

James Watt Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134102
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	395769
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Keith Sadler

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	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Hadley
Headteacher	Helen James
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Keith Sadler	Additional Inspector
Richard Kentish	Additional Inspector
Mary Usher-Clark	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. Inspectors observed 24 part lessons, taught by 20 different teachers, observing for a total of approximately 11 hours. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included: the school's analysis of pupils' progress; teachers' lesson plans; the school improvement plan; leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires completed by 54 parents and carers, together with those from staff and from pupils in Key Stage 2, were analysed and their responses taken into account.

Information about the school

James Watt is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are identified at the school action plus level is average as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Almost all the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with the large majority of these being of either Asian or Asian British heritage. Most pupils speak English as an additional language. An above average number of pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual time of entry. The school meets current floor standards, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has gained the Leading Parent Partnership Award and national Healthy School status.

The school's breakfast club and after-school provision were inspected separately because they are not managed by the school's governing body.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is continually improving under the effective and determined leadership of the headteacher. The school is not outstanding because good teaching enables pupils to make good rather than outstanding progress.
- Achievement is good for all groups of pupils. From very low starting points pupils make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is average. Even so, attainment in reading is hampered because pupils, particularly in Years 1 to 3, are not always provided with reading books of an appropriate level to enable them to practise the reading skills taught. In mathematics, there are sometimes insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge in practical mathematical activities.
- Teaching is good. It is characterised by excellent relationships between adults and pupils. In most lessons tasks are matched well to the different abilities of pupils. However, in a very small minority of lessons teachers' explanations about tasks set do not give enough guidance to pupils on how they can achieve lesson objectives.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and take good care of each other. Pupils demonstrate good and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. By the time that they reach Year 6, they are secure and confident young people who have high self-esteem and good levels of self-discipline.
- Leadership and management are good. Teaching has improved as a result of robust monitoring of teaching and learning, effective procedures for performance management and the continuing good quality professional development of staff. Although governors ensure that regulatory requirements are met, they are sometimes over-reliant on senior staff for information about the school's provision and pupils' progress because the checks they make for

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themselves are not always sufficiently systematic or rigorous.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding:
 - ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their reading using books that match their abilities by April 2013
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to carry out practical and investigational activities in mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers' explanations of tasks set are fully understood by all pupils by January 2013.
- Ensure that there is a systematic programme of visits in place that enable the governing body rigorously to check the school's provision and pupils' progress for themselves by January 2013,

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. Pupils join the school with skills and understanding which are much lower than those typically found. However, in both the Nursery and Reception years, children make good progress. They very quickly learn how to get on together. The focused and well-structured programme in the area of communication, language and literacy enables the high number of children who are at an early stage of learning English to make excellent progress. The caring nature of the staff, who place the children's welfare at the heart of their provision, provides a solid foundation for the excellent relationships between pupils and staff that are found throughout the school. Even so, despite this good progress, only a minority of pupils reach the expected goals when they enter Year 1.

Parents and carers are unanimous in their view that their children make good progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement and progress in pupils' speaking and listening skills are excellent. This is due to the many opportunities that staff provide for pupils to undertake paired and collaborative work which boosts these skills well in most lessons. For example, in a successful Year 5 lesson in which pupils were learning about the features of good diary writing, pupils firstly worked well in pairs to identify success criteria for this genre. Then, when undertaking the task of writing their diaries, pupils supported each other enthusiastically and made recommendations to others in their group. In addition, good focused support is given to the many pupils who are learning English. In consequence, attainment in speaking and listening at the end of Year 6 is above average. In reading, pupils are taught the sounds that

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letters represent well. Even though progress is good, by the end of Year 2, attainment is below average. This is because pupils are not always provided with books that match their stage of progress in understanding letters and sounds. This limits their opportunity to practise the skills taught. Reading skills accelerate in Years 3 to 6 so that at the end of Year 6, attainment is average. Many pupils in Year 6 are reading long novels and talk clearly and authoritatively about the reasons why they enjoy certain types of books and some of the authors they find engaging. In mathematics, basic calculation is taught well and pupils have good numeracy skills. However, the application of these skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are occasionally held back because there are sometimes insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to undertake mathematical investigations to apply their knowledge.

No groups of pupils underachieve. Pupils rise to the challenges they are set, particularly when work has a practical element. The more-able pupils receive appropriate activities to extend their learning. There are good quality processes in place to identify the particular needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Following this, they receive good support enabling them to make good progress in their learning. Furthermore the many pupils who join the school during the school year also progress well because their needs are identified quickly and well.

Quality of teaching

Inspection findings confirm the unanimous view of parents and carers that teaching is good in all year groups. There have been improvements in the consistency of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. This is because a strong and effective improvement programme has been developed to ensure that school policies are applied in all classes. For example, the previous weakness relating to target setting for pupils has been overcome. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to move to the next level in their learning particularly in writing and mathematics. However, on rare occasions, when introducing activities, teachers do not provide sufficiently good explanations for pupils to understand the work set and this slows the pace of learning.

Staff are adept at planning work for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully linked history work on Britain since 1948 to the literacy target of preparing biographies, as they studied the life of the Queen. Similarly, in a Year 4 lesson, as part of the Ancient Egypt topic, pupils were made to think carefully as they prepared a balanced argument as to whether Tutankhamen should provide slaves with an extra bag of wheat. Reading is taught well throughout the school and teachers successfully ensure that work is progressively more challenging as pupils move through the school. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'Our teachers persuade us to work by making the activities enjoyable and fun.' Teachers plan well to support the pupils' social and moral development in lessons. For example, in many lessons good opportunities are provided for pupils to work in pairs or to work collaboratively. Furthermore, pupils are helped to develop a good

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understanding of right and wrong in their personal relationships.

Teaching assistants are deployed well throughout the school, and they play a key role in enabling different groups of pupils to make good progress along with their peers, particularly those at an early stage of learning English and those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is particularly effective because the well-trained teaching assistants support class teachers well in ensuring that these pupils are clear about their targets. Furthermore, they give good and structured support to enable them to learn as well as their classmates.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Throughout the school, adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Because teachers enjoy excellent relationships with pupils and manage them well, all the classrooms have a calm and purposeful atmosphere. The strengths in pupils' behaviour found at the last inspection have been maintained. School records show few incidents of poor behaviour and pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is consistently good. Pupils who have concerns are confident that all the adults will help them. They say that any rare occurrences of bullying of any kind are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils are aware of the various risks they face in and out of school, such as when using the internet or when walking and cycling, and how to respond to these. Pupils are also aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and know how to deal with these. Those that are new to the school say that they appreciate their 'buddies' who help them to settle quickly and well. Most parents and carers say that behaviour is good in the school and they are unanimous in saying that their children are kept safe. The school rightly prides itself on its inclusive ethos; the very few disabled pupils and those who have difficulties related to their social and emotional development are given sensitive and firm guidance.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's clear-sighted and dynamic leadership, supported well by the effective senior leadership team, underpins the school's good quality provision and achievement. Her well-communicated vision and ambition for the school and her persistent drive for continued improvement is shared by all staff. Teamwork is strong and morale is high because the staff know that their views are valued. The school's partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents and carers are highly supportive and those that returned the questionnaires were unanimous in saying that the school helps them to support their children's learning. There are very well-established support networks for parents and carers including an extensive range of courses and workshops which enable them to develop their own skills as well as their knowledge of the school's approach to learning.

The curriculum has been revised and previous strengths have been improved upon, particularly in ensuring that many opportunities are planned to provide pupils with

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writing activities across topic themes. Its contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. This is because there is an effective personal, social health and moral development programme that is systematically taught throughout the school. The curriculum for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because good quality adaptations are made to meet the needs of each pupil. In addition, its impact is monitored closely.

Close monitoring and evaluation procedures, together with professional development and performance management processes, are carefully integrated so that teachers' skills are developing well. Each pupil's progress is carefully assessed and regular meetings are held to discuss individual pupils' performance. Any necessary support is provided and its effect is monitored. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school's commitment to the development of equal opportunities is evident, particularly in the care taken to ensure that learning in the parallel classes for each age group meets the needs of all groups of pupils. These effective systems, together with the vision of success, have resulted in continued and improving progress for pupils since the previous inspection. This indicates that the school has a strong capacity for sustained improvement.

The governing body ensure that regulations concerning the safety and safeguarding of pupils and the required staff vetting procedures are fully in place so that pupils are kept safe. However, members of the governing body are sometimes over-reliant on the headteacher and senior staff for information about the school's provision. While members of the governing body visit the school regularly to attend events and support the school well, procedures for them to check for themselves how well the school is doing are not always systematic or rigorous enough.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of James Watt Primary School, Birmingham, B21 0RE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We were pleased to hear about the many positive things you had to say about the school. Thank you to those who completed questionnaires. I particularly enjoyed listening to the infants' singing practice. I thought your singing was brilliant; it was very tuneful and everyone, including the adults, obviously enjoyed the occasion as much as I did!

James Watt Primary is a good school. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and they plan many exciting activities for you. This helps you to make good progress in your learning. Those of you who find learning hard, and those of you who are at an early stage of learning English, make good progress because the teaching assistants support you well.

You told us that your school is a happy place and that the adults look after you well. We agree with you and so do your parents and carers. We were impressed by how well you get on together. Your behaviour is good and you feel safe in school. We think that your headteacher leads the school well and she is greatly helped by all the staff.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things to improve. We have asked your teachers to make sure that the pupils in Years 1 to 3 have lots of opportunities to practise reading using books that are targeted at a level to challenge them. We have also asked that you are given more opportunities to undertake practical mathematics activities. In a very few lessons, you are not sure about what you are being asked to do in the tasks that teachers set. We have therefore asked them to make sure that this is always clear to you. Finally, we have asked the members of the governing body to come and see you at work in your classrooms so that they can see for themselves how well you are doing in your learning.

Thank you for taking time to talk to us and we hope that you continue to enjoy your education.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler
Lead inspector

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