

Wychall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132075
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	341284
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Chris Leigh
Headteacher	Mrs Therese Allen
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons involving 15 teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, leaders and managers, teachers, pupils and informally with parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including policies and procedures regarding safeguarding, equal opportunities and discrimination, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and reports from the school improvement partner. They also analysed questionnaires completed by pupils in Years 3 to 6, staff and 61 parents and carers.

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

- how effectively the school has assimilated the large numbers of pupils who have joined in the recent past and enabled them to make progress
- the provision for and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality of care, support and guidance, particularly for those pupils who have significant barriers to their learning.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average and a majority of pupils are White British. The rest represent a wide range of ethnic groups, with none being dominant though the largest of these groups is Black pupils of African origin. About half of the pupils of non-White British origin speak English as an additional language, though few of these are at an early stage of learning English. A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average and most of these have moderate learning or emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The school has increased in size by almost 50% over the last two years, due to a new estate of social housing being built nearby. This has meant an increase in the numbers of staff and only one-third of the current teachers were in the school at the last inspection. The school has a significantly higher than average number of pupils who attend for only a short period of their education due to the mobility of their parents or carers.

There is a children's centre on the same site that provides childcare and a wide range of family services, and this is managed by the school, though the registration for childcare is recent and Ofsted did not require this team to inspect that facility. There is also after-school provision on site, which is managed independently and 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has coped extremely well with the difficulties caused by the influx of pupils over the last two years and is providing a good education for all its diverse groups. Much of the reason for this success is the determination of the headteacher to provide the best for all and this ambition has been communicated very well to all the staff, who share her determination. Parents recognise this, saying that staff often go the extra mile to support both their children and themselves.

The result of this shared commitment is outstanding care, guidance and support. All children and their circumstances are extremely well known and significant barriers to learning are regularly overcome through the staff's support. Alfie, a labradoodle, spends every day in school and makes a considerable contribution to this. For instance, a child who did not wish to come to school was happy to do so if they could walk Alfie to school. He spends much of his time with the excellent nurture group, where some pupils often find it easier to relate to him than adults. The school makes extremely good use of a wide range of support and advice from external agencies to add to what they can offer themselves. At the heart of the school's ethos is the importance of equality of opportunity. Rigorous monitoring is carried out of the performance of all individuals and groups, leading to systems which ensure that all can play an equal role in the school. The success of tackling discrimination is exemplified by the very few racial incidents, which are all very minor in scale. As a pupil put it, 'We're all different but all human - inside we're all the same.'

Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is outstanding. For instance, pupils decided that more computers were needed. They consulted staff and pupils and drew up a specification of need; researched possible products and selected a short list; interviewed potential suppliers and made their decision. They then presented their case to governors, who were convinced and provided the necessary finance. The end result was seen being put to very good use during the inspection. Pupils are also concerned with the welfare of those less fortunate than themselves, for example organising a fair to supply a school in Ghana with resources and help them with a fresh water supply.

Children enter the school with low levels of skills and knowledge for their age. They make good progress through the school and pupils' attainment is improving so that it is broadly average by the time they leave. This good progress is due to good teaching, almost all of which is good or better. Both progress and the quality of teaching are improving well. The school is working hard to improve pupils' attainment and progress still further as the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are not yet as they would want them. For example, many pupils do not have sufficient vocabulary to make their writing lively and interesting and many younger pupils do not speak or write in full sentences.

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Untidy presentation too often leads to writing losing its impact. Pupils are set very clear goals for improvement in writing, but the next steps for learning set in mathematics are not sufficiently precisely matched to pupils' individual needs. Also, pupils do not have a sufficient instant recall of their number facts to make better progress in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have very clear plans made for their learning and are supported well so make the same progress as their classmates, some doing exceptionally well.

The school has rigorous procedures to evaluate its effectiveness, involving staff at all levels and governors. Together, they have built an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have good plans to address the latter. Pupils are involved in this process, having created their own portion of the school development plan, which they monitor. For instance, in analysis of their questionnaires, they said that they sometimes have to spend too long on the carpet. This has been addressed and time is now used well. Bearing in mind the success of the school in coping with the recent difficulties, it is in a good position to continue its upward momentum. A parent or carer put it well, saying, 'I am extremely pleased with the progress my child is making and the consistent effort put in by all staff to make her experience of school a good one.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and rate of progress in writing by:
 - putting in place a structured programme to develop their vocabulary
 - encouraging them, from the earliest stages in the school, to speak and write in full sentences
 - improving pupils' skills of presentation.
- Improve pupils' attainment and rate of progress in mathematics by:
 - setting precise goals for their next steps in learning that match more closely their individual needs
 - ensuring that pupils develop their skills of instant recall of number facts.

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

Learning in lessons is typified by enthusiasm and enjoyment. As one of many positive comments from parents or carers put it, 'My child thinks his lessons are 'cool' and his learning has been encouraged and supported in a way that has intensified his enthusiasm and enabled him to recognise his responsibility for the process and his own behaviour.' Even at this late stage in the term, pupils were working keenly and wanted to complete their tasks. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to discuss and share their work, which helps them to embed their learning and increase their understanding. They cooperate well and are considerate of the needs of others.

Particularly impressive is the way that pupils who have joined the school late fit in and make good progress. For instance, one who had only been in the school for a few days

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was observed working keenly in a group. The performance of different ethnic groups is monitored very closely and any potential differences in performance are quickly dealt with so that pupils make the same good progress.

Pupils are developing well into responsible and informed young people, who have a keen sense of their place in society and their responsibilities towards it. A number of parents commented on how well they are being prepared for the next stage in their education. They are given considerable responsibility and rise to this well, taking opportunities to plan, cost and order the food for the Year 5 camping trip for example. They know that too little food ordered means they go hungry! Attendance declined considerably last year but has improved this year and is broadly average overall. Some families, new to the school, did not initially value the education provided for their children sufficiently but the school has met with a good level of success in resolving this.

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	3
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	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching observed during the inspection was almost consistently good or better, with even the very few lessons which were satisfactory having many strong features. Some

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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outstanding teaching was seen. This consistency has been achieved through hard work and rigorous monitoring and the determination of all staff to improve and move forward. Teachers use assessment particularly well to monitor the progress of individuals and groups in their classes and as a parent or carer said, 'Any issues have been identified quickly and support has been given promptly which has prevented any long-term falling behind.' Teachers are also very good at ensuring that pupils can evaluate the effectiveness of their learning in lessons by having a clear list of what they should have learnt and making time for pupils to check their learning against this list. Teachers' marking is positive and encouraging and often guides pupils to the next steps in their learning. However, these are not used consistently and are not always linked to pupils' individual targets for learning. These targets are precise in writing, but are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' prior attainment in mathematics. Pupils are also given few opportunities to respond to teachers' marking.

The relatively recent topic approach to the curriculum has been implemented well and ensures that learning is interesting and relevant for the pupils. Planning ensures that this approach enables pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. For instance, extended writing is often found in topic books. There are many enrichment activities both in and out of school, including day and residential visits, with a high take-up of after-school clubs. The school recognises that further work is required to match the curriculum fully to the wide range of pupils' learning needs.

'The headteacher and staff have children at the heart of everything': so said a parent or carer and this exemplifies well the reasons for the high quality of care, guidance and support. The school's procedures are extremely thorough and the support mechanisms put in place for potentially vulnerable pupils are wide-ranging and exceptionally effective.

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?

The headteacher's ambition for the school has been clearly communicated to all. This was evidenced in the responses to the staff questionnaires, where staff at all levels said that they feel involved in what the school is trying to achieve, the very large majority strongly agreeing with this statement. Governors are fully supportive of this ambition and challenge the school very well. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met,

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particularly those relating to health and safety and safeguarding. Procedures for these aspects are rigorous and staff are very quick to act when it comes to their attention that a child needs protecting.

Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's effectiveness and all work tirelessly to ensure the success of every pupil. The elimination of discrimination is extremely effective, particularly bearing in mind the very diverse groups of pupils who have joined the school in the last two years. Pupils were observed playing and working very happily together with no regard for difference, though they are very aware of and celebrate the variety of cultures in the school. The promotion of community cohesion is good due to a good understanding of the school's context within its local community. Although there is evidence of promotion of aspects of the wider community, the school recognises that there is a need to extend provision to cover the international dimension.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes from very low starting points, so they are still working at significantly below average levels when they start in Year 1. There is a good emphasis on personal and social skills and speaking and listening in the early stages, though opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage children to speak in full sentences. Relationships are strong and there is a happy, industrious atmosphere in the classrooms. Children are encouraged to be inquisitive and develop independence and skills for the future.

All adults have good knowledge of the needs of children of this age and planning for

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their learning is good. The classrooms are bright, welcoming and very well organised and equipped, and the outside area is used well to promote progress in all areas of learning. Children's welfare has a high priority and detailed risk assessments are routinely carried out. Good records are kept of children's progress and the next steps for their learning are identified. These records show that improving children's attainment in early mathematics, particularly calculation, is a priority.

The leader has created a good team spirit, where all are committed to the focus of all children making good progress. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified and an action plan drawn up, which is reviewed each term. Links with parents are good and there is an effective induction process into the Nursery as well as exceptionally well-planned transition between Nursery and Reception.

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

All parents and carers spoken to and the very large majority of those who returned questionnaires were very positive about the school. Many commented on the care and support that the school offers, not just to their children, but to families as well. Several also commented on how well their children, who have joined the school in later classes, have settled and how much they enjoy this school compared with their last. There were very few negative questionnaires, where parents looked to have issues with many aspects of the school's work, and these were far from typical. Apart from this, there was only one other concern raised by more than one parent and this was only raised by a few. This was the security of the site and in particular that one of the security gates was broken or not kept locked. During the inspection, all gates were found to be in full working order and locked at all appropriate times.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wychall 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 366 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	61	20	33	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	64	18	30	1	2	3	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	56	23	38	3	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	49	25	41	3	5	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	36	59	21	34	1	2	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	59	19	31	3	5	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	48	26	43	3	5	1	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)	28	46	24	39	3	5	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	48	26	43	1	2	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	59	19	31	2	3	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	44	27	44	2	3	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	41	67	16	26	0	0	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	67	15	25	1	2	3	5

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wychall Primary School, Birmingham, B31 3EH

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting with you, talking to you and seeing how hard you work. You told us that you really enjoy school and that your lessons are interesting.

We judge yours to be a good school and these are some of the best things we found about it.

All adults look after you and care for you extremely well and this means that you feel very safe in school.

You make a terrific contribution to the smooth running of the school, for instance we really enjoyed hearing about and reading of how you bought computers.

The school has worked really hard to make sure that all of you can have the same opportunities and that all of you get on well together. As you told us, you are all the same inside even if you look different.

The school makes excellent use of outside organisations to help take care of you and provide extra opportunities for you.

You are making good progress through the school because you are being taught well. Your headteacher, staff and governors have good plans to make your school even better.

There are just two things we would like your school to improve.

To improve your writing, which also needs to be neater, and you need to improve your vocabulary and make sure you always use full sentences when you are speaking or writing.

To make sure that the targets you have in mathematics are precise enough and that you always know your number facts quickly enough to help you.

I know you will continue to work hard and you can help your teachers by always writing neatly, thinking about speaking in full sentences and making a determined effort to learn your number facts. With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie

Lead inspector

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