



St James's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103851
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 277012
Inspection dates 29 September 2005 to 30 September 2005
Reporting inspector John Eadie RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kingsway
School category	Voluntary aided		Wollaston
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 4RU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818 810
Number on roll	376	Fax number	01384 818 811
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Millichip
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss Anne Penn

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 29 September 2005 - 30 September 2005	Inspection number 277012
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a large Church of England primary school in a mixed residential suburb of Stourbridge in the West Midlands. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is less than average. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. There are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than one might expect in a school of this size. Most pupils spend all their primary education at the school. The school has won a number of awards in recent years, including ones for promoting healthy lifestyles, the arts and good use of information and communication technology.

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 school with some outstanding features, most notably the pupils' personal development, and their care and welfare. A further outstanding area is the broad and very well-thought-out curriculum. The pupils are making good progress and reaching well above average standards, as teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good with the headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibilities having a clear vision for the raising of standards of education and care of the pupils. Standards in English and mathematics are well above average and in science they are higher. However, standards are not consistent in all aspects of English. For example, writing for some of the youngest pupils and reading for some older pupils are areas for development. The school is well aware of this and has begun effective work to deal with these. Provision for the children in the reception class is satisfactory and these children make sound progress to reach average standards by the time they start in Year 1. The principal reason that their progress is not better is that assessment procedures are insufficiently clear so adults cannot always plan effectively.

The school has made good progress since its previous inspection and the areas for development noted in that report have been addressed well. It offers good value for money. The school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and that, combined with the passion that senior management have to provide the best for their pupils, places the school in a good position for future development. An indicator of the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is that the inspectors agree with almost all judgements that the school made.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the work already under way to raise standards in some aspects of English so that standards are as high as those in mathematics and science.
- Work to improve the quality of assessment for the youngest children so that teachers can plan more effectively and pupils can make faster progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are improving and are well above average in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave. Standards in science are even better. When they join the school in the reception class, most children have the expected levels of skills and knowledge, although there are significant weaknesses in some aspects of their development, particularly language. They make sound progress in the reception class and generally reach the levels expected by the time they join Year 1. The major reason that these standards are not higher is that the systems for assessing what children have achieved are insufficiently clear to plan for the next stages of their learning. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good and by the end of Year 2 pupils reach above average standards. Through Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to make good progress and reach well above average standards in English and mathematics and high standards in science. Standards in

science are much better because the school places a high priority on an experimental and investigative approach to the subject. There are relative weaknesses in some aspects of English, such as writing for some of the youngest children and reading for some older pupils. The school has identified these areas for development and is dealing with them well. Challenging targets are set for pupils' achievement and they meet and often exceed these. The pupils who find their learning difficult are supported well and make similar progress to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Attendance is above average, and pupils love coming to school. Pupils behave extremely well, they enjoy lessons and they have mature attitudes to their work. They clearly feel very safe in school, and bullying is not a problem. Pupils are confident in the support of staff should any problems arise. They are courteous, considerate and polite, and the quality of relationships is exceptional. Younger pupils report that they greatly value the support of their 'buddies' from Years 5 and 6.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. For instance, they work enthusiastically with a local company in helping to design and test wheelchairs. The school council has contributed significantly, for example, by writing booklets for pupils who join in Years 1 to 6, which one pupil said "really helped me to settle in". Pupils are actively engaged in raising funds for charities, and they are clearly responsive to the needs of others. They are most successfully introduced to the basic skills that will support their future economic well-being.

Pupils have a very good understanding of how to live healthy lives, and they benefit from the excellent opportunities provided for exercise and sport. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, with major strengths in the way that pupils know right from wrong and relate to each other. Assemblies are very well led, based on a Christian ethos which permeates the school, and they make a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' knowledge of other races and cultures is successfully developed through planned topics across the curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and the pupils are learning well. Teachers use a good range of methods to meet the needs of the pupils and they plan well to ensure that pupils of all abilities receive suitably challenging work. Support staff play a vital role in many lessons, particularly helping those who find their work difficult. This ensures that these pupils make progress similar to their classmates. A particular strength of the teaching is the outstanding relationships that pupils have with each other and

adults. This means that they work very well in pairs and small groups and are very keen to do well for their teachers. Most teachers use the interactive whiteboards and other resources well. The resources used interest and engage the pupils, helping them to maintain concentration. There are some examples of teachers using assessment very well to plan what pupils need to learn next but systems are not yet used consistently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The pupils' work covers a wide range of activities and they enjoy this variety. The curriculum is planned exceptionally well, often with themes shared across several subjects. For example, topics such as the Tudors are the basis for work at the same time in a range of subjects. The curriculum builds well on pupils' prior learning and meets the needs of all pupils extremely well. It is constantly under review, with changes being made in the light of previous experience. Lunchtime and after-school clubs are popular and provide excellent opportunities for promoting pupils' personal development. Almost all pupils attend at least one such activity and many attend several. A particular strength is the offer to every child of residential trips at three stages in their school career. The pupils describe these with enthusiasm as they enhance their learning and develop their social skills. The school provides an extensive range of sporting activities, including swimming and lunchtime play, which is well equipped. These help to improve pupils' levels of fitness and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's care for its pupils is outstanding. Guidance and support are exceptional, and pupils are happy to be in such a welcoming, caring and secure environment. Supervision at break and lunchtimes is organised very well. The school works hard to ensure that its pupils develop as responsible young citizens. It actively promotes healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are carefully identified. Well-focused help is provided, and progress is very carefully checked. Arrangements for child protection are exemplary, and staff are very alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Pupils work in a safe environment, with teachers taking every care to ensure their well-being. Safety checks and risk assessments are carried out regularly and recorded rigorously.

Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and thoughtfully, and clear advice is provided on how they might improve. In initialling these comments, pupils show that they understand what they need to do to make further progress with their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides clear direction to the work of the school and she is ably supported by her deputy and others with management responsibilities. There is a very evident drive to provide the very best for all pupils. A good example of this is the excellent range of opportunities provided in the exceptionally well-planned curriculum. Pupils say that they really enjoy the experiences on offer. The good range of resources is used well to enrich the pupils' learning experiences. There are good links with other schools, businesses and parents, which support pupils' learning.

Governance is good. Finances are managed carefully. Governors are knowledgeable and provide good levels of support and challenge as well as being fully involved with development processes. Their involvement is enhanced by all governors taking an interest in individual subjects and almost all making regular visits to the school to meet with co-ordinators. Governors are further informed at each of their meetings by a presentation from staff with management responsibilities. At their next meeting the school council is presenting a PowerPoint display on their work. This is evidence of the importance that the school gives to the voice of the pupils. All statutory requirements are met. The school conducts regular surveys of parents on specific issues as well as more general topics. Evidence from questionnaires issued by the school and the inspection show a high level of parental satisfaction and support for the work of the school. The school's evaluation of its performance is good and has led to many initiatives that have raised standards. It is well-placed to make further improvements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	1	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	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	1	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	1	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

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school; we really enjoyed our time with you. You are right to be proud of your school, as it is good.

The inspectors consider that the following are the best things about your school.

You behave really well, get on very well with one another, and work hard.

You enjoy your lessons because teachers make them very interesting.

There is a wide range of other activities for you to take part in, such as after-school clubs, visits and residential.

Teachers and other adults take really good care of you, making sure you are safe and secure. They also encourage you very well to eat healthy food and take lots of exercise.

You play your full part in the running of the school and we were very impressed with the work of the school council and the playground buddies.

Your headteacher and all the staff have a clear idea of how they can make your school better.

There are a couple of things we are suggesting to the school that it could do to improve the education you enjoy. They are already working at these.

Your work in English, although good, is not as good as work in mathematics and science.

Although you usually know exactly what you need to do to improve your work, this is not always the case.