

Bird's Bush Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124170
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340508
Inspection dates	22–23 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Rowley
Headteacher	Helen Coulthard
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, governors and some parents. They observed the school's work, looked at progress records, teachers' lesson plans, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed 149 pupils' questionnaires, 27 staff questionnaires, 82 parents' questionnaires and undertook a case study of several pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable.

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

- the progress of boys throughout the school
- learning and progress in mathematics
- the quality of the challenge that teachers provide to secure at least satisfactory progress
- the effectiveness of leaders' plans, for example to improve teaching, to accelerate progress and secure average or better attainment.

Information about the school

Bird's Bush is a larger-than-average school. Nearly all pupils are from White British families and the remainder are from a mixture of other ethnic backgrounds. A few of these pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of families that claim free school meals is average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a part-time Nursery and a Reception class taught jointly by two teachers. The school has recently been awarded the Financial Management Standard, Dyslexia Friendly Status Level 1, Healthy Schools Status, Activemark, Bronze International Schools award and full Eco Status.

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

Bird's Bush Primary is a satisfactory school and it is improving. These are the main features of the school.

Attainment is average and achievement is satisfactory.

The learning and progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes are satisfactory.

The learning and progress of pupils in other years is satisfactory and improving. This is evident, for example, in reading, where progress is good.

Pupils feel very safe in school and their behaviour is good.

Teaching is satisfactory and there are clear signs that it is getting better.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has several strengths including provision in English and the way it supports pupils' personal development

Pupils are cared for well and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and potentially vulnerable pupils receive good support.

Parents are very happy with the quality of education the school provides.

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The headteacher's clearly articulated drive to improve the school is enthusiastically shared by staff. Since the last inspection the school has been through a difficult period during which progress slowed and standards of attainment fell. The leadership has successfully addressed recent weaknesses in teaching and aspects of the English curriculum. As a result, progress has accelerated over the past year so that it is now at least satisfactory for all pupils and attainment is no longer low. Progress in reading, which has been slow over the past three years, is now good. These successes demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further. There are three key areas in which the school can become better.

Teaching is not yet consistently good or better because the work teachers plan does not always match closely enough the needs of different groups of pupils. This means pupils are not always working hard enough to make good progress.

A few subject leaders are not fully accountable for attainment and progress in their areas of responsibility. This is because the monitoring and evaluation of the work in their subjects are not always effective. As a result, areas for improvement are not always spotted or rectified quickly enough.

Attainment in mathematics is not rising as quickly as it is in English. This is because pupils often find work in mathematics less engaging and relevant. Furthermore, the mathematics curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise

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solving mathematical problems, a relative weakness in their knowledge and understanding in this subject.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure good or better teaching by ensuring the work teachers plan matches closely the needs of different groups so that pupils are fully stretched.
 - Ensure all subject leaders check work in their areas of responsibility effectively so that they can identify and remedy shortcomings quickly and become fully accountable for standards in their subject.
 - Provide work in mathematics that pupils consistently find interesting and relevant and ensure there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise solving mathematical problems to improve their level of attainment.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspection before their next Section 5 Inspection.

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

Pupils' achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Last year, children started school with skills and knowledge at the levels expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in Nursery and Reception to reach standards that are average by the time they start Year 1. Learning and progress in English, mathematics and science are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Pupils who left school in July 2009 attained average standards. Attainment is rising and progress is accelerating because the quality of learning is improving. This was confirmed by inspectors who saw good learning and progress in about half of the lessons that they visited. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were really thinking hard about the feelings of the characters in a fiction book they were reading and using their ideas to make predictions about what these characters will do next as the story unfolds. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils of all abilities were working hard to measure accurately the length of different objects so that they could put them in the correct order of size.

Progress in reading is good because teachers provide books that both challenge and interest pupils. The individual support provided for pupils who find reading hard is especially effective in raising their attainment. Progress is accelerating in writing because pupils enjoy the exciting and relevant topics that they write about and so work hard. This is especially so for the boys who find topics such as 'Pirates' most interesting. The attainment of boys has been below that of the girls in writing in recent years. With the introduction of more interesting work the school is rapidly closing the gap in attainment between boys and girls. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory and improving but not as quickly as that in English. This is because mathematics tasks do not consistently engage the pupils well and their ability to solve mathematical problems is a relative weakness. The small number of potentially vulnerable pupils and the few who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers.

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The school's stimulating atmosphere is helping pupils grow into confident and mature young people. They reflect maturely on their feelings and the feelings of others. A clear moral code underpins their good behaviour. Occasionally pupils fidget when they spend too long listening to the teacher talk. Pupils have a strong respect for people from backgrounds different to their own and have a satisfactory understanding of the diversity of British culture.

Pupils feel very safe because the school deals quickly and effectively with the rare cases of bullying. They confidently approach a member of staff with a concern knowing their worry will be quickly and effectively resolved. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when crossing the road and on the internet. Most of them eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise. They have a clear understanding of the dangers of taking drugs, alcohol and smoking. Many pupils readily take responsibility in school, for example as members of the school council. The council is beginning to help make decisions about learning and the curriculum. Pupils generously collect for charity and work hard to improve the local environment, for example by joining local wardens to pick litter. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and try their best. Their average levels of attendance and attainment mean their preparation for secondary school and future employment is satisfactory.

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

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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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In lessons relationships are positive. Teachers use computers and other resources well to engage pupils and develop their learning. The work teachers plan does not always match accurately enough the needs of all pupils. This means there are occasions when some pupils find their work too easy and so coast while others struggle with tasks that are too hard. In a few lessons, pupils are too passive because teachers talk for too long. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to check how much pupils know. Marking, along with other feedback that tells pupils how they can make their work better, is improving, although it is not yet consistently good across the school. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum supports aspects of pupils' personal development well. For example, lively assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to think about their emotions, moral choices and the needs of others. The English curriculum meets pupils' needs well. The mathematics curriculum does not always engage learners well or address relative weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. The many sports and other clubs and educational visits broaden horizons and add to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Staff use their detailed knowledge of each child well to provide a good standard of pastoral care. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive sensitive support that ensures they take full part in school life. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is effective and ensures they settle quickly into the school's routines, gain confidence and behave well. The needs of pupils who do not speak English at home as their first language are carefully assessed and their effective programmes of support ensure they rapidly develop skills in the language and take full part in the life of the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The rigorous monitoring and evaluation by most leaders provide the school with a largely accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. The school's recent gains show that improvement plans are mostly effective. However, this is not a consistent picture and the checks carried out by a small minority of subject leaders are

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not always robust enough to pinpoint quickly and accurately where improvements need to be made. Their improvement plans are not always effective and so they are not yet taking full responsibility for attainment and progress in their subjects.

The school's priority to improve teaching is appropriate and its plans are proving effective. For example, training has significantly sharpened the skills of staff when they teach reading and writing so that pupils' progress in English is quickly improving. The school's system for regularly checking each pupil's progress towards their challenging targets is rigorous. If any pupil's progress slows, the school quickly provides them with effective additional support, often on an individual level, so that they can catch up missed work. Governors work hard on behalf of the school. They are not afraid to challenge the school over its standards and they are beginning to check its performance against challenging goals.

The many links with other schools and agencies promote pupil's welfare and learning well. For example, following concerns about the behaviour of a small group of pupils who were at risk of exclusion, the school arranged for these pupils to have help from outside experts to manage their behaviour. This has proved successful; these pupils no longer interrupt lessons and are now making better progress. Child protection procedures are robust and the checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with children and pupils are most rigorous. The school is thoroughly committed to equal opportunities. The inconsistencies in the progress of boys and girls mean that some policies are not yet entirely effective and that this area of the school's work is no better than satisfactory. The school has an evaluated its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context thoroughly and its promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Its work has a positive impact in school, which is a happy and harmonious community. It is supporting local people well in many ways. For example, recently it provided classes for adults to improve their qualifications. Its links with communities overseas are limited.

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

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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 make best progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing because of the good support they receive from adults in these areas of learning. The well-managed induction arrangements ensure children settle quickly into the routines of school. They enjoy their learning and behave well. They readily share apparatus and are keen to help each other and make good strides in their personal development. Children are well cared for and parents receive regular feedback on their child's progress. Teaching is satisfactory. Children's accelerating progress in reading and writing shows that teaching is improving. Children find lessons interesting and engaging. For example, they really enjoyed testing their coordination skills when they used tweezers to pick up small objects. Occasionally teaching does not provide sufficient challenge to stretch each child, for example when the children spend too long on the carpet listening to the teacher. Learning indoors is better than it is outdoors because planning for indoor activities is more detailed than the planning for outdoor activities. This means that children do not always get enough guidance about what they need to do outdoors and their progress here is sometimes slow. Leadership is satisfactory. Recent training has improved the use of assessment to help staff to plan accurately children's next steps. Parents are pleased with the quality of education provided. One wrote, 'I am really pleased with her progress in Reception and in particular with her writing and the way she recognises words.'

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Nearly all parents are very pleased with the standards of education the school provides. One parent summarised the views of many others writing, 'Bird's Bush is a fantastic school. My child is always eager to attend. The staff are always enthusiastic and helpful.' The school works hard to keep parents and carers informed about school life, and communication is good. Carers of pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable receive good support from the school. The school is eager to hear about

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parents' concerns, and inspectors found that their worries are mostly resolved to their satisfaction. Several parents commented that they were concerned about their child's progress in mathematics. Inspectors found that progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall but that it is not improving as quickly as it is in English. A minority of parents raised concerns about standards of behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be good throughout the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bird's Bush 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 308 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	59	33	40	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	62	30	37	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	54	34	41	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	45	37	45	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	41	50	37	45	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	50	34	41	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	48	39	48	3	4	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)	32	39	42	51	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	41	42	51	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	28	46	56	7	9	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	29	48	59	7	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	38	46	39	48	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	48	36	40	1	1	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.



24 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bird's Bush Primary School, Tamworth, B77 2NE

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I was very impressed with your generous support for the hospital charity during 'Silly Socks' day. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think that Bird's Bush is a satisfactory school and that it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

You make a satisfactory start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Satisfactory teaching helps you make satisfactory progress in your lessons.

Standards of attainment are average in English, mathematics and science.

You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.

Your behaviour is good.

You have good relationships with your teachers and you try hard for them.

The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.

Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.

The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

Make sure teachers keep you all working hard so that you make better progress.

Provide the headteacher with plenty of help from the other leaders to improve your learning in different subjects.

Plan mathematics lessons that you find exciting and give you more practice in solving mathematics puzzles.

You can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, attending regularly and behaving well.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector

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