

# Great Barr Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103377
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	323810
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry Elston

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	456
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Larry Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Courbet
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	21 November 2007
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Aldridge Road Birmingham B44 8NT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 642251
<b>Fax number</b>	01214 649714

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

- The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:
- The achievement of boys
- The effectiveness of the provision in promoting good progress in writing
- The quality of care, support and guidance.

The inspectors gathered evidence from observations of lessons, discussions with pupils, governors and staff, tracking pupils' progress, analysis of attendance and gaining the views of parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a large school with over half the pupils coming from Asian and Black Caribbean backgrounds. A fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language, but few are at an early stage of learning English. Compared with most schools, the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. The school has provision for up to 22 pupils with physical disabilities. The governing body manages before and after school clubs on the premises for around 60 children. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills which are lower than expected for their age, particularly in their early language development.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and leave well prepared for the future. They build well on their excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes so that, by Year 2, they reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This good progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6 and, by the time they leave, standards are above average in English and mathematics, with a significant proportion reaching the higher levels. Pupils do really well in their reading because teachers give them a love of books and ensure they have the skills to read fluently and with good expression. The many pupils with English as an additional language do well because of the good support they have from all staff. The only weakness is in writing. While girls produce long, interesting pieces of work, boys tend to write less and make unnecessary mistakes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. They are supported well by skilled teaching and support staff and are given every opportunity to be involved and fully included in all school activities. Parents of pupils in the resource base for those with physical difficulties sing the praises of all the school staff because their children do so well in all aspects of their development. Typical of many parents' comments was, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds because of this very special provision.'

Pupils develop their personal and social skills exceptionally well. They reflect deeply on issues such as poverty around the world and are quick to consider how their actions affect others. As a result, their behaviour is impeccable and, when the teachers are talking, you can hear a pin drop. Pupils love coming to school, and attendance figures are improving as a result of the work done by the school to limit extended visits abroad. Pupils are very eager to take responsibility for their community, and were rightly proud of their efforts when representing the school in a presentation about special education provision to the City Council.

Pupils are full of praise for their good teachers, particularly for the way 'they explain things really well until you get it'. Lessons are a good balance between the teacher teaching new skills, pupils working at tasks well matched to their abilities and time for reflection at the end to assess their progress. Teaching assistants play an important part in lessons as they work effectively with small groups and support individual pupils who need extra help. Teachers' assessments provide accurate measures of pupils' attainment and they use them effectively to show them how well they are doing. Their marking is detailed and helpful. As one pupil put it, 'The feedback you get in your books really helps you to do better next time.'

The school provides a good, interesting curriculum that has a strong focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills while providing many opportunities for pupils to enhance their talents in art and design, dance and music. The curriculum provides much to teach pupils about how to stay healthy and keep safe, and they speak with authority on the best foods to eat and the hazards of things like smoking and drugs. There is a wide range of popular clubs at lunchtime and after school to enhance the curriculum. In Key Stage 1, teachers give pupils many opportunities to write in topics that embrace all subjects, and this gives them the skills and confidence to put pen to paper. At Key Stage 2, this is not so much the case, and boys in particular sometimes lack enthusiasm for writing.

Parents think highly of the school and, as one put it, the 'great start it gives the children'. They appreciate the very high quality of the care, support and guidance that make their children feel safe and valued. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and reviewed regularly. The staff track pupils' progress very carefully and use the data well to set challenging targets. Parents rightly

feel that the before and after school clubs are very well run, and say how much their children enjoy these stimulating sessions.

The headteacher leads very well, with high expectations of the school and a strong focus on ensuring that all pupils, whatever their abilities, disabilities or background, have every opportunity to succeed. Other leaders support the headteacher effectively. Their strength is the way they work as a closely-knit team to analyse the school's performance in great detail and set priorities to make improvements. The school promotes community cohesion well, particularly by giving pupils many opportunities to appreciate the diversity of cultures, faiths and economic backgrounds in school and the wider community and, to a lesser extent, across the world. The well-informed governing body provides good support to the school and is not afraid to challenge the leaders' decisions. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection, and it is well set to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The provision is outstanding and, from a low starting point, children attain standards that are above average by the end of Reception. The very good induction procedures, excellent partnerships with parents and rigorous attention to children's welfare ensure that they settle quickly into school routines, feel safe and are ready to learn. As one parent put it, 'The staff don't see teaching as just a job; they really care for the children.' The high quality of the teaching, with a strong emphasis on developing children's language, writing, numeracy and social skills, ensures that they achieve exceptionally well. The classroom is well organised with stimulating resources to support all the different areas of learning. Children happily choose from the range of activities on offer. For example, they have just as much fun writing about why the troll should not have tried to gobble up the goats, as building complex models from kits or dressing up in the castle. Staff observe children's learning and development very carefully, and use the information well to plan future work.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent, and the sensitive encouragement and guidance they receive helps them to become happy and independent learners. Children behave exceptionally well and learn to play with and help each other. The provision is led and managed extremely well. Staff have a clear understanding of how well the provision meets children's needs and how it could be improved still further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise boys' standards in writing at Key Stage 2, particularly by providing more opportunities for them to write in all subjects.

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## Annex A

**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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

27 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Barr Primary School, Birmingham, B44 8NT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. You are right to be, because it is a good school.

What we found out about your school:

- You work very hard and make good progress.
- Your behaviour is outstanding, both in class and out in the playground.
- You get on very well with pupils from all sorts of backgrounds.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- You do much to help people who are not as fortunate as you.
- The leaders are good at running the school and know how to improve things.
- You love the many clubs at lunchtime and after school that teach you important skills in things like music and sport. Some of you play musical instruments really well!
- Your teachers are doing a good job. They work very hard to plan interesting work and, as one of you said, 'help you when you are stuck'.
- All staff at the school take really good care of you and keep you safe.
- The excellent Nursery and Reception give children a really good start to school.

What we would like the school to do now:

- Make sure that boys do as well in their writing as girls. You can help, boys, by checking your work more carefully.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston Lead inspector