

County Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104189
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	355540
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2010
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaun Coughlan
Headteacher	Dawn Herriott
Date of previous school inspection	22 October 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons led by eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and the representatives of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning documents, assessment data, samples of pupils' work, the school's records of monitoring of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 55 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from school staff and pupils.

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

- Whether pupils' progress throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 2, is being accelerated quickly enough.
- If all leaders and members of the governing body are sufficiently ambitious to make key improvements rapidly
- Are higher attainers, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and boys taught well enough to improve their achievement?
- Is the use of data derived from assessment effective in raising attainment?

Information about the school

County Bridge is similar in size to most primary schools. The pupils come from a number of different ethnic groups, although the largest group is White British. More pupils speak English as an additional language than is usually found. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. Many of these have some form of learning difficulty or autism. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and Reception classes. Some pupils, including those from Nursery and Reception, attend another local primary school for before-school and after-school provision. This was not inspected. The school has Healthy School status. The headteacher has been in post for one year. There have been a number of staff changes for this school year, which has led to the creation of a new senior leadership team.

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

County Bridge Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. They make satisfactory progress and their attainment is broadly average when they leave school. Both progress and attainment are rising, largely due to improvements in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory. The improved use of assessment data to identify patterns of achievement and to focus the necessary support for different groups of pupils is also significant in this. The quality of care, guidance and support is good, which has led to pupils' calm and mature behaviour, above average attendance and their secure knowledge of how to keep safe.

During the last year, the school has benefited from the expert leadership of the headteacher. Her high expectations, well-expressed ambitions for the future of the school and the clear direction she provides have ensured that any inadequate features of the school have been eliminated. Staff and members of the governing body share her agenda for improvement, know how well the school is performing and are involved appropriately in school self-evaluation and improvement planning. The new staff have joined the staff team with confidence and already show a number of good features in their work.

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and in some sessions better. Where the pupils are given challenging work and are allowed to manage their own learning, progress is accelerated well. This was observed in Key Stage 2 as much as elsewhere in the school. Generally, boys show the same good enjoyment and interest in lessons as the girls and their progress is similar. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress because their work is planned carefully to help them take the next essential step. Although higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, school leaders recognise that more pupils than at present should reach the higher levels in their work and that the challenge provided for them is not consistent in all years and lessons. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

The school has improved its system of assessment and the use made of the data it produces. The tracking of pupils' progress is now more frequent than in the past and is also more robust. In most lessons, the skills and knowledge to be learned are shared clearly with pupils, although opportunities for them to talk together about how well they are learning are less common. The marking of pupils' work is similarly inconsistent. There is some good quality marking, especially in English, but there are also examples where little information is shared with pupils about how well they are progressing or about the next steps in their learning.

The school has developed good partnerships with other schools, groups and agencies to enable it to provide additional experiences for the pupils. The link with a Canadian school is such an example. This link also contributes to the satisfactory promotion of community

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cohesion, although partnerships with communities in other parts of the United Kingdom are relatively low key.

After a period since the previous inspection when pupils' achievement declined, the school is now more successfully making sure pupils' learning and progress are secure. It has made satisfactory improvement in recent years and has the necessary capacity to improve further. This capacity is not yet good because some staff are new to their posts and there has not been enough time for every improvement to show its full effect in accelerating progress and raising attainment further. Nevertheless, the will to improve is clearly established among all staff and the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment for higher attaining pupils by providing consistently greater challenge through:
 - making sure lesson plans always identify the specific skills and knowledge to be learned by each ability group
 - checking that the higher attainers are set work to challenge and extend their thinking, questioning and reasoning.
- Promote more rapid progress by:
 - bringing greater consistency in the use of assessment to support learning across different subjects
 - ensuring pupils have ample opportunity in lessons to talk together about the successes and difficulties in their learning
 - using the marking of pupils' work to identify what has been learned successfully and what is the next step towards their targets.
- Strengthen the promotion of community cohesion by enhancing partnerships between pupils and people of different communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge well below those levels expected of children of that age. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make satisfactory progress. This continues into Years 1 and 2 and by the time pupils are seven they reach average levels in their work, as shown in their writing and mathematics books. Progress has accelerated recently in Years 3 to 6. In recent years pupils made particularly rapid progress in Year 6, which has been maintained this year. By the time they leave for secondary school, they are satisfactorily prepared for the work to come.

Pupils were seen to make good progress in a number of lessons throughout the school. Occasionally, though, progress is less brisk because it is not always clear exactly what is to be learned and at what pace; this is particularly the case among the higher attainers. Planning for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more precise in this, which assists these pupils to make steady progress towards their targets. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed counting in a set sequence of numbers around the circle so that the pupil following the count of nine had to sit. It was noticeable in this

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session that the higher attainers were planning ahead. They could be observed mentally tallying where the count of nine was likely to occur and adjusting their own counting for greatest effect. Progress in this activity was good for all pupils because the challenge for the higher attainers was enjoyed by the other pupils too.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The fostering of moral and social development is secure and well established, so that pupils know how to behave, develop good relationships and respond well to the staff. While there are some effective opportunities for pupils to find out more about, and to take part in, activities related to their own community, there is not yet enough emphasis on learning about different communities and cultures found in the United Kingdom today.

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of learning is satisfactory and improving. This is because the school is now providing greater consistency in the quality of teaching through the school. Senior leaders know their task of improvement is not yet complete. In some lessons, the pace of work is not brisk enough and more could be packed into the time, especially to make greater demands of the higher attainers. In others, pupils have greater challenge and are expected to work quickly. Thus, in a lesson observed in Year 1, pupils were enthusiastic to gather the necessary data to construct a block graph of favourite fruit. In much of the lesson, pupils were given responsibility to manage their own learning by working

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independently and collaboratively. They enjoyed this approach to learning and made good progress because the expectations of their work, behaviour and response were all high.

The curriculum provides the necessary opportunities for learning across the different subjects. Provision in information and communication technology has been improved well and there is now more, and effective, use of computers across the curriculum. Music has a high profile in the school and pupils achieve well, as seen when they sang an African song in assembly. At present, the curriculum is not fully developed to encourage pupils' creativity and initiative in learning, although provision for their personal, social and health education is strong.

In addition to the effective work to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff work well to encourage vulnerable pupils and those with barriers to learning to succeed. Virtually all pupils enjoy their time in school and are eager to please their teachers and to behave well. As a result of good care, guidance and support, outcomes in pupils' personal development are at least satisfactory and, in some cases, better.

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?

School self-evaluation has been improved considerably over the last year. The monitoring and evaluation of provision and achievement are now shared more equally across the leadership team, so the staff as a whole have a more realistic view of the school's performance. This extends to members of the governing body who are supportive, involved in many school events and have a reliable view of the school's work. As some leaders and members of the governing body are relatively new, they have yet to develop a fully probing approach to checking strengths and weaknesses although this is compensated for by the rigorous approach of the headteacher and other leaders. The drive and ambition of all staff to make the necessary improvements have been consolidated successfully during this time of staff change and there is successful teamwork to bring more advances.

The school's good partnerships with local schools and groups are at the root of its effective care, guidance and support. The partnership with parents and carers is being strengthened, particularly through invitations for them to join special events during the school day. Partnerships with outside groups and with parents and carers are enabling the school to safeguard pupils well. Staff and members of the governing body ensure that procedures for safeguarding meet and exceed the requirement to be rigorous and robust. Likewise, the promotion of community cohesion benefits from the school's partnerships

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with others, though it is at present satisfactory rather than good because links with those outside the local community are not fully developed. Links overseas are stronger.

The school ensures satisfactory equality of opportunity. Staff do not tolerate discrimination and any issues are dealt with firmly and effectively. School leaders and members of the governing body realise that to raise equality of opportunity to good, progress and attainment should be raised consistently through the school for all groups of pupils, including the high attainers.

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	3
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
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

As in the school as a whole, there have been changes to staffing and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage this year. Because there have only been a few weeks for the new leadership to influence improvement, the outcome of work to develop provision further is not yet complete. However, past strengths of provision have been sustained and the children in both Nursery and Reception classes have settled happily to this year's learning.

All staff ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to work and play both indoors and out and to make choices of the activities to follow. Children have the necessary opportunities to develop independence and confidence away from adults. For example, during their autumn walk, nursery children enjoyed shuffling through the leaves in the wood, running down the slopes and hiding from the adults. For them, there were risks in this adventure. For the adults, the activities were all safe as, unrecognised by the children, they were observing the activities from a distance, ready to intervene if necessary. The welfare of children is promoted well, as seen in the activities to nurture the youngest children in the Nursery.

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There are some useful occasions when learning is guided by the staff and children are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills directly. This is not always frequent enough, especially in the Reception class. On these occasions, staff tend to observe, assess and record the learning that is taking place but do not join in enough. The children make satisfactory progress at present and are on course to join Year 1 with the necessary range of skills and knowledge in all six areas of learning.

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

Although the level of response was lower than the average for primary schools, parents and carers hold very positive views of the school. There was no pattern in the very few concerns shared in the responses to the questionnaire. Positive comments focused on the effective leadership of the headteacher and the school's provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspection team judges that the headteacher is a very capable leader and that the care, guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective in helping them progress appropriately.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at County Bridge 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.

Inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	53	26	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	62	20	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	47	28	51	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	53	25	45	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	44	29	53	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	51	27	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	36	32	58	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	33	33	60	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	42	30	55	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	44	28	51	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	29	35	64	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	35	35	64	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	56	22	40	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



22 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of County Bridge Primary School, Walsall, WS2 0DH

We enjoyed visiting your school recently because you gave us a warm welcome and willingly helped us find out about it. We have written about your school in our report. In it we write that it is providing you with a satisfactory education. We also write about some good things in the school and three areas for improvement.

We were pleased to see that you behave well, enjoy being in school and work hard. You are making the necessary progress and by the time you leave school most of you reach the expected levels in your work.

It was obvious when we visited many of your lessons that you have fun. You are improving your computer skills and do well in music. Your singing in assembly was joyful. Your books show your writing and mathematics skills are getting better.

We know your headteacher and other staff want you to learn even more successfully. To help you, we have suggested that they:

- make sure you are all challenged by your work, especially the more able among you
- give you more opportunities to talk and write about how well you are learning
- develop more links with people in other parts of the United Kingdom to help you learn about different cultures and communities.

To assist your teachers to make these improvements you can start by talking to them about the difficult and easy things in your work.

Best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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