



Great Barr Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103377
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276903
Inspection dates 28 November 2005 to 29 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ruth Westbrook RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Aldridge Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B44 8NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4642251
Number on roll	450	Fax number	0121 4644714
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Larry Jones
Date of previous inspection	4 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Sue Courbet

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Great Barr Primary is a large city primary school with nursery provision. It is a multicultural school with a high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. A higher than average number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is in a socially deprived area of Birmingham and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. An average number of pupils have special educational needs (SEN). However, there is a higher than average number with a statement of SEN as the school has a significant number of physically disabled pupils. The headteacher has been in post for three years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school which has worked hard on raising standards. Provision and effectiveness are good and the school provides good value for money, confirming the school's own view. The school achieves its aim to develop caring children who work hard. The headteacher has successfully identified areas of underperformance and initiated action to improve teaching and learning. As a result, pupils progress well and there is a stimulating learning environment. The school has a good capacity to build on recent improvements. This is as a result of the headteacher's very clear and inspirational leadership and the outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils. The school assesses pupils' progress very well and shares the results with them. Staff are committed to helping pupils to improve. They very carefully track the progress of individual pupils and take effective action when underachievement is identified. A small number of pupils underachieve because their attendance is low. The Foundation Stage is well run and gives pupils a good start in the school. Pupils reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage

The school has successfully addressed the issues of the last inspection but is aware that there is room for standards in writing to improve further. Parents are very satisfied with the school, as shown in the survey conducted for the inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by further improving pupils' literacy skills.
- Work with parents to improve the attendance of those few pupils with low attendance, by enabling parents to understand its impact on their child's achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with below average standards. In 2005, Year 2 pupils reached expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics, and standards at higher levels improved on 2004 in all subjects. In 2005 Year 2 pupils made good progress. White boys underachieved in 2005, but the school is successfully addressing this by improving their literacy skills.

In 2003 and 2004, Year 6 test results were average but there was an improvement in 2005, when they were above average. All groups identified as underachieving in 2004 did better in 2005 and lower ability boys and pupils with statements of SEN made good progress. The number of pupils achieving higher levels increased in English, mathematics and science as a result of decisive action. Results in science were in the top 25% in the country.

Pupils' work seen during the inspection shows that standards have continued to improve. Pupils are making good progress in all years and those in Years 6 and 2 are meeting challenging targets. Pupils' progress is very carefully tracked by teachers and where pupils underachieve, they are helped to get back on track. Pupils with learning

difficulties or disabilities make good progress as a result of the very good quality of support which they receive. 'My daughter's reading has improved extremely well and her eagerness to learn is very rewarding' is a typical parental comment received during the inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy the diversity within the school community, and relish the opportunities which it presents to play with children from other cultures. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility, and help others, such as playground pals. The school council is rightly proud of its effective contribution to school life, for example the development of play zones and provision of benches. The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved as a result of a number of clear reward systems which have been introduced. Pupils recognise this and respond well. The attendance of pupils is satisfactory. A small number of pupils do not make satisfactory progress because their attendance is low as holidays are taken during term-time. Pupils' social development is given a high priority throughout the school, with the result that pupils get on well together and are very caring, towards each other. Moral development is fostered well through planned activities in circle time. Good cultural development is supported by RE, creative subjects, involvement in celebrating festivals and visiting places of worship. Spiritual development is good and assemblies provide plenty of opportunities to reflect. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles, and they show an understanding of how to do this. They take advantage of easy access to drinking water and regularly eat fruit. Fitness is encouraged through physical education and participation in sports clubs and through the good play opportunities which are promoted at playtimes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and pupils respond positively to this, working with very good attitudes. Teachers know their subjects well. They plan lessons full of exciting activities. Occasionally, lessons begin slowly and do not fully engage the most able learners. Resources, including interactive whiteboards and laptop computers, are used well to involve pupils actively in lessons. Children are successfully encouraged to work independently. They understand how much progress they are making and what they need to do to improve because their work is marked very well. Pupils often assess their own work and that of their friends, giving them an active interest in their learning. Teachers set challenging targets that stretch all abilities. This is particularly effective because pupils work in groups of similar ability. Learners with special educational needs are supported very well through excellent deployment of teaching assistants. Pupils with physical disabilities are looked

after particularly well, enabling them to take a full and active part in lessons. Pupils show in surveys and discussions that they appreciate the good teaching in school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good range of courses and activities to enrich the lives of its learners. By having smaller Year 6 groups, teachers are able to give more individual attention to learners. A comprehensive personal, social and health education course gives pupils a good background on how to live a healthy life. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about money matters and develop their literacy, numeracy and computer skills as a strong foundation to their future working lives. The Foundation Stage curriculum is developing a wide range of activities to stimulate pupils so that all learning styles are catered for. During the inspection, children were thrilled to dance imaginatively to evocative music in the Imagination Room in the Reception classroom. Good partnerships with other schools and outside agencies have enabled pupils to continue their education with confidence. Pupils appreciate the good range of sport and other activities offered, particularly for the disabled such as wheelchair basketball.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The highly committed staff provide very good care, guidance and support, which for physically disabled pupils is exemplary. Pupils know how well they are doing through regular monitoring and letters that are sent home. Advice on how they can improve is applied consistently. In this safe and supportive environment, pupils strive to reach challenging targets. Parents are very pleased with the support given to their children and they value regular meetings with staff. They say that the values and respect that are fostered within the school are 'a perfect example of the meaning of inclusion'. Good links exist with outside agencies, providing good support for all pupils' circumstances and needs. Excellent arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place, including support for the most vulnerable. Child protection and health and safety procedures are fully in place and well understood. The school has good procedures in place for monitoring attendance and very good strategies for encouraging good attendance and punctuality. As yet, there has been only a small impact on those pupils whose low attendance is the result of holidays in term-time. Pupils know where to turn if they have problems. Very little bullying and racism occurs, but when it does, it is handled very well, so pupils feel safe. Pupils have exceptional relationships with their mentors and receive detailed guidance on their next steps. Pupils in Year 6 feel very well prepared for moving to secondary schools. Parents say that 'there are excellent procedures in place regarding medical care'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides very clear educational direction and leads the school very well. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has a good capacity to improve further. The development planning, which was weak in the last inspection, is now detailed, focuses directly on what will improve pupils' achievement and is very clearly linked to financial planning. The headteacher has reorganised the way in which other teachers help her to manage the school and has promoted a very good sense of teamwork amongst staff and governors. Other managers are open to change and innovation and, as a result, standards are rising across subjects. Governors are very active in helping to drive the school forward.

Following the dip in results in 2004, the school rightly identified that there should be a closer link between what pupils have achieved and the targets they are set. The school also felt it was important to give pupils much more responsibility for their own learning and so started to share with them information about how they were doing. This had a very positive impact on pupils' learning as they felt more in control. The 2005 results improved markedly as a result, and further good improvement since the tests was evident during the inspection. The headteacher and senior managers regularly check the quality of teaching and learning and act decisively if weaknesses are seen. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, perceptive and well established. The school actively seeks and acts upon the views of parents, pupils and other members of the community. Almost all parents praise highly what the school does for their children. The school uses all of its resources imaginatively to promote learning.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Great Barr Primary School Aldridge Road Birmingham B44 8NT

30 November 2005

Dear Pupils

I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently for an inspection. We enjoyed our visit to the school, and hearing from so many of you about the work which you are doing. We would like to share some of our impressions with you.

- your school is a good school, and you are right to be proud of all that happens there
- your headteacher and other staff work hard so that you make good progress in your work
- you are set challenging targets in your work and you understand how to improve
- you enjoy being in school and appreciate the good teaching in lessons and the variety of activities which are available to you
- you care for each other well and there is very little bullying or racism; when things do go wrong for you, you know where to get help
- you are keen to take on responsibility in a number of ways, and you are very helpful to each other
- your behaviour in school and the playground is good, and you appreciate the rewards and certificates which you can earn.

We think that your headteacher and her staff know how to carry on making improvements in the school. For example, we agree with them that you can make more progress in your Big Write work. Most of you attend school whenever you can, but there are a small number of pupils in each year that could attend more often and make better progress in their work.

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to wish you success and happiness in your time at Great Barr Primary.

Ruth Westbrook Lead Inspector