

Short Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103272
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323789
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Field

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)	445
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	110
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Mason
Headteacher	Hilary Collier
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Streetly Road Erdington Birmingham B23 5JP
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most other primary schools and provides for pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds, a very small proportion of whom, are learning English as a new language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that seen nationally whilst the percentage who are eligible for free school meals is above that seen nationally. The school provides for 110 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). At the end of nursery, around two thirds of the children typically transfer to the Reception Year. There are an above average proportion of pupils who join the school at non-standard times, especially in Years 4 and 5.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and improving, due to the renewed leadership drive to raise pupils' academic achievements. The headteacher, very ably assisted by a recently appointed deputy, are accurate in their diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are working in successful partnership to move things forward. Senior leaders are well focused on the priority areas to be tackled that will assist better quality and outcomes. They are good role models as core subject leaders and classroom practitioners and their work is influencing positive change. Well-conceived action plans are focused on improving pupils' progress and the school's monitoring has moved up a gear, with some good mentoring and coaching assisting better consistency in teaching. The school can demonstrate a good track record in improvement over the last twelve months and has good capacity to sustain this into the future.

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Children in the EYFS achieve successfully because of the good provision made for them as do pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from a carefully planned programme of intervention and specific targets that ensure their good progress throughout the school. There is good use of challenging targets to help the school raise its game that is reflected in the significantly improved standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The impact of target setting in raising standards has yet to be seen so dramatically in the first two years of Key Stage 2, where more work is required to help staff set specific 'next step' targets and to review them with pupils at regular intervals. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in Nursery, Reception, and Years 5 and 6, facilitating good progress. Relationships between pupils and staff are a strength in all years, as is behaviour management, which results in calm and purposeful learning. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is not yet good enough to ensure that all pupils learn well at all times. This is particularly the case in mathematics. In the weaker lessons in these years, teachers are not using assessment information precisely enough to plan work that provides sufficient challenge, especially for the more able learners. Occasionally, lessons also proceed at a slow pace and allow too little time for pupils to complete tasks, and this limits their progress.

Pupils work from a sound curriculum with good features that nurture their good social and moral awareness and positive involvement in the life and development of the school and local community. Close attention is given to adapting the curriculum to meet the personal needs of lower attaining pupils and those new to school. A useful tracking system is being implemented that offers good potential for school leaders to keep a check on the progress that individuals and groups of pupils are making. There are not yet enough regular checks on the findings to enable any troughs in progress to be pinpointed early on so that effective intervention can take place and otherwise satisfactory academic guidance strengthened.

Good attention is given to the pupils' well-being, with robust arrangements in place to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. The school's work to improve attendance and punctuality, which were flagged as issues at the last inspection, have met with success. Staff know the pupils really well and are very responsive to individual needs. The pupils recognise this and say that they feel safe and happy in school. Many parents commented on the caring environment, saying such things as, 'The teachers are very approachable and understanding. There is a pleasant and friendly atmosphere.' The school draws on the services of many experts in the field to ensure that those pupils who are most at risk are helped to develop positive self-esteem, make well-informed choices about keeping safe and healthy and behave sensibly.

Governors are supportive and carry out all statutory requirements efficiently. The chair of the governing body visits weekly and, through her involvement in monitoring, is fully aware of the quality of education provided. Other governors use their expertise well to support financial management, for example, or to help in setting science challenges for the gifted and talented learners. Governors are effective in securing sound value for money in the procurement and provision of services.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

From a below average start, children in the EYFS achieve well in most areas of learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. They make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Despite good progress in reading and linking letters to sounds, some children's communication, language and literacy skills remain below the level expected for their age at the start of Key Stage 1. The school is developing a sensible transition programme that helps these learners transfer confidently and ensures that learning needs are fully met.

Strong teamwork and relationships and the emphasis placed on promoting the children's welfare and well-being assist their good personal development and positive self-esteem. Children with severe learning difficulties, including visual impairment, are fully included in all activities. Very good links with outside agencies support their successful integration and good progress. Home visits play an important part in building a good home-school partnership and support the development of a caring, calm atmosphere and ethos which encourage the children in their learning journey. There is good tracking of individual progress, with effective use made of the findings to ensure work is pitched at just the right level for each child. The school has rightly identified that more work is required to ensure that assessments are developed to include moderation across the EYFS setting and staff team.

Good leadership and management are taking the EYFS forward. The EYFS leader recognises that closer liaison between Nursery and Reception staff will enable best practice to be shared and further strengthen provision, particularly in the use of the outdoor space to promote all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure middle and higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in mathematics by raising teachers' expectations, injecting more challenge into the tasks set, increasing the pace of lessons and giving pupils time to complete their work.
- Insist that teachers make better use of assessment findings to plan work that provides sufficient challenge, especially for the more able learners, and informs the setting of specific and measurable 'next step' targets.
- Ask senior leaders to evaluate at more regular intervals the progress pupils are making so that any pupil in danger of not making good progress is targeted with the necessary support.

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

When they start in the nursery, children's learning and development are below the level expected for their age. Most make good progress and achieve well despite some still working at a below average skill level in communication and language. Pupils' good achievement is built on successfully in Key Stage 1, where standards have been improving and are very close to the average by the end of the key stage.

The picture of standards and achievement in Key Stage 2 since the time of the last inspection is very mixed, with the data showing a declining trend, particularly in mathematics. Following a highly effective focus last year on raising pupils' achievement and standards, provisional Year 6 results showed an uplift of 15–20% across the board to reach an average position. Precision teaching and setting arrangements are two factors that assisted this positive improvement and these are in place and working well in the current Year 6. The progress that pupils made last year in Years 3 and 4 was barely adequate. An effective system of mentoring and coaching is assisting better teaching. However, other initiatives to track and target quicker progress in these years, especially in mathematics, have yet to show a tangible impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Moral and social aspects are good because of the strong emphasis staff place on personal responsibility and taking responsibility for one's own actions. Relationships are a strength of the caring and harmonious ethos. Pupils are well aware of a healthy diet and say how great the school's lunchtime salad bar is. They enjoy taking part in PE lessons and really like participating in the many after-school activities available. Pupils adopt good healthy lifestyles and identify that exercise 'makes your bones stronger'. Pupils feel safe in school because all instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly. Behaviour in class and at play is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the community as members of the school council, ICT monitors or house teams. Children in the EYFS have helped design their garden whilst Year 4 pupils take part in a project called 'Growing Gains', which involves the care and cultivation of a vegetable plot in the school grounds. Pupils are building satisfactory numeracy and literacy skills to help them prepare for a future working life, with the recent residential visit in Year 6 assisting good teamwork and corporate endeavour.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, and there are examples of good teaching particularly in the EYFS and Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is good, there are high expectations and plenty of challenge that result in pupils gaining good knowledge and understanding and building key skills. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards as a tool to enhance teaching and learning. Teaching assistants support teaching and learning well and provide good support for individuals and groups of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is a key feature in helping them make good progress. There are weaknesses in teaching Years 3 and 4 where expectations, pace and challenge are not good enough to bring about

good, rather than satisfactory, progress for middle and higher attaining pupils. The presentation of work in Year 4 pupils' books coupled with misspelled headings and dates are particular shortcomings that have yet to be fully addressed. Additionally, learning outcomes are not planned precisely enough for teachers to assess pupils' progress rigorously and accurately plan the next stages of their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The sound curriculum matches the needs of most pupils and has particular strengths in the provision for pupils who find learning difficult, and good provision for personal, social and health education. The school has not yet given sufficient attention to ensuring that the more able learners in all years have curricular experiences that support their good achievement. The school is working with other schools to extend creativity and enhance pupils' experiences via 'themed weeks'. A range of visitors are invited into school to share their life experiences, skills and aspirations and these have a good impact in raising pupils' expectations of the world at work. Curriculum workshops are held for parents and carers, and local businesses sponsor school events as well as supporting groups of pupils for reading. Governors are ensuring a sound contribution to community cohesion through initiatives such as the email links with a school in Kenya and the introduction of Spanish into all Key Stage 2 classes this year. However, they recognise that more development is required in promoting the global and multicultural dimension of education, but do not yet have specific plans to address this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care and support for pupils provided by the school are good and as a result, pupils feel safe and well looked after. Academic guidance is satisfactory, with more work required to ensure that all pupils are clear about how to improve their work and have opportunity to review their personal targets regularly. Much has been achieved in reducing absence and improve punctuality. Pupils strive hard to win extra playtime for good time keeping. The school has robust procedures for the welfare and safeguarding of pupils, with child protection arrangements fully meeting requirements. The school has forged links with a range of specialist agencies to support pupils, especially those who are most vulnerable. The work of the school's sensory group that nurtures the well-being of pupils who need extra support is used as a model of best practice in other schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory overall, as reflected in the satisfactory achievement of the pupils. A new leadership team is working together well to bring improvement. Between them, they have many skills and talents that are making a positive difference. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection three years ago in raising attendance and lifting standards in Key Stage 1. However, it is work over the last twelve months that has reversed the declining trend in standards at Key Stage 2 and enabled more pupils to reach the higher Level 5 in national tests than previously. Senior leaders are well aware of the weaknesses that still exist and are working effectively to iron out the inconsistencies in teaching and learning that are impeding Years 3 and 4 pupils' good progress. Staff are on board for the challenges

ahead and are working hard to improve their practice. Everyone shares the same determination at Short Heath: to do their best for the pupils. Although the monitoring system supports accurate self-evaluation, it is not yet well enough focussed or frequent enough to measure the effects of the strategies being used to improve progress.

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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	2

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	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**

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Short Heath Primary School, Birmingham B23 5JP

Thank you for the friendly welcome when my team of inspectors visited your school. You told us that you enjoy school because your lessons are interesting and everyone gets on well together. We were very pleased to see you playing so nicely together at lunchtime and how much you enjoy the salad bar – well done for being such 'healthy eaters'! Here are some of the other things we found out about your school that we thought you should know.

- The very youngest children in EYFS get off to a flying start and are well prepared to move to Year 1.
- Infant pupils achieve well and reach standards that are not far off average – it is pleasing to see a good number of you doing so well.
- Junior pupils achieve soundly overall, with many of you making good progress in Year 6 that enables you to reach your goals.
- Teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 is not yet good enough in order for all of you to reach the very best standards in your work in mathematics. We have asked the school to check that you are all being given hard enough work and enough time to finish your tasks. You may see the headteacher and deputy in some of your lessons as they work alongside your teachers or pop in to see how you are getting on.
- Some of you know your personal targets and others are less sure. We have asked your teachers to make sure you know how to improve your work and be clear about the next step to take to reach your target, especially those of you who find work easy.
- You feel happy and safe at school because all staff are caring and listen to any worries you have. This supports your good relationships with one another and very sensible behaviour.
- The headteacher and her staff are keen for Short Heath to go from strength to strength and they are going to work hard to achieve this. I am sure you will all help them by always trying your very best and aiming high.

Good wishes and every success for the future,

Yours sincerely

Christine Field Lead inspector 3