

St James's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103851
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	323915
Inspection date	7 October 2008
Reporting inspector	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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	334
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	108
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Millichip
Headteacher	Anne Penn
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kingsway Wollaston Stourbridge DY8 4RU
Telephone number	01384 818810
Fax number	01384 818811

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the progress of more able pupils

how well the school helps pupils understand and appreciate the diverse cultures in their society
the effectiveness and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation systems.

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

The school admits pupils from mainly White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools. The governing body manages a pre-school group and playgroup on the site as well as breakfast and after-school clubs. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with knowledge and skills typical of their ages.

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 that justifies its reputation for its strong moral values, the good standard of pupils' work and their impeccable behaviour. There is an expectation that pupils will consider the needs of others at all times, and they do. For example, they reflect deeply on the plight of those less fortunate than themselves and are quick to help other pupils who are lonely or upset. Pupils take responsibility well for their community, and the school council is rightly proud of the improvements it has helped to make, including the Trim Trail, the impressive water feature and French and Latin clubs.

Pupils love school and are proud of their good progress. One pupil echoed the views of many when saying, 'I would come to school every day if I could.' Standards in the national tests are above the national average. Standards in science are the highlight because teachers give pupils many opportunities to plan and complete interesting experiments. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported and work towards clear targets. However, the achievements of the most able pupils are not as high as they could be, particularly in reading and mathematics. This is because these pupils are not always provided with tasks that make the most of their skills and knowledge. The school has this as a main priority, and recent measures to challenge these pupils with more demanding work are starting to bear fruit.

Pupils think the world of their teachers, whom they describe as 'caring', 'fun' and 'always there to help'. They appreciate the way teachers use different teaching styles and new technology to add interest to lessons and help them learn quickly. Pupils show great respect for their teachers, who only have to lift an eyebrow to get their complete attention. Teachers have helped design an interesting curriculum with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy while providing many opportunities for pupils to develop their artistic skills. The school is full of stunning pictures and wall hangings produced by the pupils. The curriculum provides exceptional work on the need to live healthy lives and keep safe, and pupils speak with great authority on the best foods to eat and the need to take good care of their bodies. Pupils are prepared well for the future by developing good literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, organising sales to support their chosen charities and attending residential trips that teach them how to take care of themselves. Year 6 pupils still harbour fond memories of their 'brilliant' first trip when they were in the Reception class. Pupils have some knowledge of other faiths and cultures, but the school recognises that it does not give them enough first-hand experiences of how different ethnic groups live and worship.

Parents value highly the outstanding way the school cares for their children, both during the school day and in the excellent after-school club. Pupils know whom to turn to if they are troubled and say, 'It's like being part of a big family.' All statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met and reviewed regularly. The school tracks pupils' progress rigorously and has good systems to identify any groups or individuals who are not doing as well as they could.

The good leadership and management are the keys to the school's success. The headteacher's enthusiasm for the school and her high expectations, which are infectious, have helped to create a strong team of staff who are committed to school improvement. The headteacher is very good at using the skills of other leaders, who make an important contribution to target setting and self-evaluation, which is accurate. The school development plan outlines clearly the main priorities, but lacks a clear view of how its success will be evaluated in terms of pupils'

higher standards. This makes it difficult for the leaders to judge the success of their initiatives. The good governing body supports the school well and is not afraid to hold it to account. The school has done well since the last inspection and is well set to build on its successes.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision is good and ensures that nearly all children meet or exceed the expected goals in all areas, except writing by the end of the Reception Year. Parents are pleased with the good start their children make in the playgroup and pre-school class, and the way they are prepared for full-time school. They develop their social skills particularly well and grow in confidence. Children's progress is recorded carefully and supplemented by useful photographic evidence. Their early literacy and numeracy skills come on well, although the staff recognise that more detailed planning of activities would accelerate children's progress, particularly in writing. The comprehensive induction procedures, excellent links with parents and thorough attention to children's welfare mean that children settle quickly to school routines and feel safe. In the Reception Year, good teaching, with a strong emphasis on developing children's language, writing, numeracy and social skills, ensures that children make good progress. The classrooms are bright and stimulating, and children choose confidently from the wide range of activities provided. There is an excellent focus on developing children's awareness of how to live healthily and they enjoy things like role-play sessions, acting as doctors and patients.

Children develop their personal and social skills extremely well, as can be seen in the way they work and play so happily together. Children behave extremely well and soon learn the rules and expectations that prepare them so well for the future. The provision is led and managed well. Staff have a clear understanding of how well the provision meets children's needs and what needs to be improved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide sufficient challenge in the teaching and curriculum planning to get the best out of more able pupils.
- Ensure that the school development plan has a clear focus on raising standards and shows how its success will be measured.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about the diverse cultures and faiths in the local area and farther afield.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

8 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James's Church of England Primary School, Stourbridge, DY8 4RU.

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming in our recent inspection of your school. Some highlights for us were watching you work and play so happily, dancing so gracefully in the hall and acting as characters in the poem, 'The Highwayman'. You are clearly very proud of your good school and you are right to be.

What we found out about your school:

- You work hard and make good progress. The standard of your work is above that of most schools.
- You have an exceptional knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives.
- Your teachers do a good job. They make lessons fun so that you enjoy learning.
- You like the activities planned for you and the wide range of clubs after school for things like music and sport.
- You behave really well and take very good care of each other.
- You have a good understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.
- Your school's leaders run the school well and make sure it runs smoothly.
- Your teachers and other adults take good care of you and help you if you are worried or upset.

What we would like the school to do now:

- Make sure that all of you, particularly those who find work easy, make equally good progress. You can help by always trying to do your best work.
- Make sure your school's leaders check whether the improvements they plan are helping you make even better progress.
- Give you more opportunities to learn about and meet people from different cultures and religious beliefs.

Best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston Lead inspector