

# Forestdale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133759
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	328755
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Atcheson

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)	216
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>	Anne Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Robertson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Wareham Road Frankley Birmingham B45 0JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 648659
<b>Fax number</b>	01214 644002

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British, with a few from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Their needs mainly relate to speech, language and communication difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or autism. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into a Nursery and a Reception class. Frogmill Pre School shares the school site but is not managed by the governing body. This was also inspected and is reported on separately.

## 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. There are a number of strong aspects to its work, notably the rich, stimulating learning environment, which includes a wide range of extra outdoor activities such as tending the school chickens. This reflects the drive and determination of the headteacher to provide pupils with inspiration and aspiration beyond their experience. Senior leaders and staff share this vision and it is at the heart of the school's work.

Children enter the school showing skills, knowledge and understanding that are lower than expected for their age, particularly in speech and language. For the last four years, pupils at the end of Year 6 have reached standards that are just below the national average. These dipped slightly in 2008, particularly in English. School data about pupils' progress and inspection observations confirm that the school's prompt action has been effective in addressing weaknesses, particularly in writing. Although children receive a good start to their education and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, achievement across the whole school is satisfactory. This is because teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching where teachers have high expectations and tailor the work to meet the needs of the pupil, but this is not yet consistently the case in all classes throughout the school. Through their marking of work, teachers do not always make sure that pupils know how to improve, and the part that pupils play in setting their own targets is often limited. This slows the pace of pupils' progress.

Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Behaviour is good because relationships across the whole school community are strong. Pupils demonstrate respect for others because adults provide good role models. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and pastoral care is good. Parents appreciate this and are overwhelmingly supportive. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said, 'The work that the teachers, mentors and headteacher have put in with my son is fantastic and I have the utmost confidence in Forestdale.'

The curriculum enables pupils to make steady progress in developing basic skills but it does not always allow enough opportunities for those pupils who need extra time to consolidate new learning. However, pupils really enjoy school because the wider curriculum is rich and varied and provides them with many opportunities such as horse riding and the 'Forest Schools' project work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation of the school's work gives senior leaders an accurate view of where strengths and weaknesses lie and where support for teachers is needed. However, the focus of this programme and the resultant school development plan is sometimes too broad. Consequently, although the school has made some important improvements in teaching, learning and pupils' progress, the pace of improvement is not always as rapid as it could be. Governors are proud to have played a sound and active part in the life and work of the school. The satisfactory progress that the school has made, through the improvements it has made in recent times and the clear plans that have been set, shows that the school has satisfactory capacity for further development.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children are well cared for. They feel secure and valued in the safe, stimulating environment. Sensitive and thorough induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly and soon enjoy exploring all the activities on offer. They enjoy taking responsibility at snack time and work hygienically, for example ensuring they wash their hands before cooking. The staff understand each child's particular needs and are fully committed to helping them progress well in their learning and personal development. Good leadership ensures that children are well taught. They make good progress in all areas of learning but many are still at below average levels when they transfer to Year 1, especially in communication, language and literacy. Well-planned activities inside and out of doors provide a wealth of opportunities to learn new skills and extend children's experiences. They delight in collecting soil, leaves and sticks to make 'muddy paint' in the Forest School and in mixing the ingredients to make 'rocket biscuits'. Staff are good at identifying at an early stage the children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that support is precisely tailored for all individuals. Good relationships with outside agencies also help to support the needs of these children. Regular observations and assessments ensure the planning of the children's next steps in learning and a relevant balance of activities, although there are times when more able pupils would benefit from more challenging activities.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good across the school so that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress.
- Give pupils a greater understanding of how to improve their work through more informative marking and increased involvement in setting their own targets.
- Ensure that all management tasks have a much sharper focus on measurable outcomes that are linked to raising standards.

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

Achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is consistently good. Progress throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory. This is because teaching is satisfactory and occasionally, work set in lessons does not match precisely enough to pupils' needs and so not all groups of pupils achieve as well as they could do. In 2008, Year 6 pupils did not make as much progress as in previous years and standards dipped, particularly in English. The school promptly implemented successful strategies such as a programme of letters and sounds, reading 'Wonder Bags' and a consistent approach to problem solving in mathematics. Inspection evidence and school data shows that these measures have had a direct impact on raising standards and achievement. Most pupils have made satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics and a large majority have made satisfactory progress in reading. The majority are on track to reach average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school and are friendly and polite. Through their work on other faiths and through visitors to school, pupils gain a secure knowledge and understanding of other cultures. They know how to eat healthily and enjoy sporting activities. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that they could go to any member of staff if they were worried. They enjoy their responsibilities. The school council are proud of the fact that their ideas to develop the school grounds by providing 'monkey bars', a Forest School area and allotments have been fully acted upon. They feel confident that they contribute well to school life. However, the school recognises that pupils' contribution within the wider community is a weaker aspect of their development. Satisfactory achievement, together with the skills they learn that can be used in adult jobs, means they are suitably prepared for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and meets the needs of most learners adequately. In some lessons observed, teaching and learning were good, with pupils making good progress because teachers set high expectations and matched tasks closely to pupils' needs. Also, in these lessons, teachers explained ideas clearly and used a range of activities and lively questioning to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. However, these good features are not consistently apparent in all classes across the school. Where lessons are less successful, teachers talk too much, the pace of the lesson slows down, and pupils become restless because they are not being allowed to get on with work or to think for themselves. Whilst marking of pupils' work is usually clear and supportive, it does not always give pupils a full understanding of their next steps in learning or give them a full awareness of how well they are progressing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the skilled help of additional staff in the classroom.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy 'Creative Wednesday' when all of them, from Years 1 to 6, have the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of enrichment activities such as horse riding, gardening, street dance, chess and judo. This is a very effective part of the school's plan to broaden the range of skills that pupils can acquire and to offer experiences outside their normal routine. Other extra-curricular activities such as homework club and various sporting activities also enhance pupils' learning. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to develop pupils' skills and interest in writing and aspects of mathematics. The curriculum supports pupils' good personal development through an effective programme for personal, social and health education. Consequently, pupils develop good skills that will help them to keep safe and lead healthy lifestyles. However, there are a few areas of the curriculum that are not yet sufficiently adapted to ensure that all groups of pupils progress as rapidly as possible.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Many pupils have emotional and social barriers to learning when they start school and staff very effectively help all individuals settle happily into school life. Consequently, pupils feel well cared for and thrive in this nurturing environment. There is a good level of support for vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school works closely with parents and with other agencies to make sure that these pupils are fully included and make satisfactory progress. All staff are committed to promoting pupils' health and safety and all safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. The school's systems for monitoring progress are strong but teachers are not sufficiently skilled in keeping pupils informed about their progress and telling them what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils are not always as involved as they might be in improving their own learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully developed and motivated her leadership team. Consequently, they share her passion for improvement and are actively involved in implementing effective strategies to do this. They adopt a rigorous attitude towards analysing what is needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards and achievement. However, although there is a well-structured development plan and comprehensive system to monitor and evaluate the work of the school, the focus is currently too broad and this hinders the pace of improvement. The school sets appropriate targets for pupils' achievement. Governors play an active part in the work of the school and have a good understanding of the priorities for development. Measures to promote community cohesion are satisfactory. The school has worked hard to change the attitude of the community towards the school and, as a result, vandalism has reduced because the school is valued. However, the school recognises that it now needs to extend this contribution to a wider field and, for example, has effective plans through its involvement in the 'Comenius Project' to help develop links with schools internationally.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<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>	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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forestdale Primary School, Birmingham, B45 0JS

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us to your school for the recent inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your classrooms. You have given us lots of helpful information. We think your school is a satisfactory school and these are the main things mentioned in the full report that we thought you might like to know about.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a good start.
- You enjoy school and behave well.
- You are satisfactorily taught so that you achieve the levels expected for your age by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a satisfactory curriculum and a wide range of interesting extra activities.
- You have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe.
- You enjoy your responsibilities, and know that you contribute well to school life.
- The teachers look after you very well.

The school is working hard to make things even better for you. We have asked the school to do three things.

- Make sure that all of your teachers help you to do your very best all of the time so that your work improves quickly.
- Make sure that all teachers tell you clearly how you can improve your work and what you can do in order to move to the next level in your learning.
- Make clearer plans that focus precisely on the most important things that are needed to keep things improving.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Thank you again. We wish you continuing success.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector