

Kitwell Primary School and Nursery Class

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103339
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308284
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Neale
Headteacher	Pat Cooke
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Wychbury Road Birmingham B32 4DL
Telephone number	01214 760694
Fax number	01214 761700

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The great majority of pupils at Kitwell Primary School are from families of White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. An above average proportion has been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, these pupils are not evenly distributed across the school and some classes have significantly more than others. Children join the Nursery with the usual range of abilities but most children have a much narrower variety of skills and knowledge than is expected for their age. The school has successfully achieved the Artsmark Gold Award, the Healthy Schools Award and the Inclusion Quality Mark amongst others.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kitwell Primary is a good school. It provides a rich learning environment which promotes pupils' personal development and enjoyment of learning. Pupils' attitudes to work are excellent and this adds greatly to their good achievement. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils feel safe and secure. The provision for their personal and pastoral care is strong and consequently they enjoy coming to school and want to do well. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. 'Kitwell is a school to be proud of' was a comment of one parent.

Pupils achieve well across the school but good progress is not yet consistent in all classes. Children make a good start to learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and they become confident learners who approach their work with enjoyment. Standards in the school fluctuate because of the different proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each class but this year there is a general improvement because pupils are making better progress. Standards in Year 2 have been below average in the past because pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 has not always been strong enough. Progress is now much improved and standards are broadly average. Standards in Year 6 have also improved and this year are already above average because of the good progress made in Years 5 and 6. Good teaching and strong support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has made a positive impact on pupils' learning and, although not yet consistent, strategies of support are ensuring pupils achieve well. Teachers are also increasingly effective in sharing with pupils how well they are doing and an understanding of how to improve their work. This is also making a very positive impact on pupils' progress but some of the strategies are still new and not yet fully embedded.

Another reason for pupils' good achievement is the exciting range of additional activities, visits and after school clubs which enhance the curriculum and motivate pupils' enjoyment of learning. The basic curriculum is appropriately broad and well balanced but opportunities to use and extend pupils' language and mathematical knowledge and skills are not made sufficiently in other subjects.

Leadership and management are good and the impact of many recent strategies has had a positive impact on pupils' good progress. Monitoring of teaching and learning is comprehensive and senior leaders have a clear view of how pupils are progressing. This information is used well to identify possible underachievement but not always why pupils' progress has been only satisfactory in the past rather than good. Although these reasons have not always been fully recognised, the interventions now in place and consistent good teaching in many classes are enabling pupils to achieve well. Good improvements have been made in many areas of the school's work, especially the recent good achievement, the improved Nursery curriculum and in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), all of which give a secure view to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children start school with below average language and mathematical skills and limited knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in all areas of their learning and reach broadly average standards by the time they start in Year 1. This good progress is the result of teachers' good understanding of the learning needs of these young children and good teaching that focuses very well on the

basic skills to be learned. Children have many opportunities to learn through activities led by the staff and through their own investigations. Good opportunities for children to experience new ideas and to learn through their self-chosen activities ensure good learning. Children enjoy their tasks and develop good levels of confidence in their own abilities. Staff check on children's progress regularly and set targets for their next stage of learning that are shared with parents. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. Planning for children's activities is now comprehensive and staff work closely together to ensure that children's needs are fully met. The well-developed outside areas are used effectively as an important part of children's learning experiences, although access for those in Reception is somewhat restricted by the school building.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils make consistently good progress by sharing good teaching and effectively using the strategies already in place for helping pupils to understand how to improve.
- Plan regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their language and mathematical skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average and improving. Standards have risen this year in both reading and writing in Year 2 and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards has also improved in all areas. This is the result of teachers' higher expectations and more effective teaching. Standards often fluctuate in Year 6 but progress has remained satisfactory for some years. This is changing and pupils' progress is now accelerating in Years 5 and 6 so that progress is good. Standards in Year 6 this year are already well on their way to being above average and here too a greater proportion of pupils are reaching the higher standard of Level 5. Although progress is good overall, it is not consistent in some classes and in some subjects. Mathematics has been the weakest subject for some years. It is improving because of the recent good focus on developing the subject but standards still lag behind English in some classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities regularly make good progress because of the well-focused support given by class teachers and teaching assistants. The very few pupils in the early stages of learning English make good progress and take an active part in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their time at school where their lessons are 'challenging but fun'. They are keen to learn, and their attendance is above the national average. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although there is scope to strengthen their awareness of the richness of the multicultural society in which they live. Pupils form strong relationships with each other and their aptitude for cooperative learning is a particular strength. They report that any bullying or misbehaviour is rare and dealt with swiftly, because 'teachers always sort it out'. Older pupils have caring responsibilities for younger pupils in their 'buddy' roles. The active school council has been instrumental in bringing about improvements to school lunches and the school environment. It was actively involved in the project to resolve conflict and received the Impetus Award. Other pupils have less opportunity to extend this contribution to the wider community other than organising charity fund raising events. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, healthy and fit. They know the importance of a balanced diet and regular

exercise. They are proud of the school's designation as a Healthy School, saying 'we won the award twice!' Pupils are keen to learn and their skills of independence and initiative are developing well so they are prepared well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are effective in providing activities that interest pupils so they want to do well and concentrate on their tasks. Most lessons move along at a good pace and are well structured so there is a clear line of development of knowledge and skills and good progress is made. Sometimes activities are not as well matched to pupils' abilities as they could be and more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, but this is improving. There has been less focus on developing teachers' skills of teaching mathematics, which has slowed progress in the past but this is improving under the clear direction provided by the new mathematics coordinator. Similarly, several new systems for teaching writing skills are supporting pupils' good progress. Teaching assistants are well trained and play an important role in supporting pupils of all abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has rightly emphasised the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and recent improvements to these are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. For example, intervention strategies such as the 'Reading Recovery' programme are improving pupils' skills. However, opportunities are missed to extend pupils' skills in English and mathematics through other subjects and to build upon pupils' own interests and ideas. High numbers of pupils benefit from and enjoy the wide, stimulating range of extra-curricular activities in music, sports and the arts. Well-chosen visits, visitors and themed weeks supplement these activities. Pupils talk excitedly about trips they have been on, such as the visit to the Black Country Museum, which linked in with their topic on Victorians. Year 6 pupils spoke with eager anticipation of their imminent residential visit to the Isle of Wight. Links with other schools and outside agencies extend the pupils' opportunities to try out new experiences. Resources for ICT have improved since the last inspection and the computer suite is used well for teaching in most subjects. The comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education effectively promotes pupils' social and emotional needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral and personal support given to pupils is strong and contributes well to pupils' very good personal development and well-being. Staff know pupils well and pupils consequently feel well cared for. The school liaises closely with a range of service providers to ensure good care and support for all pupils including those most at risk. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are firmly in place. Regular risk assessments ensure that pupils are taught in a safe environment. The rigorous systems for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance ensure most pupils attend regularly.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Good systems for monitoring pupils' progress are in place and targets have been set for raising standards in English and mathematics, but pupils are not

always helped to meet these targets through careful marking of their work. Although most teachers praise good work, they do not always indicate why it is good, or refer consistently to pupils' learning targets. Personal targets for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not always sufficiently clear to ensure pupils have a good understanding of how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is a clear focus on raising standards and in increasing pupils' progress, to which all staff aspire. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff and they are well motivated to improve their knowledge and skills. Staff readily take on new challenges and research ways to improve their pupils' learning. This strong ethos is clearly led by the headteacher who is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. There are well-established and comprehensive systems for monitoring the work of the school which identify underachievement and set in motion strategies of support. Data from tests are analysed and weaknesses in teaching identified so these aspects are improved. Despite these effective procedures the school could not identify consistent trends for only satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6 in the last 3 years. They were not disheartened and have worked steadily to improve teaching, and more consistent good achievement is now clearly evident. Financial management is good and effective use is made of outside funding to increase the workforce so that additional programmes can be implemented. Governors are well informed and supportive. They are committed to ensuring pupils have the benefits of a wide curriculum.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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?	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kitwell Primary School and Nursery Class, Birmingham, B32 4DL

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering all our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school that has lots of strengths. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Most of you make good progress and you reach standards that are at least in line with those expected and sometimes even higher.
- Your behaviour is good. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You understand how to keep yourselves safe, and make sensible choices about how to keep healthy.
- You clearly enjoy your lessons and often have lots of fun. You work very hard and want to do well.
- You are taught well and your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting.
- The headteacher leads the school well and the staff work as an effective team.
- All the staff look after you very well so you feel safe and happy.
- You have lots of interesting things to do, including many visits and additional activities.

Even though Kitwell Primary is a good school, there are some ways in which it can do even better. I have particularly asked the headteacher and governors to do two things.

- To ensure teaching is always good and that you have a really clear understanding of how well you are doing and how to make your work even better.
- To make sure you have lots of opportunities to use your writing and mathematics in other subjects so your understanding becomes even stronger.

Thank you again for making our visit such a pleasant one, and remember you can do your bit by continuing to work hard.

Best wishes

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector