

The Deanery Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 103542 |
| Local Authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 308350 |
| Inspection dates | 2 July 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Melvyn Hemmings |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 466 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Claire Parker |
| Headteacher | Mrs Sally Yates |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3–5 May 2005 |
| School address | Fox Hollies Road Walmley B76 2RD |
| Telephone number | 0121 3516441 |
| Fax number | 0121 3130320 |

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|---------------------------|-------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection date(s) | 2 July 2008 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues:

- if the level of challenge for more able pupils is sufficient, especially for those in Year 2
- to what extent there are effective links between subjects
- how effectively leaders at all levels are involved in promoting school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, assessment and tracking records, observations of the school at work, and discussions with staff, the chair of governors and pupils. The parental questionnaire responses were analysed. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 the report.

Description of the school

This large school is popular and oversubscribed. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It cherishes each pupil as a unique individual within a caring Christian ethos, and very effectively supports them in achieving to their full potential. The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school, being rightly proud of the wide range of stimulating experiences provided for their children. The following parental comment is typical of many: 'We feel incredibly lucky that our children attend this school. The staff go above and beyond what they should do for children and care about the whole child. I feel any parent would want to send their child to this lovely, caring school.'

At the core of the school's success are outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher provides excellent educational direction and a very clear vision for school improvement. Leaders at all levels very ably support her, and there is a strong shared commitment amongst all those involved in school life to promoting its improvement. Some subject leaders are relatively new to their roles but the high quality training and support given to them ensure they are suitably involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the correct areas for development to be identified. Leaders then take decisive action by setting and using challenging targets to bring about improvement. For example, the action taken over the last 18 months to increase the numbers of pupils achieving the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 has proved successful. Governors are very supportive of the school and their effectiveness as critical friends plays an important role in the success of the school. Leaders are not complacent and constantly strive to improve provision further. For example, they are rightly exploring ways of further strengthening links between subjects to add more creativity to the curriculum. The school's excellent track record of sustained improvement in recent years shows the capacity to make any further improvements is outstanding.

Teaching and learning are outstanding and ensure that pupils make consistently good or better progress throughout the school. As a result, pupils build very effectively on previous learning and their achievement is outstanding. Children enter Nursery with skill levels as expected for their age. The good progress they make in the Foundation Stage ensures that, on entry to Year 1, pupils are working securely within the goals expected of them in all areas of learning, and many are exceeding them. Pupils attain standards by the end of Year 2 that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science, and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level in these subjects is well above the national average. Standards in science are particularly high and result from their very well developed investigational skills. Pupils' creative writing skills are very high. This is because they have many opportunities to practise and refine these skills by writing in a range of styles across all subjects. Pupils have very well developed skills in information and communication technology and use these well to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils' standards of presentation are high and they take great care and show pride in their work.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and this greatly benefits the progress they make. Relationships are excellent and this ensures that classrooms are very friendly and calm places in which to work. Teachers use marking very effectively to suggest to pupils how they could improve their work. They involve pupils very well in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve. Pupils with learning difficulties make the same progress as other pupils because of the very well targeted extra support they receive. Teaching assistants play an integral role in ensuring all pupils achieve to their full capability.

Pupils behave in an exemplary way and are kind and polite. They greatly enjoy coming to school and take a full part in all activities. They make a very positive contribution to school life by taking on a range of responsibilities. These include being a school councillor, house captain and peer mediator. In so doing they effectively develop their negotiating and leadership skills. They also contribute very well to the wider community, such as by fundraising for local charities and the choir performing in church fetes and fairs. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles very well, as is seen in their healthy choices at lunchtime and their enthusiastic participation in the many sporting activities offered by the school. They also have a really good awareness of how to stay safe, acting responsibly in and around school. Pupils are prepared in an outstanding way for their future lives.

A wide range of high quality enrichment activities very effectively extends the curriculum. Pupils talk with particular enthusiasm about the visits in which they can take part, including a residential visit to an activity centre in Shropshire and a theatre visit in London. These experiences make a very positive contribution to their personal and social development. The curriculum is planned well to develop pupils' creative talents and the provision for music is particularly strong, with the school having a choir and orchestra. The school is keen to develop pupils' creative skills further and is looking at ways of strengthening the good links between subjects to achieve this. The pastoral care of pupils is excellent and safeguarding arrangements are very rigorous. There are very strong links with outside agencies to provide extra support for individual pupils when required. The school has a 'Jolly Jungle' unit that very effectively helps pupils overcome any temporary emotional problems, worries or concerns they might have. Academic guidance is very strong and plays a major role in pupils' progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Staff have a very good awareness of the needs of children of this age and so provide activities that are interesting and capture their imagination. Children show much enjoyment in these activities and work well in pairs and small groups. They behave very well and are keen to learn. Staff encourage them to make choices for themselves and this has a beneficial effect on their development as independent learners. Staff check children's progress carefully and use the information well to set them challenging targets to improve. The leader has a very good view of the strengths and weaknesses in provision, and as a result is already planning to further develop children's mathematical skills by providing more opportunities for them to investigate and solve simple problems. Parents are involved well in their children's learning and are kept fully informed about their progress. Children in Nursery and Reception are housed in different buildings and this is a barrier to the provision

functioning as an integrated Foundation Stage unit. To improve provision, the main school building is to be extended during the summer holidays to accommodate all of these children together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen links between subjects to add even more creativity to the curriculum.
- Ensure the new accommodation for Nursery and Reception children is used effectively as a fully integrated Foundation Stage unit.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of boarding provision | |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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|---|----------|
| How good is 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 |
| How well 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 | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|---|----------|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 1 |
| 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 |

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.

Leadership and management

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| 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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 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 | 1 |
| 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

3 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Deanery Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Walmley B76 2RD

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. A special word of thanks to the head boy, who showed me around school when I arrived. Yours is an outstanding school. It helps you make excellent progress and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are exceptional by the end of Year 6.

What I found about your school.

- You behave in an exemplary manner and are very kind and considerate to others.
- Your school is a very friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- Teachers have high expectations of your performance and behaviour and you have very positive attitudes to learning.
- You show a great deal of enjoyment in coming to school.
- Adults look after you in an outstanding way and make sure you are safe and secure in and around school and on visits.
- You make a very good contribution to the school community and to the life of the local community.
- The curriculum is made interesting by lots of very exciting activities that you say make learning fun.
- You are adopting healthy lifestyles in an excellent manner and show a very good awareness of how to stay safe.
- Leaders of the school are working hard to make it even better.

What I have asked your school to do now.

- Make the curriculum even more creative by strengthening links between subjects.
- Ensure the new accommodation for Nursery and Reception children is used well to help them learn together.

You are a credit to your school. All of you can help the school by always trying your best in all you do.

All my best wishes for the future

Melvyn Hemmings
Lead inspector