



Hillary Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131511
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 282219
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector David Biltcliffe AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hillary Street
School category	Community		Walsall
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands WS2 9BP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01922 720812
Number on roll	415	Fax number	01922 720993
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Martin Evans
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2001	Headteacher	Miss Lynne Cherry

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little larger than the typical primary school. It has more boys than girls. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Nursery at age three covers a wide range, but is low overall. About one third of the annual intake of pupils have little or no English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is close to the national average. Pupils' social and economic background varies widely, but is below average overall.

The school had three headteachers in 2005. The present headteacher only took up her post on 31 October 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hillary Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils and is a rapidly improving school. It is a calm, friendly and caring place for children to learn and grow up in.

Although the overall standard of work is slightly below average, children make reasonable progress. In the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), attainment is well below average, but children make good progress towards reaching national learning goals. The standard of work of Year 2 pupils is just a little below average, so continuing the good rate of progress. Older pupils make satisfactory progress, but some of their work has insufficient depth and further improvement is required in mathematics. Standards are rising throughout the school.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Much of the teaching is thorough and challenging, especially in the early years. Some has real flair. In a minority of classes, teaching does not require pupils to think, plan or discuss enough and marking is imprecise. Pupils are well behaved, enjoy school and work hard. They are well cared for. The school has close links with the community it serves.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some strong features. The leadership's view of the school's effectiveness matches with that of inspectors. The new headteacher provides very good leadership and is focusing hard on the drive to raise standards. The school runs smoothly, but has insufficient data to check fully on academic progress. It has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. Recent, solid improvements in standards show that the school has a good capacity to become still better. It gives sound value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring all teaching up to a good standard by ensuring that pupils have to think, plan and discuss deeply enough in all lessons.
- Raise standards further, particularly in mathematics, by lifting expectations of what children can do and marking work consistently.
- Establish a comprehensive system to track and evaluate the school's academic performance across all subjects and year groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 6 is slightly below average. This represents satisfactory progress throughout pupils' time in school. Both attainment and achievement are, however, rising because of better teaching, clear-sighted leadership and very effective management.

The standard of children's work on entry to the Nursery in the Foundation Stage is low (particularly in English) but, owing to careful planning and generally good teaching, children make good progress towards the nationally expected levels of work and

personal development. By the end of Reception, however, the standard remains well below average.

By the end of Year 2, standards are just a little below average. Pupils achieve well. Their progress is at its best in Year 2, owing to the good (and sometimes outstanding) quality of teaching that they receive. The many pupils for whom English is an additional language progress at least as well as other pupils because of the well-targeted help they receive.

By the end of Year 6, standards are below average. Attainment in English and science is a little stronger than that in mathematics – a subject that the school is working hard to improve. Although the school did not reach the challenging targets it had set itself in the 2005 national Year 6 tests, the results showed a significant improvement over those of the previous two years. High attainers, vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, significantly aided by the school's caring and friendly ethos. Pupils have positive attitudes, enjoy school and behave sensibly in lessons and around school. Pupils from different ethnic groups get on extremely well together, respecting one another's cultures.

Attendance has improved since the previous inspection, so that it is now in line with the national average. Nevertheless, although the vast majority of pupils have a very good attendance record, the overall picture is spoiled by the small minority of pupils absent from school on extended holidays.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of the multi-cultural world in which they are growing up. They are keen to make a positive contribution to the school community – such as when they become prefects or members of the school council. They happily celebrate one another's successes on occasions such as the Friday 'achievement assembly'.

Pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle in school and act safely. For example, the good quality of meals provided at the school helps pupils to eat healthily and acquire a strong awareness of the importance of a healthy diet. The good development of basic skills prepares them soundly for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory – although there is much good teaching, particularly in the early years, and some outstanding teaching in Year 2 and for the oldest pupils. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and too much

variability in the performance of some teachers who are potentially good. This confirms the headteacher's view of teaching and the need to remove the variation in quality.

Lessons are generally well planned and engage pupils' interests. The increased emphasis on developing linguistic skills amongst younger children is beginning to have a significant effect on raising achievement. Trained teaching assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils' good behaviour, attitudes to learning and relationships contribute much to their sound level of achievement.

The procedures for monitoring how well pupils are doing are satisfactory. There are some examples of good marking, but pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work. The recent, rigorous monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and the local authority has provided the school with clear information, which is being used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides well for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, but, in a small minority of cases, does not secure enough challenge for other pupils. The school gives high prominence to literacy and numeracy. The start it has made in promoting these in a wide variety of other subjects is helping to raise standards across the board.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, the curriculum is well planned and offers a wide range of stimulating activities that promote good, coherent progress. The school has firm plans to improve the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 in various ways, such as promoting the creative arts and making closer links between subjects.

'Life Skills' are taught through regular lessons in personal and social education. These are effective in helping pupils to learn how to stay healthy and safe. There is satisfactory enrichment of the curriculum through visits and out-of-school activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Whilst the school offers a good level of personal care and support, the guidance for pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. Pastoral care is of a high order. All children are valued as individuals, with a strong commitment to ensuring their health and safety. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. One pupil summed up the views of many when he said, 'Teachers help us and teachers respect us'.

Systems to track individual pupils' academic progress vary between classes and do not cover all subjects. As a consequence, procedures for guiding and supporting learning do not fully ensure that each pupil makes the best possible progress.

Support for pupils in the early stage of learning English is very effective, especially in the nursery and reception. There is good support for vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as effective communication with parents and outside agencies. Child protection procedures are robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership, management and governance is satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and is a major factor in the school's rapid improvement. She has a very clear, accurate vision for the future development of the school and is soundly supported by the senior management team and governing body. A few governors visit the school regularly and give generously of their time and expertise. The effectiveness of subject leaders is good in English and mathematics, but satisfactory overall. The school takes thoughtful account of the views of parents and others.

There is a strong commitment to pupils' enjoyment and well-being. Each pupil is highly valued and all have equal opportunities to succeed. The support given by the local authority and external agencies helps significantly to foster pupils' achievement. The school's accurate self-evaluation of its activities is used effectively to raise standards.

The governing body supports the school satisfactorily. It takes great care in the recruitment and selection of staff to ensure that pupils are well taught and protected. It has a limited role, however, in shaping the school's vision and direction.

Staff have good opportunities for professional training and development, aspects that are closely linked to the school's priorities. Approaches to financial management are good, helping the school to achieve its educational goals. The accommodation is of a high standard and provides an oasis of calm. The headteacher's emphasis on raising standards and recent solid improvements in achievement indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	3	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

2 March 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your welcome and help to us during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the work you do. You told us how much you like your school.

Here are some of the things we especially like about your school. We hope that you enjoy reading them.

- You work carefully and want to do well.
- You behave well and are very polite.
- Staff care about you very much. You feel the school is a safe, friendly place.
- You like coming to school and are proud to be pupils here.
- Your school is getting better all the time.

There are also a few things that need to improve: • Sometimes teachers do not ask you to think hard enough in lessons. • Some mathematics work is not as good as it needs to be. • Teachers need to have still more information about how well you are doing.

We hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time in school.

Yours sincerely

Dr David Biltcliffe Lead inspector