

Ladypool Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103265
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355349
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey HMI

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	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mumtaz Mohammed
Headteacher	Liz Manley
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 20 lessons and 18 teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, groups of pupils, parents, carers, leaders at all levels, the inclusion coordinator and Early Years Foundation Stage leaders. They observed the school's work, looked at the school development plan, assessment information, school and local authority monitoring information, lesson plans and school policies. They analysed 176 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with questionnaires from staff and a representative sample of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is pupil attainment securely at least average, particularly in writing and are the majority of pupils making good progress?
- Are all adults using assessments to plan lessons which are well matched to pupils' needs and are pupils clear about what they need to do to improve?
- Do procedures ensure that the governing body is involved well in school improvement and self-evaluation and particularly, are governors ensuring that measures to promote community cohesion are having a positive impact on pupil outcomes?
- Have leaders successfully implemented the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework so that all children now make a good start to school?

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds with those from Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritages forming the biggest groups. A very few come from a wide range of other heritages. English is spoken as an additional language by most pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has achieved an International School Award. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staffing, including the leadership. Seven new members of staff have been appointed, including two assistant headteachers, and leadership responsibilities have been reorganised.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. Its overall effectiveness is now good.

Success has been ensured because school leaders, staff and the governing body have worked together highly effectively to drive rapid improvements to the quality of provision and, as a consequence, improve attainment for all pupils at Ladypool Primary School. From low starting points when they join the school, all pupils progress well so that by the time they leave Year 6 their attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. In English, the good leadership of initiatives to improve pupils' writing skills, an issue at the last inspection, have been so well focused and successful that they have become a strength. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, also a previous issue, has been transformed so that children are now on track to achieve levels of knowledge and skills expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. This good start is being built on with good teaching and a stimulating curriculum as pupils progress through school, indicating a further rise in attainment. While most teaching is now good and some outstanding teaching was seen, a few instances remain where the progress of some pupils slows. This is because, for example, work is not matched precisely enough to their diverse needs for them to make good progress or, for some, to enable them to reach the higher levels of which they are capable. For some pupils, the strategies needed to think about and solve problems, or to explain their ideas clearly, remain underdeveloped.

The school provides a positive and welcoming environment. Staff form strong and trusting relationships with pupils and therefore pupils feel safe, develop good attitudes to learning and behave well. They are proud to take on responsibilities, such as membership of the school council, and say they would welcome even more of these opportunities. They show empathy and are thoughtful of others, for example, in taking the lead in raising funds for those affected by flooding in Pakistan and in their ability to reflect on important issues such as child poverty. Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate this through their broadly average but improved levels of attendance. They particularly enjoy the many first-hand experiences they are offered through, for example, educational visits to the theatre and science investigations in the classroom.

Leadership has been strengthened. School self-evaluation is rigorous. Leaders at all levels, the governing body and staff have an accurate understanding of the school's success so far and what they need to do to play their part in ensuring attainment continues to rise and that all pupils do as well as they can. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and quicken and bring consistency to the rate at which pupils make progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers match work to pupils' needs so that all are suitably challenged to do as well as they can, particularly the most able
 - ensuring that the best teaching practice is adopted consistently across the school
 - developing pupils' thinking skills so that they can solve problems and communicate their ideas clearly
 - extending and embedding innovative measures to encourage all parents, carers and pupils of the importance of regular attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Observations by inspectors and other evidence presented by the school show that attainment is average. Additional intervention programmes provided for pupils who find learning more difficult and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that they also do well. The school demonstrates its commitment to equal opportunities by ensuring that where there are differences in the performances of groups, additional interventions are put in place or the curriculum is modified to ensure they are closed quickly. This is seen, for example, in the reducing gap between boys and girls, and in the rising attainment of boys with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage often outperform their peers nationally.

In the majority of lessons, pupils were observed to be making good progress and in some lessons their progress was outstanding. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils were excited by the challenge to create a multimedia book for younger children. They progressed rapidly with their information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy skills because the teacher and teaching assistant intervened throughout the lesson with questions to test their understanding and to challenge them to move on to the next step of learning. Occasionally, progress is much slower. For example, in one lesson the majority of pupils were given a task to demonstrate their knowledge of number bonds to ten. Some found it easy and waited too long to be moved on to the next challenge; others had to wait for their misconceptions to be addressed.

Pupils acquire a range of personal and social skills that help them to develop into rounded individuals. The school cultivates mutual respect and cooperation and promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and initiatives to promote community cohesion have resulted in a strengthening of their ability to reflect and comment on their place in a multicultural and multi-faith society. They demonstrate a good knowledge of how to keep healthy and embrace sporting opportunities with enthusiasm. A very high proportion tuck into the healthy school lunches on offer. Their growing confidence with new technologies and ability to apply their basic skills together ensure that they are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

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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	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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is much improved and is now good. The skills of support assistants are mostly well developed and used. Lesson planning is detailed and shows clear success criteria, though on a few occasions these are not well enough differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. In the majority of lessons, expectations are high and teachers are confident to use a range of teaching styles and activities to sustain pupils' concentration and motivation, including the effective use of ICT. In the best lessons, skilful questioning is used throughout to give additional challenge, gauge understanding and ensure that misconceptions are cleared up swiftly and teaching plans modified to meet individual needs. Excellent examples of feedback to help pupils improve their work were seen but such practices are not consistently applied.

The good curriculum includes cross-curricular topic themes which are made more relevant because pupils are involved in making choices about what they want to learn. There is a strong focus on the cross-curricular use of literacy skills, especially in writing, which has helped to ensure considerable improvements, as has the introduction of a more rigorous approach to teaching the sounds that letters make. Sometimes pupils find it difficult to think through problems or explain their ideas and this presents a barrier to learning, particularly in terms of their being able to attain the highest grades. Some teachers are beginning to address this successfully. In one outstanding lesson, drama was used to bring learning alive and help pupils develop expressive language to describe emotions.

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However, a consistent approach is not applied across the school. Partnerships and the use of subject specialists bring additional enrichment to the curriculum, particularly in the creative arts and sports. However, opportunities are missed, for example, to pursue partnerships which extend the provision made for the more-able or gifted and talented pupils or to learn a modern foreign language. A good range of clubs are well attended by all groups in school. The school hosts the first Asian-led Badgers group in the West Midlands.

At the heart of the school's work lies the removal of barriers to learning and establishing an environment in which all pupils feel confident they can succeed. Strong links with parents and carers, and effective partnerships with a range of agencies, help to achieve this. Well-being is a high priority and vigilant systems ensure that the potentially vulnerable are identified quickly and a range of successful interventions put in place. Transition arrangements are well developed and include effective links with the local secondary school.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, provide a strong strategic steer. Despite staff changes and the reorganisation of roles, the drive for improvement is widely shared and motivation is high. Staff work closely in teams to share support, professional development and best practice and this coaching approach has resulted in good improvements to the quality of teaching, curriculum and care. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that the best practice is consistently applied. Improvement planning is extremely detailed, although it occasionally lacks sharp identification of what improvements will look like for pupils or how they will be measured. A wealth of information is collected about how well pupils are doing and this is used effectively to target resources.

Members of the governing body are ardent supporters of the school and make a valuable contribution to its work. They are highly committed to carrying out their statutory duties and are now more able to play their part in setting a strategic course for the future. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding practice was good. It includes quality training and high levels of vigilance in monitoring the application of policies and procedures. Effective policies for ensuring equality of opportunity are well applied and their impact seen in the good outcomes for all groups of pupils. The school knows its context well and exhibits examples of good practice in the promotion of community cohesion, for example, in joining with families to celebrate International Food Day. It enjoys established links, joint

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activities and exchanges with a contrasting school from a rural area in England and international links are developing well. Parents and carers are well informed and involved in the life of the school. A great deal has been achieved since the last inspection and the school offers good value for money.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are well cared for and thrive in this exciting environment. The many and varied activities ensure that children make good progress and achieve well. Children's knowledge and skills are lower than expected on entry to Nursery. Their communication, language and literacy, number and personal skills are particularly low. Children gain a wide experience of the six areas of learning because their needs are carefully assessed and their progress tracked very closely. Any gaps in learning are quickly identified and addressed. When they leave Reception, an increasing number of children are on target to catch up with their peers nationally.

Children become confident and develop a range of skills that equip them well for the future. They are successfully encouraged to be independent and, for example, can organise themselves with coats and wellingtons. They know how to take turns and handle equipment with care. They are taught to keep themselves safe and healthy, for example, by regular hand washing and tucking in to healthy snacks. Children concentrate well when working in a group with an adult or at a task on their own. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, though sometimes opportunities are missed when children are at play to intervene with well-chosen questions to further promote learning. The opportunities now offered in the newly-created outdoor classroom offer the same excitement, variety and freedom for children to explore and discover as they enjoy

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indoors. A few children remain reluctant to go out and enjoy its full learning potential in all weathers.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage have made a strong contribution to driving the transformation of its effectiveness from inadequate to good since the last inspection. Under the guidance of two leading practitioners the environment is well organised, vibrant and safe. Leaders model their high expectations continually and have ensured that teaching is much improved, though some inconsistencies remain. Adults are quick to spot potential barriers to learning and put support in place to ensure everyone is included. Strategies to develop thinking skills are well embedded here and resources well directed. Parents and carers, quite rightly, value highly the care that is taken to ensure children are happy and enjoying school life.

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

A larger number of parents and carers than expected responded to the questionnaire. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded are happy with their children's experience and express positive views on all aspects of the school. A very few parents expressed their concern that their views are not listened to, that their children do not make enough progress or that they are not well enough prepared for the next stage of their education. Inspection findings confirmed good improvements in these areas.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ladypool 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 176 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 480 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	99	56	72	41	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	101	57	72	41	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	88	50	80	45	5	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	77	44	82	47	10	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	87	49	78	44	6	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	42	87	49	6	3	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	74	42	99	56	2	1	1	1
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)	69	39	82	47	8	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	38	93	53	8	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	75	43	85	48	6	3	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	40	89	51	7	4	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	72	41	82	47	4	2	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	45	90	51	3	2	2	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ladypool Primary School, Birmingham, B11 1QT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school.

We think Ladypool Primary is now a good school. The teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and to plan exciting activities for you to do. As a result, you make good progress in your learning and your attainment is similar to that of pupils in most schools. The youngest children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress. Those of you who find work more difficult get good support so that you can do well too.

You told us that the school is a very happy place. You also said that teachers look after you well so that there is always someone there for you if you have worries or concerns. We were very impressed with how you behave and get on with each other. You concentrate well on your work and try hard to do your best.

The school is as good as it is because the governors and staff are always checking how well it is doing. They want the best for all of you and are always looking for ways to make it even better. That is why we have asked them to:

- make sure teachers always give you work which is at the right level to help you do as well as you can
- make sure all the teaching is as good as the best teaching in the school
- help you to think carefully, solve problems and explain your ideas clearly
- work even more closely with your parents and carers to make sure that you don't miss school.

You can help by coming to school regularly, working hard and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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