by the end of Year 6 you are reaching standards that are above those reached by other children in schools nationally. Many of the older pupils produce some really interesting writing but we have asked your teachers to help them to make sure that their spellings, grammar and punctuation are always correct. Your teachers work very hard and most of your lessons are good. Occasionally lessons in Key Stage 2 are a little slow. This affects your learning so we have asked your teachers to make sure that learning moves on at a good rate in all lessons. Teachers usually tell you exactly what you are expected to learn at the start of lessons and check your learning at the end of the session. We have asked them to make sure they do this in all lessons in Key Stage 2 and to make sure they plan work for you that's not too easy or too hard.

Teachers give you lots of help during your lessons but we have asked teachers in Key Stage 2 to improve the way they mark your books and use targets so you know exactly how to improve your work. You told us that the staff look after you very well and we agree. The people who run your school are working hard to make it an even better place. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector

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