

Timberley Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 103269 |
| Local Authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 308270 |
| Inspection date | 12 September 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Alison Grainger |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 358 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Stephen Cheshire |
| Headteacher | Maggie Rose |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 May 2005 |
| School address | Bradley Road Shard End Birmingham B34 7RL |
| Telephone number | 01214 642002 |
| Fax number | 01217 766911 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of the school's provision on pupils' rate of progress through the school from entry to the Nursery to the end of Year 6 particularly in English; the challenge for the more capable pupils; the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being; and the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving school improvement. Evidence was gathered from: analysis of data on pupils' attainment and progress; observation of lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work; discussions with senior staff, middle managers, governors, pupils and parents; and analysis of parents' responses to the questionnaire.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this large primary school are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Although there is a wide range of individual attainment on entry to the Nursery, many children begin with skills that are well below the level expected for their age.

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for little more than a week, having formerly been the deputy head. The school also had an acting deputy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Its major strength is the good quality of its pastoral care and the contribution this makes to pupils' personal development and well-being. This aspect of the school's work is highly valued by pupils and their parents. Pupils say that the school is 'a second home' and that 'the grown-ups make this a special place for us.' Numerous parents told the inspector how well the school cares for their children as individuals and how much they trust all the adults who work in it. Much is done to form a strong partnership between home and school.

Pupils of all ages are friendly, courteous and well behaved. They really enjoy school and say, 'We are proud to be at this school.' Those with responsibilities such as members of the school council and peer mediators, who help to care for others and promote good relationships, take their roles very seriously. As one recently elected school councillor said, and others agreed, 'I am really chuffed to have been chosen.' In many ways pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are particularly mature and sensible young people. One pupil in Year 6 observed, 'We are a team and no-one must let us down.' This is a racially harmonious school in which bullying is rare and not tolerated. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and steadily grow in self-confidence. Pupils have a satisfactory and growing awareness of how to keep fit and healthy.

Pupils' academic progress is not as consistent as their personal development. Children do well in relation to their starting points by the end of the Reception Year because the provision is good for them in the Nursery and Reception classes. They reach standards that are a little below the level expected in early reading and writing and close to the level expected in mathematics. The picture of pupils' progress is patchy, but acceptable overall, in Years 1 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, the gains pupils make are only just adequate and standards are below average in reading and writing.

Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 in reading and also make steady gains in mathematics to attain broadly average standards in these areas. Good progress is made in science so that standards in this subject are above average. However, too many pupils move on too slowly in writing. In the most recent national tests, pupils' results in writing were well below average at the end of Year 6. Given that pupils do so well in reading and also in the development of their speaking and listening skills, it is clear that they are capable of doing better in writing.

Senior leaders, staff and governors recognise that there is inconsistency in how well pupils do in different stages in the school and in different subjects. They are committed to improving the satisfactory teaching and curriculum to ensure that all pupils do as well as they should in all aspects of their school work. There are already strengths in the teaching and curriculum. The wide range of activities additional to lessons, such as sports and other clubs, adds much to pupils' enthusiasm for school. An emphasis on problem solving has given good support to pupils' progress in mathematics and science, and a focus on reading has been highly effective in Years 3 to 6. Teachers manage pupils and activities well in lessons, give clear explanations and usually deploy teaching assistants carefully to support individuals or groups. They do not, however, vary the level of challenge in teaching, such as when using questions in whole-class sessions or in the tasks they set, to ensure that all pupils' needs are met well. Across the curriculum, writing activities are not matched to all pupils' needs nor are they stimulating enough.

Although there is much that is impressive about the care for pupils' personal welfare, including the measures taken to ensure that pupils are safeguarded and feel valued, the academic guidance requires improvement. This is the reason why the care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory rather than good overall. Pupils have targets that indicate what they need to work on next to improve their performance, but many do not have a secure knowledge and understanding of what their targets are or how they should use them. This is particularly the case regarding the targets teachers set to help pupils to improve their writing.

Parents, pupils and governors have confidence in the new headteacher to maintain the school's strengths and to move it on. The headteacher knows what needs improving. She recognises that the analysis of how provision contributes to the outcomes in pupils' progress requires sharpening. The school has already identified the importance of developing the way in which it checks on its effectiveness to ensure that underperformance by pupils is always picked up and swiftly rectified. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Based on its present areas of strength and the way in which it has raised reading standards, the school has the necessary capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a strong start in the Nursery and Reception Year. Much effective action is taken from the moment children enter the Nursery to compensate for weaknesses in their social development and language skills in particular. As one parent commented about the Nursery, 'I cannot sing its praises enough. They have assisted my son with his speech and social interaction.' Teaching and the curriculum are good in the Nursery and Reception Year. A strong partnership with parents begins as soon as children start at school. One example is the provision of stimulating and well-presented book bags that include toys and recorded stories that help parents in supporting their children's learning at home. The Foundation Stage leader is clear about what needs to be improved next. Action has rightly started on developing the use of the outdoor environment for learning for Reception children. Learning outdoors is currently better established in the Nursery than in Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise the standards they attain in writing throughout the school, and in reading in Years 1 and 2.
- More closely match teaching and the curriculum to all pupils' needs, particularly in writing.
- Ensure that all pupils have clear targets that they understand and that help them to improve their performance.
- More sharply analyse how the quality of provision, particularly teaching and the curriculum, affects pupils' progress and the standards they reach.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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

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|--|---|
| 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Timberley Primary School, Birmingham B34 7RL

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you. You told me that you like school a lot and how much you appreciate the way that the adults look after you. I know that this is very important to your parents too.

You grow up into mature and sensible young people. Those of you who have special responsibilities carry them out well. You form good relationships with each other. I found all of you that I spoke with to be very friendly and polite. You are learning about how to keep fit and healthy and are trying to make sensible choices about what you eat.

You make satisfactory progress overall with your school work. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception Year. By the time you reach the end of Year 6, you have made good progress in reading and science. You have also made steady improvements in your work in mathematics, which many of you say is one of your favourite subjects. I have asked the school to help you to do better in writing in Years 1 to 6 and also to speed up how quickly you learn to read during Years 1 and 2.

- There are some other things that I have asked the school to do as well. These are to:
- Make sure that the teaching and activities are always at just the right level for each of you, particularly in writing.
- To make sure that you all have clear targets that you understand and know how to use to help you to make progress with your work.
- To check more carefully how the teaching and curriculum affect your progress so that they can make changes to them when necessary.

You can help by continuing to be such pleasant young people and by always working hard and doing your best. Thank you once again for making me welcome and for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead Inspector



13 September 2007

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