

Smith's Wood Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104083
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	355518
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2011
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Hendry
Headteacher	John Talbot
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kingfisher Drive Smith's Wood, Birmingham B36 0SZ
Telephone number	0121 7798050
Fax number	0121 7793038
Email address	office@smithswoodpri.solihull.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors, who observed 32 lessons taught by 19 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress, documents relating to the curriculum, records of checks on teaching and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils. They also analysed responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 53 parents and carers.

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

- To what extent have the monitoring of teaching and the subsequent actions taken by the school's leaders proved successful in raising achievement?
- How well does the school support pupils with special educational needs and/disabilities who have difficulty controlling their behaviour?
- To what extent are the actions taken to improve attendance proving effective?

Information about the school

This very large primary school opened in September 2009 after the amalgamation of two existing schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. Most pupils come from a White British background with small numbers coming from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, a relatively large number of whom have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A relatively high proportion of pupils are in the care of the local authority. The governing body runs daily breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved rapidly since it was opened, under the strong leadership of the headteacher. Accurate self-evaluation has allowed the school's senior leaders, including the governing body, to quickly identify weaknesses in provision. Decisive actions have been taken to rectify them. As a result, attainment, attendance, behaviour, progress and the quality of teaching have all improved and this clearly demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Teachers now have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set demanding tasks for them. Most groups make good progress. They join the school with low levels of attainment and leave with results that are broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make varying progress, depending on their level of need. Those with the greatest need (who have statements or are at 'school action plus') are supported intensively and make good progress as a result. The largest group ('school action') who are usually supported in class by teaching assistants, make satisfactory progress. This is because, when they find tasks challenging, teaching assistants too often do the work for them in order that they can keep up with the rest of the class.

Themes are used well to link topics across the curriculum in Years 1 to 6. This makes learning relevant and gives pupils plenty of opportunities to practise and improve their basic skills. The same approach is not used as effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and as a result progress for these children is satisfactory rather than good. There have been notable improvements in some areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage where managers have taken concerted actions. However, improvements in other areas have stalled as they have not been the focus for development.

Most aspects of pupils' personal development are as good as their academic progress. The school has an ethos of firm but fair discipline within a caring and supportive framework that is implemented consistently by all staff. As a result, pupils behave well and have great confidence in their teachers to act on any concerns they have. The outstanding range of outdoor fitness and play equipment is much appreciated by pupils and plays a good role in encouraging them to stay fit and healthy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are supported on 'school action' progress as rapidly as other groups by:
 - providing them with tasks that are not too difficult for them tackle independently
 - ensuring that teaching assistants provide sufficient time and opportunities for pupils to do the work themselves.

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- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make at least good progress by:
 - making greater use of themes to link areas of learning, so that activities are more relevant and provide greater opportunities to learn and apply a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding
 - targeting for improvement those areas of learning that have not yet been a focus for development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well. Attainment has risen markedly since the school was opened. The levels of attainment seen in Year 6 pupils' lesson and books in English and mathematics were in line with national averages, and pupils were seen to be making equally good progress in information and communication technology. Teachers' increased understanding of the prior attainment of individual pupils means that most are suitably challenged so there is no difference in the progress of groups from different socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds. Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high in comparison with primary schools nationally, they still form a small minority of the total number of pupils at the school. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs and those supported on 'school action plus' make good progress because they receive more intensive and focused support than those supported on 'school action', who are in the majority. Nevertheless, the very large majority of pupils and groups of pupils make good progress at the school, and so achievement is good. Pupils immediately settle to their work in lessons. They enjoy the way that topics are presented and most maintain their concentration well. Pupils quickly respond to instructions and are keen to discuss their opinions with others. Many will put their hands up when the teacher asks a question, safe in the knowledge that they will be praised for trying even if their answer is incorrect.

Pupils are polite, friendly and engaging. Those from different backgrounds mix well together and the school has a great sense of community. Pupils are interested in the lives of those from different faiths and cultures, and understand why it is important to learn about them. Pupils say they feel safe in school and all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires agreed. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet and show a good awareness of others' safety when using the fitness equipment. They are very clear about the importance of staying fit and healthy and take part in sporting activities enthusiastically. Attendance has shown significant improvement. It was low in the previous academic year, but improved every term so it is now average and continuing to rise.

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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	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	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	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?

Teachers have tasks ready for pupils as soon as they arrive at lessons, so pupils get straight down to work and this sets the tone for the day. The topics and methods chosen enthuse pupils. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning, especially short video clips. Writing reports about the suitability of monsters for a well-known film lends a sense of fun to English lessons, while house buying helps pupils see the relevance of their mathematics. A good pace is maintained by breaking the lesson up into short, sharp activities that keep pupils concentrating well. Boys are motivated by appealing to their competitive spirit, completing a mathematics challenge in the shortest time for example. In those lessons where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, the work is sometimes too demanding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities supported on 'school action' to complete independently. Teaching assistants do not strike a suitable balance of support and challenge; they help pupils too much so that they appear to keep up with others in the class. The school uses its good links with secondary schools to provide extra activities for gifted and talented pupils in a range of subjects. There is a wide range of school clubs and a residential experience available for pupils in Years 2 and 6. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide well for pupils, especially in promoting healthy lifestyles.

One pupil summed up the good quality of care that pupils receive with his view that 'the teachers are like having another parent'. They take the time to listen to pupils and always

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take any necessary actions to help them. Pupils find the headteacher an inspiration. He urges them to greater efforts in his 'raising the bar' assemblies, where he high jumps with pupils. Younger pupils are taught the importance of targets by watching the video of him criticising two trainee dragons for not working hard enough on learning how to breathe fire or fly. Across the school, pupils are very aware of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. A relatively high proportion of pupils have special educational needs relating to their behaviour. The consistency of approach ensures that they understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, while the effective support they receive helps them to control their emotions. As a result, far fewer are excluded from school than previously and the number of incidents of disruption is falling rapidly. The school has taken a strong line on absence. No holidays are authorised during term time and parents and carers have responded well to the school's guidance, so attendance is rising. Pupils who are in the care of the local authority are particularly well monitored and supported, especially through the use of specialist agencies where necessary. They settle quickly into the life of the school and make progress at the same good rate as their peers.

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's drive for improvement is supported by most other managers within the school. The newly formed senior management team are particularly effective. Every member of staff who responded to the questionnaire said that they felt proud of the school and the part they play in its improvement. All now share the same ambition to make it an outstanding place of learning. Most senior staff are good role models in their teaching. Checks on teaching are rigorous and the headteacher does not flinch from taking difficult decisions where necessary. He is well supported by a challenging governing body, whose members have a good understanding of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding. Priorities for development are appropriate and actions taken have proved highly successful in improving outcomes. Parents and carers, who were initially concerned about the amalgamation, have been won over by the school's successes and the lengths to which the school goes to seek and act on their views.

Good use is made of data to track pupils' progress and involvement in school life. The results are used well to evaluate provision for equality. Respect for others and an intolerance of discrimination are encouraged, with, for example, Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech playing in the corridor. Nevertheless, equality is only satisfactory as gaps in pupils' performance still exist, particularly for the main group of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A comprehensive audit of needs relating to

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community cohesion has been completed and used to draw up a detailed plan of action. The school's own evaluation accurately identifies the need for more opportunities for pupils to engage with those from other countries as a priority.

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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although their attainment remains low in most areas of learning on joining Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage has not been as great a priority as other year groups since the school was opened, so improvement has not been as marked. Nevertheless, where actions have been implemented they have proved successful. Many more children can now count and know the sounds that letters make. They make good progress in these areas of learning and leave with standards that are average for their age. Progress in other areas of learning is satisfactory. A wide range of activities are available to children, but they are not always guided towards those which will help them make the most progress in the areas in which their skills are weakest, such as their creative development and understanding of the world around them. This is compounded by the way that activities focus only on a single area of learning, rather than helping to develop creativity, fine motor skills and early writing, for example, at the same time.

There are a large number of adults available to support children, especially in the nursery, and this ensures that children are safe and well cared for. The indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced with good quality equipment. Parents and carers are very pleased with the provision. Staff are freely available to talk to them, although there are no learning journals for parents and carers to take away a record of their child's development. Assessments are accurate and the results are comprehensively analysed to provide a clear picture of progress across each area of learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	3
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

The number of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was relatively low. However, by coincidence, the school sent out its own questionnaire with very similar questions on the same day as the Ofsted questionnaire. The results on the next page are from the Ofsted questionnaire, but the responses fall into the same pattern as those seen in the school questionnaire. Parents and carers are very happy with all that the school provides, and hold views that are broadly similar to inspectors. Very few made comments on the forms, and almost all of these were entirely positive.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Smith's Wood Community 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 426 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	74	13	25	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	68	17	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	51	25	47	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	57	19	36	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	62	19	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	62	18	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	55	23	43	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)	27	51	23	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	60	19	36	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	51	24	45	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	47	25	47	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	66	18	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	74	14	26	0	0	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



13 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Smith's Wood Community Primary School, Birmingham, B36 0SZ

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. The pupils from Year 6 were especially helpful in providing their views. We found you to be polite and well behaved. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school, and that it is getting better all the time. We agree with you. You go to a good school where most of you make good progress.

You enjoy coming to school because your teachers make lessons interesting and fun. They give you difficult work to do, and you like the challenge of tackling tough problems. For some of you, the work is a bit too hard. So we have asked your teachers to make sure that you can always do the tasks if you try your best and are given the time and opportunities to do them without too much help. You like the way that the subjects are organised in topics, and this helps you learn more quickly. We have asked teachers in the Reception and Nursery classes to use topics as well, so that the children there can make as much progress as the rest of you. You all told us that you feel safe and well looked after. All the teachers take good care of you and make sure that they teach you to look after yourselves too. You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.

Your headteacher checks everything to make sure that that the school keeps getting better. He will not tolerate anybody not trying their best, and that includes all of you. All the teachers make sure you know your targets and try your best to achieve them. You now come to school more often, and your attendance is now average. If you all come to school whenever you can, you can raise attendance even further and this will help your school provide you with an even better education.

With all best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector

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