

Lightwoods Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103947
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355495
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Baldwin
Headteacher	Elaine Bowen
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed the nine teachers who were teaching at the time of the inspection. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body and with staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised the arrangements in place to safeguard pupils, the school's learning and improvement plan and self-evaluation, and the assessments that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress. Questionnaire returns from 73 parents and carers were analysed, as well as returns from staff and all pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Are pupils making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all classes?
- Does the teaching and support provided for pupils offer the right level of challenge to enable them all to reach their learning and attainment targets?
- How effective is the school's monitoring in sustaining improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Just under half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the rest come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group (28%) is represented by pupils of Indian heritage. Approximately 16% of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language, although all are fluent in English and do not need individual support. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below that of most schools. The main areas of additional need include pupils with moderate or specific learning or communication difficulties such as dyslexia. The school manages an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and out-of-hours clubs, and has well-established links and partnerships with other schools, colleges and organisations. It has a large number of national accreditations, including the International Schools Award, as it has links with schools outside the United Kingdom, the ICT Mark in recognition of its provision in information and communication technology, Activemark, the Eco-schools award and National Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Lightwoods Primary School is outstanding. The pupils achieve exceptionally well and demonstrate enthusiasm and a zest for learning. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is, and has been for some time, high. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in high attendance rates. Many state that they greatly enjoy their lessons and the wealth of additional activities provided by a dedicated team of teachers and support staff. Parents and carers express their satisfaction with the school, with many paying tribute to the efforts of the staff in helping their children to do well. 'An excellent school,' 'The school and teachers are very approachable,' and 'Excellent teaching standards,' are a few of the many tributes expressed by parents and carers representing year groups right across the school. Underpinning the school's success is strong and highly effective leadership which has encouraged the staff and governing body to continually strive towards further development. The headteacher and governing body have been diligent and highly effective in recruiting new staff, as well as undertaking sharp and systematic monitoring of pupils' and teachers' performance. Well-focused training and support for all staff have brought about significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning since the school's last inspection. The school demonstrates outstanding capacity to sustain improvements and provides excellent value for money.

Pupils benefit enormously from outstanding teaching, where the quality is never less than good and the pace of learning in lessons is rapid and purposeful. The staff are highly committed to pupils' all-round academic and personal development so that pupils are exceptionally well behaved and highly motivated to do well. Teachers' assessments are sharp and accurate and pupils are helped to evaluate their own progress towards their learning targets. However, pupils are not always given enough time in lessons to reflect on what they have learned in order to practise, consolidate and apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills. The learning objectives set for pupils are ambitious and challenging so that lessons are always productive with pupils fully engaged and involved in their learning. However, lessons do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to work independently because the staff sometimes over-direct, leaving less time for pupils to learn through trial and error, or to explore their own methods and ideas even further.

Daily intervention sessions before, during and after school hours are provided by skilled teaching and support staff. There are well-devised programmes that help pupils of all abilities catch up or accelerate their learning towards very high levels. Younger pupils are often grouped with older ones if they demonstrate the skills and aptitudes to exceed the levels expected for their age. This, for example, is evident in mathematics, when sessions for particularly talented pupils boost their learning and performance to reach extremely high standards. The school is very committed to including all pupils by providing them with excellent opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community through visits, fundraising and creative, musical and sporting events. Pupils are enterprising and show

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initiative. The school council is successful in representing pupils' views and there are very good opportunities for them to support others or make suggestions to improve their school. Pupils who need additional support are monitored closely and diligent assessments of their progress help the staff to give these pupils the confidence and skills to improve their learning. In addition, the staff provide strong pastoral support and excellent care and guidance to pupils. The curriculum is stimulating and varied, as pupils are offered many opportunities to engage in a wide range of interesting projects, for example, through independent learning logs to undertake further research in school and at home.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on current strong practice to improve even further the impact of teaching on pupils' learning by:
 - giving pupils greater responsibility and more time to work independently without too much direction from adults
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reflect on and assess their own learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The majority of children join the Reception class with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected of four-year-olds. By the end of each key stage, pupils have made rapid progress so that their attainment by the end of Year 6 has been consistently high in English, mathematics and science for the last three years. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities do exceptionally well in relation to their starting points. In lessons, they persevere when challenged and volunteer to ask questions, with excellent support for those who lack the confidence to offer ideas as support staff are always on hand to engage and encourage them. Pupils are confident in groups when generating their own ideas, for example, during an outstanding English lesson, when Year 6 pupils produced lively and imaginative accounts to describe reptiles. The lesson was made more stimulating as a parent brought some animals into the classroom, which sparked pupils' enthusiasm and interests even further. In Year 5, pupils shared ideas and wrote sophisticated accounts of mythological characters, and generated intelligent and perceptive questions for more extended studies of myths and legends. Not all lessons provide pupils with enough opportunities for them to probe further independently to deepen their understanding.

Pupils work hard and achieve exceptionally well in both their academic and all-round development. There is a strong sense of collective responsibility and pupils treat each other with respect and courtesy. Elected school councillors are encouraged to represent pupils' views to improve the school. Pupils appreciate that their work and efforts are valued and supported by the staff. 'Our teachers listen to us and everyone is really helpful if we get stuck or are worried,' commented one, with nods of agreement amongst the rest of the group. Pupils enjoy class discussions or debates about important moral, social or cultural issues. Their involvement in environmental work to improve the school grounds and their study, for example, of features of the River Severn, help them to understand why conservation is important, although there are missed opportunities for them to think more broadly about global issues facing the world today. Pupils' excellent spiritual and

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moral development is nurtured through well-devised programmes of assemblies and creative, sporting or cultural events. Many pupils spoken to were aware of the many social and cultural benefits of the topics they study, with pupils of Indian heritage particularly enjoying sharing their experiences of their heritage with other pupils. All pupils benefit from special projects, exhibitions, fundraising events and visits, including an excellent range of residential visits in the United Kingdom and abroad which broaden their interests and talents.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The teaching is never less than good and it engages and supports pupils' knowledge and understanding. Lessons are very well planned using accurate assessments to offer challenge and variation so that the pace of learning is brisk, purposeful and productive. Lessons provided for pupils who are particularly talented in mathematics offer the right level of challenge as many are working towards very high standards that are comparable to early entry GCSE. These pupils are able to use a wide range of methods of calculation to investigate, for example, complex number sequences and arithmetic progressions. In all lessons, pupils enjoy sharing and generating ideas with others, which is a common feature of their learning. Pupils often extend the range of vocabulary they use to improve the quality of their writing by using complex sentences. This was the case in an excellent English lesson when Year 2 pupils were prompted to explain why 'Horrid Henry's bag' (a

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story character) was left lying around untidily in the corridor. This led to productive and enthusiastic discussions that developed pupils' ideas to produce good-quality expressive writing. The vast majority of the teaching reflects these strong features of learning, although some lessons over-direct the pupils, leaving less scope for them to work independently. Even in challenging and fast-paced lessons, pupils are sometimes given too little time to pause and reflect on their learning in order to consolidate or deepen their understanding of newly acquired skills and knowledge.

Combined with outstanding care and guidance, the staff have modified the curriculum to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including those with dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties such as speech and language delay. Daily booster sessions for groups and individuals accelerate the progress of those who find learning difficult. Assessments show that the vast majority of pupils who receive additional support manage to catch up and reach age-related levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are broadening opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and develop their talents and interests through enrichment opportunities embedded within the curriculum. For example, specially themed days enable pupils to apply a range of skills by combining art, science, technology, humanities and a range of creative subjects. Outstanding use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) which extends pupils' computer skills and use of interactive technologies to produce multimedia displays, reports and animated presentations. Projects linked to sustainable development in science and geography broaden pupils' knowledge of the effects of climate change on the environment. Pupils are thoroughly absorbed during weekly specialised music tuition, with good opportunities to extend their language and communication skills by learning a modern foreign language.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's outstanding performance is underpinned by the success of its leadership in embedding ambition and sustaining high standards. The headteacher and senior leadership team have nurtured a climate of collective responsibility for the achievement and welfare of all pupils. Robust assessments of pupils' and staff performance have enabled the staff to measure the school's effectiveness accurately. Diligent attention is given to the process of audit and review that fully involves the governing body. The school has, in the main, accurately assessed most aspects of its performance, with some modest evaluations reflecting high expectations. All teachers have well-defined responsibilities to check the subjects or areas they manage and the performance of the pupils they teach. All classes have links with a member of the governing body and, together with regular pupil progress reviews, there is an effective process of monitoring which sharpens the impact of

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management on classroom practice. The governing body is committed and supportive and fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well. It uses the information and reports from staff to pose questions and challenge the school. It is fully involved in self-evaluation to produce its own action plan which shapes the direction and pace of improvement by checking the extent to which the school is achieving its priorities.

The school is successful in creating a cohesive community. Pupils are encouraged to develop a wider understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and beyond through the school's extensive international links with other schools. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils to achieve as well as they can, which is reflected most in the school's excellent engagement with its pupils, families and local community. At the time of the inspection, all safeguarding requirements were met well, with a few minor administrative amendments required to the system for recording suitability checks on visiting students. There are good arrangements to ensure that only suitable adults come into contact with pupils. The pupils themselves are also involved in undertaking their own risk assessments through the school council. Those spoken to were very aware of internet safety and how, for example, to avoid hazards when e-mailing. There are excellent partnerships with local colleges and universities, as well local businesses, sports clubs and the cluster of schools in the school's consortium. Consequently, the school is innovative in its development of the curriculum as it is continually using the expertise and shared vision of its partnerships to look beyond the horizon and strive towards building on its current outstanding provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception children make outstanding progress. By the time they start Year 1, attainment is well above that expected of five-year-olds in all areas of learning. Teachers and support

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staff provide a stimulating range of activities that helps the children to improve their reading, writing, mathematics and early science skills. The sounds that letters make (phonics) are taught consistently well and followed up successfully when children join Year 1, reflecting excellent transition planning between classes. This also accounts for the children's accurate handwriting, spelling and sentence structure when writing independently as they move through the school. The children recognise familiar words in stories because they have regular opportunities to read and write. The teaching inspires the children's curiosity and interests. For example, when asked to look for a 'treasure map', the children showed great interest when discussing where the 'treasure' might be hidden.

Children settle quickly and thoroughly enjoy playing and working indoors, outdoors and in the local community with equal success. However, the staff sometimes miss opportunities to provide time for the children to pause and reflect on their learning because the children are so busy trying to complete tasks rather than consolidating newly-acquired knowledge or skills. Every child is purposefully engaged when, for example, arranging numbered mats or cones to make sequences and number patterns. The children thrive on the challenges, for example, of solving puzzles, building shapes and counting out odd and even numbers while singing and clapping. The staff successfully nurture the children's understanding of the natural world and science when exploring different habitats, plants and animals, for example, when collecting eggs laid by the chickens that they care for in the outdoor area. The children explore and play in the outdoor areas safely and productively, which improves their physical and creative development extremely well. Regular and accurate assessments of children's progress are undertaken to ensure that the staff plan the right level of challenge and support for all the children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well managed and the staff undertake a thorough process of evaluation to ensure that the high quality of provision is sustained.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Nearly all parents and carers returning inspection questionnaires are happy with their child's experience at the school, although a few would like the school to take more account of their views. Most believe that this is a caring and supportive school. Inspection findings have found that there is a very good range of support and intervention programmes provided for pupils of all abilities. Despite a very small number of concerns about the progress their children are making, most parents and carers have commented that the teaching is effective and that they trust the school to help their children to do well in school. Inspection findings agree with these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lightwoods Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	68	22	30	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	62	28	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	60	22	30	4	5	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	45	30	41	6	8	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	37	51	31	42	2	3	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	53	25	34	4	5	4	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	47	36	49	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	42	32	44	2	3	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	42	32	44	6	8	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	40	37	51	6	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	34	36	49	6	8	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	43	59	26	36	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	62	23	32	1	1	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lightwoods Primary School, Oldbury, B68 9BG

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school and to those who completed the questionnaires. The inspectors enjoyed meeting and talking with you, as well as observing some of your lessons. You go to an outstanding school. The inspectors were pleased to see you behave exceptionally well and can see why this is a successful school because your teachers are providing you with excellent challenges. Your assessments and work show that you are doing very well to reach high standards. Your attendance is high when compared with other schools, again well done, and to your parents and carers for supporting the school so well.

Reception children are doing exceptionally well. They are very good at learning their letter sounds and numbers, which lays excellent foundations for their learning. In Year 1 right through to Year 6, the inspectors judged that pupils are doing extremely well in all subjects, including ICT where you also work to a high standard. We have asked your teachers to carry on helping you to do even better by giving you more opportunities in lessons to think, reflect and check your work, so that you are always clear about what you are learning. Inspectors have also asked that your teachers give you more time show how well you have understood things, which is what your teachers call 'self-assessment'.

Your art work is displayed very well around the school and in classrooms, and congratulations for winning prizes and national awards in sport, Eco work and the International Award for the strong links you have with schools abroad. Throughout the school, you are doing exceptionally well with your reading and writing and inspectors were very pleased to read some excellent stories, reports and diaries as part of your literacy work. Well done. The teaching is outstanding and is helping you to make rapid progress. The headteacher, staff and governing body have made excellent improvements since the last time your school was inspected, and like all outstanding schools, they still work hard to continue improving. You can all help too by carrying on trying hard and keeping up your excellent work. On behalf of the inspectors, I wish you every success in continuing to achieve your very best at Lightwoods Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Her Majesty's Inspector

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