

Wallbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103783
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308421
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John English

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Clare Longden
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	off Bradleys Lane Coseley Bilston WV14 8YP
Telephone number	01384 818985
Fax number	01384 818986

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Inspection number	308421

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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

This is an average sized urban primary school. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. About half of the teaching staff are new to the school from September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wallbrook is a rapidly improving school, which has picked itself up from a very low ebb reached last year, to a point where it is now offering its pupils a satisfactory standard of education with some good elements. This has come about through the energetic and clear direction of the headteacher, ably supported by a strong senior leadership team. They have concentrated on raising the expectations of what all pupils can achieve, and on ensuring that they make better progress. Many parents hold this view. 'The children are taught as individuals and work is targeted at their strengths and weaknesses,' wrote one, and another said, 'It is a good school with an excellent headmistress who is always striving for improvement.' Many parents are concerned at the high turnover rate of teaching staff. The situation has been managed well by the senior leadership who have done everything possible to provide continuity, for example by utilising long serving teaching assistants to support new staff. The governing body is very supportive of the school and plays an important role in the drive to raise the expectations of staff.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with very low standards. The school rightly concentrates on developing their social, literacy and numeracy skills, and they make satisfactory progress. However, they still start Year 1 with standards that are below expectations in literacy and numeracy. By the time pupils leave school, they have made good progress in English and science so that standards are close to the national average. However, standards in mathematics and the other subjects remain below average. Overall, standards are below average and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should because work is often too easy for them.

The pupils are happy at school, and they feel very safe and well cared for. They enjoy school, because, as one pupil said, 'Lessons are fun and interesting.' The attendance and punctuality of a few are not as good as they should be. Pupils have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Their knowledge and understanding of those with different backgrounds from their own are limited. They behave well in lessons and around the school, and are especially polite in their dealings with visiting adults. They are proud of their school and many are prepared to do tasks or take up responsibilities, for example, looking after younger children in the playground.

Pupils are well cared for. There is very good support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or for those who have social or emotional problems. The school works very well with outside agencies such as child psychologists where appropriate. Pupils are given satisfactory guidance on how to improve their work. Marking is helpful in English where teachers provide very useful comments on specific actions that the pupils can use to improve. However, in other subjects marking and assessment are not used well to inform pupils about their progress.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there is much good, and occasionally outstanding teaching. New teachers have already adopted methods and routines with which the children are familiar. Relationships within the classroom are very good, enabling the teachers and teaching assistants to concentrate on teaching. In a few lessons, teachers spend too long talking and there is not enough time for the pupils to complete sufficient work. The curriculum for English is good because it has been well adapted to meet the needs of the pupils, and in mathematics there is a good emphasis on problem solving. A small minority of teachers lack confidence in their teaching of mathematics.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Staff know the children well and keep meticulous records of their development. The school has no nursery provision and the children enter Foundation Stage with widely varying pre-school experiences, some having had very little. Standards on entry are very low, especially in the core areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and personal, social and emotional development. They make satisfactory progress, particularly in literacy and mathematical development but still enter Year 1 with standards well below expectations.

Children make good progress when involved directly with adults. Progress is slower when children choose their own activities because they are not suited well enough to the children's interests or are not sufficiently purposeful.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics by ensuring that teachers develop their confidence in teaching the subject.
- Improve the achievement of high attaining pupils by providing work better suited to their needs.
- Give pupils good guidance on how to improve their work in all subjects.
- Work more closely with parents and carers to improve attendance and punctuality.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards improve through the following four years particularly in English and science, which are broadly average by the end of year 6. However, progress is not as good in mathematics where standards are below average. Taking all subjects into account, standards are below average when pupils leave school. The pupils' achievement overall, from the time they start school, is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and low attaining pupils progress as well as their peers because work is well matched to their needs. However, higher attaining pupils do not progress as well as they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life, joining in enthusiastically in lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Within this, the pupils' moral development is good and this is reflected in good behaviour both in class and around the school. They have a limited understanding of the breadth of cultural backgrounds to be found in modern Britain. They feel well protected in school, for example from the possibility of outside intruders. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of good food and exercise. They take part in some positive activities that contribute to the community, the choir being used particularly well around Christmas time. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and the world of work.

The attendance rate is below average despite the wide range of appropriate strategies that the school has used to try to improve it. In addition, a few pupils arrive late after the start of the school day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

With so many new teachers it is notable how quickly they have adopted known and successful routines so that the pupils experience as little discontinuity as possible. Relationships are very good, which results in a good learning atmosphere in lessons. All lessons are well structured so that they offer the pupils a range of activities which help them enjoy their learning. In some cases, teachers spend too long talking about the work before the pupils engage in these activities to consolidate their learning. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used well by the teachers on their interactive whiteboards to liven up the teaching. The quality of teaching in English is particularly good and often imaginative and innovative. In mathematics, a few teachers lack the confidence to plan and manage numeracy sessions effectively, so that pupils do not develop their number skills rapidly enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is continually looking to improve the curriculum. Recently there have been good developments in approaches to writing, problem solving in mathematics and providing a more practical approach to science. However, the curriculum does not contain enough planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is appropriately matched to their abilities and needs, but there is not enough provision of more challenging work for higher attaining pupils. Where enrichment activities are planned, these are used well to motivate pupils. The recent visit of a poet provided a very positive outlet for creative work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' social and emotional well-being is a priority of the school and this is reflected in the good quality of everyday care. Staff know the children very well and respond quickly and effectively to any issues that arise. Arrangements for the safeguarding of children are robust. All pupils are valued, and parents are given every encouragement to become involved in their child's learning. Learners at risk are identified early, and outside agencies are used well to meet specific needs. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle for pupils, providing access to water, a good range of nutritious food, and encouraging exercise.

Guidance for the pupils on how to improve their work is satisfactory. It is strongest in English where teachers provide very useful comments on specific actions that the pupils can use to improve. However, in other subjects marking and assessments are not used well to inform pupils about their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides excellent direction for the work of the school. Well supported by her senior team, she has laid the foundations for sustained improvement, and this is demonstrated by the very strong improvement in pupils' academic performance in the last year. Despite earlier problems in retaining teachers, she has put in place strategies that minimise the effects of staff mobility. A number of parents who expressed concern on this issue still recorded considerable satisfaction with the school. The school is now fully staffed. The data on the performance of the pupils is thoroughly analysed so that the senior managers and governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have made effective plans to tackle underachievement. The capacity to improve further is good. The school values all children, and as many parents remarked, goes out of its way to meet the needs of individuals, although it has not yet succeeded in ensuring that the higher attaining pupils always do as well as they should. Governors play a strong role in supporting and setting high standards for the performance of the school.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for your welcome when we visited your school. Many of you talked to us and helped us with the inspection. We think you are doing well in many ways at school, and we were particularly impressed by your progress in literacy. Overall, you are getting a satisfactory education, and it is improving all the time. This is particularly because:

- You have a very good headteacher who makes sure that the teachers and other adults do their best to help you learn.
- The adults look after you very well and make sure the school is a happy and safe place to come to work.
- The teachers make sure that learning is fun – you told us that yourselves!

Your progress as you go through the school is satisfactory and it would be better if you made more progress in mathematics. We have asked the school to see how this can be done. We have also asked them to provide harder work for those of you who find it too easy, and to work out better ways of telling how you can improve to the next level. Most of you enjoy school, attend regularly and are punctual. There are a few of you who do not come to school as often as you should, or are late for lessons. We have asked the school to work with the adults who look after you to ensure that everyone attends regularly and arrives on time.

With best wishes to all of you for the future.