

East Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104308
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	324014
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	347
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	165
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Lewis
Headteacher	Nicholas Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	30 May 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hollington Road Wolverhampton WV1 2DS
Telephone number	01902 558899
Fax number	01902 558897

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	22 October 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: teaching and learning, pupils' personal development, the curriculum, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, staff and governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail.

Description of the school

The school is bigger than most infant schools. It serves an area that has high levels of disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average, but only a few of these speak English as an additional language. Pupils start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills and knowledge well below those expected. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. An unusually high proportion of these have statements of special educational needs. The school includes a unit for children in Wolverhampton with a hearing impairment. The closure of a nearby school in the last school year resulted in an unusually high number of pupils joining the school at times other than the usual time of admission. The school has achieved the Gold Artsmark, the Active Mark and the Healthy Schools Award. The local authority has awarded the governing body with Bronze accreditation for good practice. The school provides before and after school care in 'Amigos'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

East Park Infant School is an outstanding school. It meets its pupils' diverse needs extremely well. Parents are delighted to send their children here and an exceptionally high proportion of them shared their very positive views during the inspection. Driving the school's success is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. He has a passionate belief that all children deserve the best and can overcome any barriers holding them back. To achieve this he has created an imaginative curriculum that links exceptionally well with the local community and leads to excellent relationships between pupils, staff and parents. Unsurprisingly, many other organisations recognise aspects of the school's provision as examples of best practice.

Children start the Nursery with attainment well below the levels expected. Their communication skills are particularly weak. However, throughout their time at the school they make outstanding progress irrespective of their background. By the end of Year 2, the attainment gap has closed and the pupils reach average standards in reading and writing. Standards are even higher in mathematics and are above average. This is because of emphasis on practical learning that helps pupils to understand and apply the basic mathematical skills. One third of pupils achieve the highest level in mathematics and this is significantly higher than the national average. The school's innovative work with information and communication technology (ICT) and the high priority it gives to art, dance and music lead to above average standards in these areas too.

This outstanding progress is a result of good teaching, an exciting curriculum and excellent care, guidance and support. Children love coming to school and arrive in lessons keen to learn. The support that pupils with learning difficulties and pupils with disabilities receive is particularly effective because their teachers and teaching assistants understand the individual needs of pupils. Consequently, they carefully tailor activities taking into account not only the next steps in learning but also the emotional and physical needs of the individual. In recent years, there has been a high level of staff turnover and although most teaching is good or outstanding, the school recognises that at present there are areas for development. For example, comments written in pupils' books do not consistently make it clear to them how they can improve their work and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning.

The school rightly prides itself on providing an exciting range of experiences that inspire and motivate the pupils. Outstanding use is made of educational visits and visitors to provide a starting point for learning and to provide first-hand experiences from which pupils see the relevance of their learning to life. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visits to a range of art galleries, of their award winning animations, and their visit to Wightwick Manor, a local Victorian industrialist's mansion, used as the focus point for their work on the Victorians. Classroom, corridor and playground displays, particularly of pupils' art, are of a very high standard and provide a colourful, stimulating and interesting environment. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils from different backgrounds know about and respect each other's cultures and differences. They play and work together happily. Pupils who have joined the school recently following the closure of a local school have settled in very successfully. The pupils' high levels of self-esteem and positive attitudes prepare them extremely well for the next stage in their learning and for future adult life. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because the curriculum is rich in opportunities for awe and wonder. Close links with a school serving a contrasting community deepen their understanding of the diversity of national communities. Attendance is average; it is improving and the school continues to work further with parents to reduce the number of requests for

term-time holidays. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to be healthy and they feel safe in the school grounds. They make an excellent contribution to the community through their charity work and enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as members of the school council.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and reflects the excellent care, guidance and support provided. The school has an outstanding record for helping pupils who have been unsettled in other schools to become confident and successful learners. The integration of the pupils with a hearing impairment is an outstanding example of inclusive practice and exemplary partnership with external agencies and parents. There is similarly high quality care and support from the well qualified and experienced staff in the 'Amigos' before and after school club. The care staff team recognise the importance of the service they provide and have developed excellent working practices. They have successfully addressed the three issues from the last report. Both the school and the 'Amigos' meet the current requirements for safeguarding learners.

The school's record of maintaining a high quality of education and excellent levels of care would not be possible without outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher is extremely well supported by the deputy and assistant headteacher. Together they are providing highly effective leadership and securing high quality leadership at all levels within the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and illustrates the school's outstanding capacity to improve further. Throughout the school, staff work as a team and share a very strong commitment to inclusive education. The school knows itself very well because it uses an extensive range of information about how well it is doing and involves all staff, governors and pupils in the process. When it identifies areas for development, action to bring about improvement is swift and effective. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life. Appropriate training enables them to challenge as well as support the senior leadership team. Their work has achieved recognition by the local authority and they are committed to achieving the highest level of accreditation.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The EYFS unit is creative and exciting and ensures children enjoy the best possible start to school life. Children are happy, settled, enthusiastic and self-assured in this welcoming environment. One parent reported, 'My child wants to come here on Saturday and Sunday as well as all the other days!'

When children start in the Nursery classes, they can do far less than others of their age can in all areas of learning except their physical development. They move on with their learning at a fast pace and by the time they start Year 1, the majority reach the expected standards in most areas of learning. They make this outstanding progress because staff tailor teaching and activities to match the needs of all the children. Teaching is consistently good. It challenges children and helps them enjoy learning and be creative. Children learn to move independently from one activity to another and are happy to approach staff for assistance. The classroom environment is stimulating. It encourages children to explore, participate, share, try and have fun. The outdoor environment is not as exciting and children do not have free access to these areas. The leadership has identified this as an area for improvement. Staff are aware of the individual child's needs through the excellent communication in place with parents and the thorough assessments made. They take time to get to know the children well; this enables them to plan activities so children develop their full potential. In turn, children understand what is expected of them and they behave exceptionally well. The deputy headteacher and the headteacher

provide outstanding leadership of the EYFS because they want nothing but the best for the children in their care.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further through ensuring that comments written in pupils' books make it clear to them how they can improve their work and by giving them sufficient opportunities to assess their own learning.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	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	1

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?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

23 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of East Park Infant School, Wolverhampton, WV1 2DS

Thank you very much for making Mrs Robertson and myself so welcome when we visited your school on 22 October. We had a great day and, just like you, we think your school is a happy and exciting place in which to learn.

We found that your school is outstanding and that you learn extremely well. Your behaviour is excellent and you really do know the difference between right and wrong. You all get on so well together and try to make sure that everyone is happy. Many of you said how much you enjoy coming to school because of the interesting things you do and the 'lots of new things that you learn'. We particularly enjoyed watching your dance and your brilliant film animations. You fully deserve your 'Woscar' for 'Apollo Adventure'. Both of us will remember the assembly and the music played for a very long time. All of the grown-ups in your school take excellent care of you and listen to what you have to say. We were pleased to hear about the work of the school council and the jobs you do inside and around the school.

Your headteacher, all the other grown-ups and the governors want you to have the best school possible; they work very well together and have been very good at making improvements happen. We think your teachers and teaching assistants are doing a good job. They make your lessons interesting and fun. One thing we have asked them to do is to ensure that the comments they write in your books help you to understand how you can do even better. You can help, too, by thinking carefully about your work at the end of a lesson and telling your teachers what you think you could improve. Your parents are rightly pleased that you attend such an excellent school. Keep up all the good work. Thank you again for making our visit such a happy one!

Best wishes

Anthony O'Malley Her Majesty's Inspector