

Hillary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131511
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	328603
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	426
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Evans
Headteacher	Lynne Cherry
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hillary Street Pleck Walsall WS2 9BP
Telephone number	01922 720812
Fax number	01922 720993

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is for 78 children (part-time) in the Nursery and 60 in two Reception classes. A very large majority of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and most of these have English as an additional language. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is currently below the national average. Pupil mobility is relatively high. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The present headteacher has been in post since just before the last inspection. The school has achieved a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has improved in many areas since the last inspection. Parental views were typified by one comment which said, 'This is a very good school. All the staff are very helpful and caring.' Pupils enjoy school because teachers make lessons fun and everyone gets on so well together. Success in improving teaching, raising standards in literacy and improving the assessment systems since the last inspection contributes to the school's good capacity to improve further. Governors carry out their statutory duties and are becoming more involved with the work of the school. Overall leadership and management are only satisfactory because the improvements carried out have had insufficient time to fully impact on results. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. It builds on the rich cultural mix within the school and the local community to help every pupil develop a good and caring understanding of the world they live in. The very good relationships within this harmonious community reflect the good awareness and understanding of pupils' faiths and cultures.

Children enter school with skills and abilities well below expected levels. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good but the outside learning area is not yet sufficiently developed to provide all-weather opportunities to extend learning through play. Across the whole school, each pupil is supported well and all pupils are given equal opportunities to make satisfactory progress in their academic skills and good progress in their personal skills. In recent years, progress in Key Stage 1 has been good but variations in teaching within Key Stage 2 resulted in only satisfactory progress, leading to below average standards. Teaching is now much improved, although it is not yet consistent across the school and has yet to have an impact on Key Stage 2 results. In many lessons, but not all, pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching. The more able pupils are not consistently provided with sufficient challenge. Pupils make the most progress in English as a result of recent changes to the curriculum.

Leaders identified that there has not been a secure knowledge of pupils' progress because of weak assessment systems. Good systems are now in place, although not yet used consistently across the school. In many classes, but not all, target setting is used well, with pupils aware of their targets. The marking of pupils' work is regular and tells pupils what they need to do to improve. Sometimes pupils respond to these comments in writing but they are not always given enough opportunities to mark their own work and to be responsible for judging their own progress. The curriculum engages pupils through interesting and enjoyable activities. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' learning and personal development.

Pastoral care is good, and safeguarding requirements, including internet security, are met fully. The school's strong links with external agencies ensure good support for pupils who find learning difficult for whatever reason. Pupils behave well, enjoy school and know how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is at the expected level. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, eat healthily and take part in sport with enthusiasm. The skills they acquire, which include many practical business skills through the school's business partnerships, as well as their good personal development ensure they are well prepared for their future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges the Early Years Foundation Stage as good. The provision is led and managed well. The children get off to a good start, and the well-established routines help them

feel safe and well cared for. Staff are friendly and approachable and there is a strong sense of teamwork. This ensures that the needs of the children are met consistently well. Very good relationships help children to grow in confidence and build on their previous experience. Children enter the Nursery classes with skills which are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress but at the end of Reception, standards are still below those expected for their age. Their personal development is given strong and successful emphasis, particularly for those with emotional difficulties. Equally, children's early literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well. Teachers are good at teaching new skills, while providing many opportunities for children to develop their independence through purposeful play. They use information on how well children are doing to plan work that is both interesting and stimulating, particularly in physical activities. Nevertheless, the limitations in the accommodation make it difficult for teachers to provide as many opportunities as they would like to enable children to develop independence through outdoor play. The development of this area is a key element of the school's improvement plan.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching by ensuring more consistent teaching across both key stages.
- Ensure consistent use of the improved data systems to provide challenge for all pupils, especially the more able, and extend their involvement in monitoring their own progress to help them reach higher standards.
- Develop the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor learning area to give children improved opportunities to develop their independence through play.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the school with standards well below expected levels and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. They are still below average by the end of Year 2 but standards are rising slowly each year. Writing has been the weakest area but this is improving. For several years, the progress in Key Stage 2 has been variable, with standards reached being below average. In 2008, there was a significant improvement in English as a result of the school's improved strategies. Progress currently being made in the large majority of lessons is now good, although achievement over time is only satisfactory. All groups of pupils are making equal progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress in lessons because of good support by teaching assistants. The more able pupils are not all making the extra progress they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through their good behaviour and respect for others, pupils show they know right from wrong. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is satisfactory. A few families keep their children away from school for extended holidays in term time and this affects both their attendance figures and the progress they make. Pupils like the variety of work which includes activities supported through the local business

community. They know how to keep safe and whom to talk to if they have any problems. Pupils say bullying is rare and they are confident it will be dealt with quickly. They eat healthily during the day and are aware of what choices they should make. This has contributed to the school being awarded Healthy School status. Children make a good contribution to the school and wider community. In school, they enthusiastically take on responsibilities such as being school councillors and running the school savings bank. They take part in many activities to raise money for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst much of the teaching is good, there are inconsistencies that mean that pupils do more work and make faster progress in some classes than others. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain things clearly so that all pupils understand. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities, although in the past this has been more based on teachers' good knowledge of the pupils rather than on secure data. Although not yet fully embedded, teachers are approaching the use of the new assessment systems with enthusiasm and their developing expertise is already evident in much of the planning. They assess pupils' progress well, and mark their work regularly with helpful comments to show them how to improve. They make lessons interesting and fun. Learning objectives are shared with pupils, who are aware of their targets and what levels they are working at. Teaching assistants provide good support for those who need additional help, although in a few lessons, they were given too little involvement. Not all lessons include opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in assessing their own work in order to help them make more progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to the wide range of learners' capabilities and is responsive to their needs. It is still being reviewed as more secure assessment data is now available in order to give better provision for the more able pupils. It promotes enjoyment and achievement for every child, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Recent improvements to the literacy and numeracy planning are paying dividends in terms of pupils' faster progress. The use of special codes is proving particularly effective in improving writing skills. Linking subjects together, most notably in Key Stage 1, is helping to raise standards in reading and writing. A wide range of visits and visitors enhance the curriculum and broaden pupils' awareness of different cultures and faiths. Good use is made of local resources such as the art gallery and a visiting poet. Extensive personal, social and health education provision ensures pupils learn how to live healthy lifestyles and keep safe. A good array of well-attended clubs at lunchtime and after school enhances pupils' skills in sport, art and music. Valuable residential visits do much to give pupils confidence and develop their social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is supported by strong links with external agencies. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Health and safety requirements are met. There are good systems for managing behaviour and monitoring attendance. All staff work well to promote

inclusion, resulting in a harmonious community. Pupils who need extra help are provided for effectively and make the same progress as others. This includes those pupils who arrive with little knowledge of English who benefit from working with adults and pupils who can speak their home language until they have sufficient English skills to communicate. Academic guidance is good and much improved since the last inspection. Computerised tracking systems provide extensive detail on pupils' attainment and progress and compare different groups, for example by ethnicity or gender. The use of this data by teachers and leaders is not yet fully embedded.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The current leadership team have a good mix of experience, enthusiasm and dedication. They have a common vision of improving the school to give pupils the best opportunities. Leaders have had a good impact on some areas of the school, including teaching and assessment, although there has been insufficient time for the actions to affect pupils' achievement over time. The school development plan is focused on raising attainment. Challenging targets are set but are not yet being achieved. The self-evaluation is accurate and the leadership team has acted to improve the teaching in areas where it was weak. Community cohesion is good and, following an audit of the provision, further global links are being developed.

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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?	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 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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	2

Leadership and management

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

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

6 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillary Primary school, Walsall, WS2 9BP

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing how your school is helping you learn. We were impressed by how well you all get on together and how polite you are to visitors.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education and has improved in many areas since the last inspection. These are some of the good things about your school.

- You enjoy being at school and find most of your lessons are fun.
- The staff care about you and look after you well.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Your behaviour is good, ensuring you can all make progress.
- You have developed good social skills.
- In many lessons, teaching is good and you make good progress.
- There is a good range of clubs, after-school activities and visits.
- There are good systems now in place to monitor your progress and to help you make more.
- Your headteacher and the staff are working hard to improve your learning further.

In order to improve the school further, we have asked the headteacher to do the following:

- make sure that all the teaching is consistently good or better
- ensure assessment systems are used consistently to help teachers check your progress and help all of you to make even more progress
- improve the use of the outside learning area for the Nursery and the Reception classes to help children develop their independence.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood

Lead inspector