



# Little Aston Primary School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 124127  
**Local Authority** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 292895  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ted Wheatley

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Forge Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Little Aston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Sutton Coldfield B74 3BE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 3531350
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	212	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 3531350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Pearce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2001		

---

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 13–14 December 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 292895
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is smaller than average and pupils come from a broad range of social backgrounds. About one fifth come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly Indian and Pakistani families. A smaller number of pupils are in the early stages of learning English and a very small number of these have specialist support. Attainment on entry to the school is average overall, but has fluctuated and until recently was above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average.

## **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 a satisfactory and improving school with some significant strengths. Pupils' progress is improving. Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory, though there is still underachievement in developing writing skills. In the Reception class children make good progress due to good provision and the great majority achieve or exceed the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1.

In the past, underperformance by boys, poor writing and insufficient focus on individual learning needs limited pupils' achievement. The relatively new headteacher has accurately identified weaknesses and is giving strong leadership in the effort to improve achievement. She is well supported by staff and governors. While leadership and management are satisfactory overall, her determination to raise standards has led to effective support and training for staff with responsibilities so that they can play an active part in leading the changes needed to raise standards.

Improved progress is coming from teaching focused on matching work more effectively to pupils' needs. While teaching is only satisfactory because the full impact of improvement is yet to be seen, good planning and high expectations are evident. However, the behaviour of difficult pupils in Years 1 is not always dealt with appropriately and a few pupils are not always sure about how to improve their work.

Changes to the curriculum are ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged with what they do. Links between subjects are good, especially the way that computers are used, although pupils sometimes copy material directly from the internet rather than putting it into their own words. The quality of work to improve literacy skills is improving though some opportunities to develop writing skills are missed. Nevertheless, the curriculum is satisfactory, with a good range of activities that enliven it and many out of school activities that pupils enthusiastically support.

Pupils' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are happy, mostly well behaved and keen to learn. They are ready to take on responsibilities. The school is a safe and secure place with many recent changes to improve this. Pupils are well cared for and parents appreciate this. Academic guidance is good with clear targets for pupils to aspire to that are contributing to improving achievement. However, a small proportion of pupils do not understand the guidance they are given on how to achieve their targets.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring work is consistently challenging, closely matched to pupils' ability and helps improve their writing skills.
- Improve the quality of marking to make sure pupils understand the guidance on how to improve their performance.
- Help teachers manage the difficult behaviour of a few pupils effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The standards reached by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are above average and their achievement is satisfactory. In the Reception class standards are above average, and these children make good progress, most noticeably in developing their personal and social skills.

Standards are above average in most years though they are below average in Year 1 where standards were particularly low on entry to the school. Progress is satisfactory and improving because the school focuses on pupils' specific learning needs and plans teaching well to meet them. The impact of this is only just starting to be seen and there are still pockets of underachievement, for example some pupils have weak writing skills. The school's targets are challenging, but given the improvements in teaching, they are realistic.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make steady and satisfactory progress due to sound, improving support. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make satisfactory progress. Their skills in using English language vary from year to year but the school has a good programme to help these pupils. A significant proportion of pupils join the school during the school year. The school assesses their performance and provides specific support where needed and their progress is satisfactory.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school; they say it is a 'great' place to be and this is reflected in their 'happy, smiling faces'. Most have very good attitudes and behave well. They are polite and friendly and work and play very well together. Attendance is satisfactory and the great majority of pupils attend regularly. However, a small number of families take holidays in term-time and this impedes these pupils' progress.

Pupils know how to keep safe and are aware of the benefits of healthy eating and physical exercise. The good range of sporting activities and the daily 'Take 10' programme contribute well to this. Pupils are proud of their school and willingly take on responsibilities as playground pals, showing care and support for younger pupils. The school council and eco-committee give pupils a voice in decision making, particularly about improvements to the school environment and the range of out of school activities. Good involvement with the local community, as seen in the regeneration of the recreation ground and fund raising for charities, helps promote a good sense of citizenship. Pupils leave school as mature and confident individuals although economic well-being is satisfactory because the writing skills of some pupils need to improve.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers plan lessons carefully, using practical activities, games and information and communication technology (ICT) well to engage the interest of most pupils. Pupils enjoy lessons and are eager to do well. Lively discussion and effective question and answer sessions support pupils' learning effectively, particularly in Years 3 to 6. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop interpersonal skills by working in pairs or small groups. However, on occasions, notably in Year 1, behaviour is not managed well enough.

New assessment procedures are used effectively to plan work that is closely matched to the pupils' needs. Teachers' marking usually tells pupils how well they are doing but occasionally does not tell them how to improve their work. Pupils have many opportunities to assess their own learning, but this is at an early stage of development.

The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory and teaching assistants work closely with them to make sure they understand what is expected of them. This ensures that these pupils understand what to do and work at a rate suitable to their needs.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Curriculum planning is good and there are effective links between subjects, especially in the use of ICT, that make learning interesting and relevant to the pupils' needs. However, while ICT is frequently used, copying material directly from the internet limits how well pupils develop extended writing skills. Work in personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles.

The Reception class curriculum is good with a wide range of practical activities to engage the children's interest. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory enabling them to reach the targets in their individual education programmes.

Pupils benefit from a good range of enrichment activities, including well attended clubs, visits and visitors, and theme weeks such as the 'Multicultural Week' and 'Wimbledon Week'. These extend pupils' learning experiences effectively and add to their enjoyment of learning and their personal development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils to learn in. Relationships are very good and pupils feel safe and know there is always someone to turn to with any worries. The school works well with outside agencies to support those pupils with learning disabilities and disabilities. Good support is given to the small number of

pupils at the early stages of learning English, enabling them to be fully included in all activities and make the same progress as other pupils. Academic progress is monitored well; pupils know their targets and the great majority know how to achieve them, but a few do not. The great majority of parents are very happy with the care their children receive.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership of the headteacher is strong and gives clear direction for the school's improvement. Her determination is a significant key to the improvements now started. The leadership and management skills of other staff, including newly appointed managers, are not as strong, but improving, due to carefully planned professional development. Recent improvements in monitoring and evaluation have led to significant changes in teaching and learning and the way pupils' progress is tracked. The school has a clear view of the areas it needs to work on to improve. It is too early to see the full impact, but the seeds of progress are there. The priorities for development have been accurately identified and the capacity for improvement is sound.

There have been several changes to the governing body, including a new chair. Governors are supportive and committed to the improvements the headteacher has started. They are working hard to ensure that they are as well informed as possible in order to provide a suitable level of challenge for the school.

The school has good links with the local community that enrich the curriculum. Collaboration with parents and pupils is good. The school takes parents' views into account and school council representatives attend governors' meetings to inform governors of their work.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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**

We very much enjoyed our time at your school. You made us feel very welcome and were very friendly and polite to us. We spoke to many of you in meetings, lessons and around school, and that helped us to build a clear view of your school.

The best things about your school are:

- Your school provides you with a satisfactory education, and this is improving.
- Your achievement is satisfactory and improving. The children in the Reception class achieve well.
- Your attitudes and behaviour are good in most cases and you enjoy school.
- Most of you come to school regularly.
- The headteacher is keen that your school should improve, and the staff and governors are supporting her well to make sure this happens.
- The school takes good care of you and teaches you about healthy lifestyles.
- You enjoy and learn from the many activities inside and outside school.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- plan work carefully to make sure you all do as well as you can, especially in writing
- make sure that you understand the guidance teachers give you on how to improve your work
- help your teachers make sure all of you behave well in class.

You can all help your teachers with this by listening to them carefully and always doing as you are told.