



Forest Dale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133759
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 282371
Inspection dates 30 January 2006 to 31 January 2006
Reporting inspector Lorna Brackstone AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wareham Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		B45 0JS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4648659
Number on roll	220	Fax number	0121 4644002
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Anne Wood
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Susan Robertson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Forestdale is an average-sized school that was opened just over two years ago as a result of the amalgamation of an Infant and a Junior School. It serves an area of high social deprivation to the south-west of the city of Birmingham. There is significant movement of pupils in and out of school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A few are from African and Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is as expected nationally but there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with statements with special educational needs. Attainment on entry into the nursery is exceptionally low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an effective school with many good features. Staff know the school well but their overall evaluation tends to reflect the weaknesses rather than the many strengths. The determined and motivated headteacher is well supported by her senior leadership team and together they have ensured that all aspects of provision are continually being improved. Although standards could be better, they are improving. From a very low starting point, pupils make good progress in lessons because teaching is good and an interesting and meaningful curriculum is provided. This also has had a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, which are now good, and there is a much improved attendance rate. However, pupils have a limited vocabulary and this negatively impacts on the development of their key skills across the curriculum. The steps they make in learning are small and achievement over time is satisfactory.

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good but despite this, standards are still low when they move into Year 1 because the children are starting from such a poor level of skills.

Pupils' moral development is outstanding and has a very positive effect on the personal development of all the pupils. The school takes good care of all learners and works well with parents and outside agencies to support them. The strong teamwork among staff ensures that they carry out their responsibilities effectively and the governing body is closely involved with all developments. The school has effective plans for development and has a good capacity to improve. When taking into account the good personal development and the progress made by the pupils in relation to their prior attainment, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Help the pupils extend their vocabulary across the curriculum to further improve the quality of learning and enable them to communicate their knowledge and skills more clearly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school knows that the academic standards achieved by many of Year 6, especially the boys could be higher and staff are working very hard to rectify this. In relation to the children's exceptionally low attainment on entry, overall achievement is good. Children start Nursery with very poor skills in all areas of learning. The good quality Foundation Stage provision ensures that they make steady steps in their learning. However, because they have so far to go, they do not reach expected learning goals by the time they start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. This is despite the good progress that they make. In 2005, the national test results in Year 2 were exceptionally low. This was because over half of these pupils had learning difficulties or disabilities.

They had experienced a Foundation Stage education that was not cohesive and were part of a traumatic transition during the school's amalgamation. Standards in Year 2, although still below average, are rapidly improving because there have been rigorous support programmes introduced to improve teaching and learning. This is ensuring that pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. The 2005 national test results in Year 6 showed a significant improvement and this trend is continuing. The school has set very challenging targets for the pupils. However, pupils' use of vocabulary remains very limited and this has a continual negative impact on the standards attained in most subjects. Initiatives have been carefully planned to rectify the underachievement of boys and these are proving effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Moral development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school. Attendance rates have improved significantly over the past eighteen months and are now satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and is a direct result of the outstanding moral guidance that the pupils receive. The pupils feel safe in school and know that incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with firmly.

Pupils feel able to make a positive contribution to their school community because their views are sought and they are listened to. They happily respond in lessons because their opinions are valued. They suggest ideas for improving the school and for fund-raising activities through their council. For example, the school councillors have ensured that lunchtimes are pleasant sociable times by the introduction of table cloths and napkins. They have also organised successful events to raise money for those affected by the Asian Tsunami and the earthquake in Pakistan. Pupils develop responsibility through activities such as house captain and office helpers and are involved in recycling projects.

Pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy by eating sensibly and through participation in physical education and the extracurricular activities on offer. They drink water regularly and many choose to eat the salad option at lunchtime. Whilst the level of pupils' basic skills is below average it is improving steadily and, together with good personal development, prepares pupils well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and this ensures that learners make good progress in most lessons. In the Foundation Stage, staff have a good understanding of the needs of the young children, and stimulating activities are planned to help make learning fun. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 are confident in their subject knowledge and use a variety of teaching styles to make lessons interesting. They make good use of use

computer-generated boards to enthuse the pupils and add excitement to lessons. This makes the pupils attentive and keen to do well.

Teachers set work that is relevant to pupils' needs. Marking is good and helps pupils understand how to improve their work. Day-to-day assessment is used effectively to provide work that is well matched to pupils' different abilities. In most lessons there is rigorous pace and all pupils are challenged effectively.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are vulnerable are well supported in class and so make good progress. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a positive contribution to this aspect of the school's work. Relationships are very good and contribute positively to the progress made.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities are good. It has been successfully restructured to better meet pupils' needs. For instance, it has now been designed to motivate boys as well as girls. The good curricular provision in the Foundation Stage has been extended into Year 1. This gives children more time to use structured play to develop their skills. The school day has been extended, which allows for an afternoon when the emphasis is on developing pupils' creativity. Pupils have a better and growing understanding of where they need to use their literacy and numeracy skills because links have been successfully made across the subjects. Enrichment activities are good, including a wide range of extracurricular opportunities. Educational visits and visitors to the school add interest to the curriculum on offer. There is a well planned programme for pupils' personal development, including sex and drugs education and how to keep healthy and safe.

There are good opportunities which enable pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are vulnerable to make good progress. The curriculum is effectively extended to involve parents in their children's learning. For example, teachers help parents make mathematical games with their children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. The well-being, health and safety of each pupil are emphasised. Child protection procedures are very good. This ensures that pupils know they are safe and feel confident about seeking help when needed. A very well attended breakfast club provides a nutritious and social start to the day. All pupils are valued and staff are committed to their best interests. Family learning programmes successfully link home and school and provide good support for both the parents and their children.

There are comprehensive and effective arrangements for tracking the academic and personal development of pupils. Detailed assessments of pupils' special educational needs contribute to the good quality of individual education plans and to helpful

targets. Good use is made of external agencies to provide extra support for these pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The very strong leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a distinct rise in pupils' achievement. Her senior leadership team, who share a strong sense of purpose and are fully committed to the school, support her very well. The senior leadership team have worked hard to create a positive and welcoming environment where learning is promoted. For instance, the school has been redecorated to reflect the interests of the pupils and support the curriculum. One parent explained that 'the school environment speaks for itself, the surroundings are pleasant and colourful giving the school a welcoming atmosphere'. Relocating provision within the main school building has raised the profile of the Foundation Stage. New exciting resources have been purchased to stimulate pupils of all abilities and this is having very positive effects on learning.

Good systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning mean that the school knows that standards could be higher, and is well focused to tackle any weaknesses and make significant impact on the quality of provision.

Governors effectively use their high level of professional skills and expertise. They know the school well and provide support and challenge. Equality of opportunity ensures that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. Parents are actively consulted through formal and informal discussions and the views of the children are always considered.

Financial management is good and resources used well. The school has a clear understanding of its weaknesses and is well positioned to develop further. As one parent stated, 'it just gets better and better'.

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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	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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	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	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?	2	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

Thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and getting to know your school. We agree with you that it is a good place to come to!

What we liked most about your school

- You are well behaved, kind and care for one another.
- You are making good progress in lessons.
- Your headteacher is very good; she has helped teaching to become better, improved your building and resources, and introduced many exciting activities.
- The school takes good care of you and you have rightly said that you feel safe at school and that teachers listen to your ideas.
- You clearly like coming to school because your attendance has improved and is now much like most other schools.
- Your parents are very happy with the school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you reach higher standards in your work.
- Encourage you to learn new and interesting words that will support your learning.

We wish you well in the future.