



Perry Beeches Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103164
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286579
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector David Carrington

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Beeches Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	4–7		B42 2PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3604222
Number on roll (school)	247	Fax number	0121 3666361
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Maureen Bowyer
		Headteacher	Ghislaine Beeson
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007	Inspection number 286579
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Perry Beeches is an average sized infant school. The school is housed in new buildings that are shared with the local nursery, junior, secondary and special schools. The headteacher has been in post for just over one term. The school is just about to appoint a permanent deputy headteacher, following a period without one, and is yet to establish a full leadership team.

Most of the pupils live locally and come from 12 different ethnic backgrounds. Just over a half of the pupils are from White British families and about a fifth are from families originally from countries in south Asia. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is twice the national average. The entitlement to free school meals is a little above average. There is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Perry Beeches Infant School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is an improving school because there is a shared determination from governors and the headteacher to improve, and good strategies to raise achievement have been established. This ensures that the school has a good capacity to maintain its improvement. The school has a number of strengths particularly in the role of the governors who have managed the task of rebuilding well. The new headteacher has introduced a number of improvements to help raise the standards and achievement of the pupils.

School leaders and governors have a realistic understanding of the school's performance. Standards are average and rising. Teaching is satisfactory and as a result achievement is satisfactory. Children start Reception with slightly below average skills and knowledge and make sound progress in that year. When they join Year 1, most have reached their targets. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also make satisfactory progress.

Teachers make good use of learning resources and teaching assistants support their pupils well. There are times when the pace of work and challenge provided are not demanding enough, especially for the more able. The curriculum is undergoing major change. At present it is satisfactory but it is being developed to ensure that pupils' creativity is developed effectively and that subjects are woven together in order to build pupils' basic skills well. The school recognises that much of the work in English and mathematics is very similar for pupils in the three main ability groups, which reduces the challenge provided for the more able.

Because the care and welfare for pupils is effective the personal development and well-being of pupils is good. Pupils grow into well behaved, polite and considerate children. They enjoy school and are enthusiastic workers. In Reception, children make good progress in their personal development. The safeguarding of children is rigorous. The school tracks pupils' achievement satisfactorily, although teachers' marking does not consistently identify how effectively pupils are meeting their targets, or what they can do to improve. The headteacher leads the school very effectively and the changes she has brought to the school have enabled staff and the governors to build on past successes and to rise to the challenges of the future. The new systems to check and evaluate the school's work and to assess and track pupils' achievement are well planned, although they have not yet bedded in fully. Because leadership and management are concentrated into relatively few people, the headteacher has a heavy workload, especially in checking school performance. She undertakes this work very capably.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work is matched to the needs of pupils in the different ability groups and that it is sufficiently challenging particularly for the more able pupils.
- Improve marking so that it shows pupils how well they are meeting their targets and how to improve their work.
- Involve a wider group of staff in checking and evaluating the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average at the end of Year 2. Whilst pupils from different backgrounds achieve satisfactorily, the progress of some is not brisk enough. More able pupils are not consistently challenged in their work, although the school has introduced a new scheme to build on the gifts and talents of the few quite capable pupils. Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve at broadly similar rates and pupils from Indian family backgrounds have done well in recent years. Differences in the achievement of boys and girls are not very different from those found nationally. Pupils who have English as an additional language quickly develop good fluency in their new language.

Children in Reception are eager workers and they build steadily from their slightly below average starting point. Their starting level in aspects of literacy is lower than is usually found, and this influences attainment in writing later in school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy, friendly and enjoy school. They work and play well together and are mindful of school rules. Consequently, behaviour throughout the school is good. Bullying incidents are rare and pupils say that any occasional upsets are dealt with effectively. They have appropriate awareness of how to be healthy and safe. For example they enjoy taking exercise, and know the benefits of having a nutritious diet saying that 'fruit is good for you' and 'fizzy drinks rot your teeth'.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. School councillors are proud of their role in 'helping the school get better'. Pupils take an active part in charity fund raising, visiting residents at the local care home and working with pupils from the adjacent special school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn to respect their own and other cultures through a range of activities such as the enjoyable recent week focused on life in Africa, India and China.

Despite the school's efforts to encourage and reward regular attendance, the rate of attendance is below average. This is due largely to relatively high rates of illness, in particular amongst younger children. Most pupils are keen to come to school and enjoy working together with others. They develop satisfactory basic skills and knowledge to help them in their future life and education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The headteacher has quickly raised the expectations of staff about their pupils' potential as learners. There is still some work to do to ensure the pace and challenge of work are smart enough. The majority of lessons are productive and focused on the

development of knowledge, skills and understanding. On a few occasions more could be packed into the available time or pupils could be set measured time in which to complete the task. Good use is made of computer controlled whiteboards to bring learning alive. Teaching assistants give carefully planned support to their pupils and always share an encouraging word with them, which keeps them well motivated. Work is marked regularly, although this varies in its focus on what has been achieved and what should be done next to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has several good features. Children in Reception benefit from well planned activities which provide an effective balance of adult-led and independent tasks. These help them to improve their social skills and self-confidence, enabling them to make choices in their learning and preparing them well for the start of school life.

The school recognises the importance of developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The recent whole school drive to improve pupils' writing has not yet had time to have full impact, but early signs are promising. The work set for pupils at present though, does not always take account of the different levels of ability and need. Much of the work in English and mathematics is pitched at the needs of the middle ability pupils. As a result, the more able do not always make as much progress as they could. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is satisfactory.

Visits to local places of interest such as Sandwell Valley and RAF Cosford have provided an effective stimulus for pupils' writing, as well as linking with other subjects and promoting personal development. The new computer suite is well used to help pupils build their basic skills. Sporting opportunities, including coaching by sports professionals, enrich the curriculum and encourage regular exercise. A wide range of interests and needs is met by the good variety of out of school clubs, such as the 'gross motor skills club', club for gifted and talented, 'Allsorts' parent and child sessions, and the choir.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is a caring environment where adults know the pupils well and are concerned for their well-being. As one pupil expressed it, 'Teachers look after us and care for us.' Because of this pupils feel safe, and are confident that there is someone to turn to if they have any problems. There are good links with parents, most of whom take an active interest in their child's education. The school's breakfast and after-school clubs are popular and provide pupils with a supportive start and end to the school day. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are robust and understood by all staff. The school links well with a good range of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils, those learning English as an additional language, and those with particular difficulties, are well supported and make steady progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school acknowledges that information on pupils'

progress should be analysed more thoroughly by all teachers to ensure that all pupils are achieving as well as they can. At present not enough focus is on marking to help them understand exactly how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has effectively rekindled the enthusiasm and hard work of staff and governors to make changes that will benefit the pupils. Advances have been made in a number of areas and standards are rising as a result. The school has developed good partnerships with the neighbouring schools and parents in order to support the progress made by pupils. Systems to check and evaluate the quality of education and pupils' achievement, and to enable more consistent sharing of learning targets with the pupils, are in place. Whilst these are well planned, there has not yet been enough time for them to bed in thoroughly. Furthermore, the lack of a permanent leadership team has placed great pressures on the headteacher. These pressures are intended to be reduced with the imminent appointment of new senior leaders.

The school has an accurate view of its performance. School improvement planning is effective and the priorities identified for future improvement are sensible. The already satisfactory pace of improvement is gathering momentum because staff and governors are focused squarely on the need to raise achievement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

When we visited your school, Mrs Dickson and I noticed that you are polite, friendly and well behaved children. We felt very welcome and enjoyed sharing your learning about people from Africa, India and China.

You helped us to find out a lot about your school. We think it gives you a satisfactory education and that your teachers are making important changes to help you improve your learning. In our report we have written more about your school and have said that:

- You make satisfactory progress and reach the expected standards for your ages.
- You enjoy your work.
- You are kind to each other and play happily with children of all backgrounds.
- You are taught soundly.
- Children in Reception settle well to school and are keen to learn.
- You like to take part in all the out of school activities provided for you.
- Your headteacher wants you to do well and to grow into good people.

We think there are three ways in which your school can get even better.

- You need more chances to do harder work that is different from the work set for other groups.
- Your teachers could tell you more about how well you are learning and what you need to do next.
- There are not enough checks made to see whether your school is giving you a good enough education.

We are sure you will want to help your teachers make these improvements. Start by telling them how well you think you are doing in lessons.

We hope you continue to enjoy your work.