

Slater Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120101
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	379950
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Tim Bristow 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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Allison
Headteacher	Cheryl Henderson
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	22–23 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Tim Bristow

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed five teachers and visited 14 lessons. He held meetings with members of the governing body, the headteacher, staff and four groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. He observed the school's work, and looked at: the school development plan, governing body meeting minutes, assessment information, lesson plans, school safety procedures, and responses to questionnaires from 53 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language are above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. No pupils currently have a statement of educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils that start or leave school during term time is above average.

When the school was inspected in December 2009, it was judged to require special measures. The school meets current government floor standards. Pupils are able to attend a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools status.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.
- This is a satisfactory school. Achievement is now satisfactory. Attainment is low because of a legacy of underachievement, but the gap is closing rapidly. This improvement is as a result of a sustained acceleration in pupils' progress. Overall, pupils are progressing as well as all groups nationally. At Key Stage 2 nearly all pupils make better progress than this.
- The overall effectiveness of the school is not good because teaching is not yet good overall. That is because in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage it is generally satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, it is good and occasionally outstanding. In satisfactory lessons, for a few pupils, such as the more able, assessment information is not used as effectively as it could be to provide work that is sufficiently challenging.
- The curriculum has improved considerably, particularly for reading, writing, and science. It also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. Pupils are polite, respectful and considerate. However, behaviour and safety is restricted to being satisfactory overall because, where teaching is satisfactory, pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning. The curriculum does not promote cultural development sufficiently well because too few opportunities are identified in lessons to make links with other cultures.
- The highly effective headteacher has galvanised the school and community. Staff performance is managed with rigour and is resulting in sustained improvements to teaching. Currently, the capacity to sustain improvement is satisfactory because other school leaders, while eager to lead, and working hard to learn, are not yet as effective as they could be.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure that, in order for achievement to be good by summer 2013, teaching is good by:

- using assessment information more effectively to plan work so that all groups of pupils, in particular the more able, make good progress
 - making expectations of what pupils should achieve more explicit so that all pupils engage well with their work
 - improving marking, particularly in mathematics throughout the school and in English at Key Stage 1
 - ensuring better progression in some aspects of the curriculum, such as shape and measure in mathematics.
- Establish more opportunities routinely to promote cultural development in lessons.
 - Ensure that all leaders are fully equipped with the skills necessary to be more effective in driving improvement within their areas of responsibility.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment is rising rapidly, particularly at Key Stage 2. School assessment information shows that, in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6, the attainment of all groups of pupils is now in line with national averages for the first time since 2005. The gap is also narrowing considerably at Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is improving and also as a result of the effective additional activities and support for different groups of pupils. All the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their children are making good progress. For some groups and pupils at Key Stage 2 this is the case. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as well as those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are making similar progress to other groups in school. In writing and mathematics, they are making better progress than expected nationally. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages make progress that is in line with other groups in the school. Pupils recently arrived in the school, particularly those who speak an additional language and are at the early stages of learning to speak English, make good progress.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes are satisfactory overall. The large majority of children enter Year 1 with skills levels that are typical for their age in most areas. The language and literacy skills of the majority of children on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are low. For a small minority, development in language and literacy remains lower than is typical on entry to Year 1. However, progress is accelerating at a good pace. For example, in a lesson where the teaching was good, children were developing their speaking and listening skills well because of the high quality of the questioning and dialogue that they had with adults.

Assessment information shows that attainment in reading at Key Stage 1 is low, but the gap is narrowing. Improvements to teaching and the curriculum have resulted in pupils being much better equipped with the necessary skills to read words that they are not familiar with than in the past. However, a limited general knowledge makes it more difficult for them to understand what it is they are reading. For example, Year 2 pupils were trying to read the words 'chariot' and 'cottage', but, because they did not know what these were, it made reading more difficult.

The reading and writing skills of pupils at Key Stage 2 are improving rapidly. They are now much better prepared for the next stage in their education. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 English lesson where the teaching was outstanding, pupils were drafting instructions for making musical instruments. Work was of a very high standard because the teacher had been extremely successful at tailoring the challenge of the task precisely for each pupil regardless of ability. Pupils worked hard throughout the lesson demonstrating a very strong sense of purpose. In some lessons where teaching is satisfactory, a few pupils do not make the progress that they could because the work is either too challenging, or for the more able, too easy. When this occurs, the pupils do not work as hard as they could.

Quality of teaching

All the parents and carers that responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that their children are taught well. The inspector agrees that, although teaching is satisfactory overall, it has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection, when it was judged inadequate. Teachers have worked effectively to make lessons interesting and to establish meaningful links between subjects. For example, during the inspection, the school was holding a science week. Teachers had successfully planned all lessons so that pupils were applying their literacy and numeracy skills within the context of the science topic of sound.

In the lessons where teaching is good, teachers foster pupils' moral and social development well. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 science lesson, pupils worked very cooperatively and considerately in groups when examining musical instruments. They demonstrated great enthusiasm and enjoyment in the tasks they were completing. One reason for this is the very effective relationships between the teachers and the pupils. In the lessons where teaching is satisfactory, social development is not as well-promoted. Occasionally, teachers do not make sufficiently clear their expectations of what pupils should achieve or of how well they should behave. This results in a few pupils occasionally becoming distracted and not working as cooperatively with each other as they could.

In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, teachers, sometimes, talk too long to pupils about what they are to be learning. This means that the pupils have less time than they could to get on with their work. Where teaching is good, the teachers keep introductions and interruptions to a minimum, focusing what they say sharply on what pupils need to know and learn to get on with their work.

The marking and guidance that pupils benefit from in writing at Key Stage 2 is excellent. Success criteria, advice and targets are exceptionally well linked and pertinent to each pupil's needs. Teachers weave this guidance into lessons expertly so that pupils are very clear about the steps they need to take to improve their work. Success criteria are pitched consistently to the different abilities of pupils in mathematical calculation and writing in all classes, but, at Key Stage 1 and in other aspects of mathematics, advice and marking are not as helpful at guiding pupils on the steps they need to take to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Historically, attendance has been very low. There has been considerable improvement and it is now average. Pupils reported enthusiastically how much they enjoy and appreciate the competitions and procedures to reward regular attendance. There are, however, a few pupils who are late for school. In consultation with parents and carers, the school has recently provided a breakfast club. This provides a safe and secure start to the day, but it is too early to determine whether this is having an impact on punctuality.

All pupils and nearly all parents and carers agree that there is a good standard of behaviour most of the time. Around the school most pupils are well behaved and sensible. One example of excellent behaviour was witnessed in an assembly, when two adults with a hearing impairment were explaining to pupils what it was like to be deaf. Without exception, the behaviour of pupils was exemplary. This was extremely effective promotion of pupils spiritual, moral, and social development as pupils demonstrated great consideration and empathy towards the adults.

In response to the inspection questionnaires, all parents, carers and pupils agree that children are safe in school. They are confident that procedures to promote anti-bullying are well managed. Pupils have high expectations of behaviour and report that there are very few incidents of name calling or swearing. As one pupil reported, 'We hate it when people swear.'

Pupils are keen to take responsibility for aspects of the schools' work. However, for understandable reasons, the headteacher and other leaders have had to prioritise improvements in other areas. Consequently, there are currently fewer opportunities than there could be for pupils to take a lead.

In lessons, there is a greater variation in behaviour. Where teaching is good, pupils have a very good attitude to their learning and demonstrate well-developed independence, cooperation and perseverance skills. The pupils are also conscientious about taking the necessary steps to improve their work, making good use of improvement time in lessons to pay attention to the individual guidance they receive from teachers. In satisfactory lessons, a few pupils get distracted and do not engage with their work as well as they could. This occurs when they are sitting on the carpet and have to listen to the teacher for too long, or when the work they receive is either too easy or too hard.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has implemented some very effective procedures that have resulted in the necessary improvements to teaching and achievement. For example, the accurate assessment procedures enable teachers to keep a careful check on the progress of all groups of pupils. The headteacher is rigorous in holding teachers to account to ensure that all pupils make accelerated progress. Until recently, the headteacher had to do this with little support from other leaders. However, since September 2011, middle leaders have worked conscientiously to develop their leadership skills and there are indications that they are having more impact on the work of the school. For example, recently, they led, monitored and evaluated the extremely successful poetry and art week resulting in pupils' work of a high standard.

Another example is the effective leadership of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Consequently, all teachers are much better equipped than they were to ensure these pupils make good progress.

Nearly all the parents and carers report that they would recommend this school to others. As one parent reported, 'I would like to say this might be small school, but it has a big heart. What I mean is that my child is very well looked after. Staff are very helpful. I feel it is very nice and lovely place for my child to be in and they look forward to coming into school'.

The governing body now demonstrate that they are effective guardians of the school's strategic development. They are conscientious in tackling discrimination and ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. This is particularly the case for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. They have also promoted the equality of pupils effectively by holding the school leaders to account to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least the expected progress. In addition, they have established a harmonious community in a school for pupils and their parents and carers who come from 15 minority heritage groups.

The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory. Generally the curriculum is broad and balanced, but there are a growing number of good features. Pupils now embark on an exciting range of enrichment activities. For example, older pupils attend an outdoor education centre on a weekly basis. Not only has this improved their physical and social development, but it has resulted in an improvement in their writing. Pupils wrote excellent newspaper articles based on their experiences at this centre. In mathematics, teachers have ensured that the curriculum for calculation and number work is progressive. In shape, measure and data handling work, this is less effective. Occasionally, pupils repeat work they have done previously because insufficient attention has been made to ensuring that teachers prepare lessons that are informed by previous learning. There are opportunities to promote other cultures and religions, for example recent work on Eid and Diwali. These opportunities are not exploited enough within the curriculum to give pupils a broad understanding and appreciation of the contribution made by other cultures within this country and abroad to society in the United Kingdom.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



24 February 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Slater Primary School, Leicester, LE3 5AS

Thank you for the help you gave me when I visited your school. You made me feel very welcome. If you remember, I came to look at the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. I was very pleased to see the important improvements to your education that the headteacher, other adults, and governing body have made. I thought that you were polite and friendly to adults and each other. Your parents and carers are also pleased at the improvements in the school. I was pleased to see how much you enjoy the many clubs and activities you take part in. You are working harder and doing much better in English and mathematics lessons. I saw children in the Nursery and Reception Year enjoying the activities that they took part in. I was also pleased to see that more of you are coming to school regularly every day.

Your teachers have worked hard to make lessons more interesting and to give you better help with your work. Overall, you are benefitting from a satisfactory education and the school continues to improve. I have asked the school to make the following improvements.

- Make some more changes to teaching so that you achieve even more.
- Teach you more about other cultures and religions and the contribution they make to our country.
- Make sure that all the teachers can help to improve your education.

Younger pupils can help by concentrating hard on your work; all of you can help by trying to come to school on time.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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