

George Dixon Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103200
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355339
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Jeffery Plumb

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Scriven
Headteacher	Maria Carter
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 14 lessons; altogether nine different teachers were seen. Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and an external adviser who supports the school. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised pupils' work and assessment records, policies, improvement plans and two case studies of pupils in vulnerable circumstances. Questionnaires completed by 61 parents and carers, staff and older pupils were analysed.

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

- Are there inconsistencies in the rates of progress made by pupils in different year groups in Key Stage 2?
- Is the school on track to reach the targets set to raise standards in English and mathematics for current Year 6 pupils and is the achievement gap between different ethnic groups narrowing?
- How robust is the school's analysis of the impact of low attendance on pupils' achievement and what decisive action does the school take to improve attendance?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The rate at which pupils join and leave the school is very high, because for a large majority of pupils their time in the school and local area is transitory. Typically the large majority of pupils in Year 6 did not start out in the school in Year 1. There are children of recently arrived immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, while a few are children from overseas whose parents and carers work in the diplomatic service. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and there are currently 27 different languages spoken by pupils. Just over 10% of pupils in the school are beginners in learning to speak English but, in some year groups the proportion is 20%. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

The construction of a new school building is about to start on an area of ground very close to the existing school. The school has 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory academic progress in response to sound teaching. It is an improving school where racial harmony is outstanding and pupils are well looked after.

Many pupils arrive from overseas and cannot speak English when they arrive. They are well-supported by the school and so quickly integrate into the local community. Relationships and communication with parents and carers, often using language interpreters, are good. The good quality of care gives pupils a strong sense of safety and security, and they develop a thorough understanding of how to live healthily. Pupils from many different countries treat each other with dignity and respect. Their understanding of their local, national and global communities is exceptional, and they make a valuable contribution to their own school and the wider community. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a particularly strong feature of the school.

The proportion of good teaching is improving securely and quickly, but it is satisfactory overall because it is not consistently effective in securing good progress for pupils in all year groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because the provision is well matched to their needs. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils build effectively on their good experience in Reception. Most pupils who sit the national tests in Year 6 join the school in different year groups throughout Key Stage 2. National test results are below average in reading, writing and mathematics but they are rising. Development of teaching following the analysis of very low national test results in 2009 paid dividends in closing the achievement gap the following year and standards continue to advance this year. Nonetheless, a few deficiencies remain in the teaching and where these occur they slow pupils' progress. In some Key Stage 2 classes, particularly in mathematics, assessment is not used sufficiently rigorously to check pupils understanding of the learning objectives. Not all pupils make the expected progress in these lessons and on these occasions teachers do not have the information required to plan to raise their achievement. Similarly, on rare occasions the lack of visual cues in lessons impede the gains in understanding made by pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve, and has demonstrated this in developments over the last two years. These achievements reflect the passion of the senior leadership team to be effective advocates for the pupils. The school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate. A range of monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out by the senior leadership team but the monitoring of teaching and learning does not focus sharply enough on the progress gains pupils make or fail to make in lessons. Attendance is low. Pupils who are frequently absent from school lag behind their peers who attend regularly and the few persistent absentees significantly underachieve. The

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school's analysis of absence does not securely explore the impact of poor attendance on pupils' achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching, particularly in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2, results in consistently good progress over time in all year groups by:
 - consistently providing visual cues for pupils who speak English as an additional language to enable them to understand the content and the learning objectives in all lessons
 - using assessment consistently in all lessons to check pupils understanding of what they are being taught and then realign planning to support those pupils who do not grasp the content taught.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils who are frequently absent from school so that they begin to enjoy school and achieve their very best by:
 - analysing in detail the impact of poor attendance on pupils' achievement
 - using this data to communicate with the parents and carers of pupils who are frequently absent from school why it is so important that their children attend school regularly.
- Strengthen the school's capacity to improve by:
 - honing in on the progress pupils make or fail to make in lessons when conducting lesson observations
 - using the evidence gained to improve teaching and learning across the school.
- Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The school's detailed and accurate assessments carried out when children enter the Reception class show that attainment on entry is well below what is expected of children of this age. The vast majority of children also have very limited English language skills. Provision for younger children takes good account of this so learning is good. Progress is improving rapidly in the school. However, learning in lessons remains inconsistent across the year groups in Key Stage 2 and so progress over time throughout the school as a whole is satisfactory rather than good. Progress is better in Years 5 and 6 than the lower years within the key stage. From year to year differences in achievement between the different ethnic groups do occur. However, the school takes decisive action when this happens and so successfully and speedily narrows the achievement gap of any particular ethnic group performing less well than the others. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Pupils willingly opt to eat the healthy foods sensitively selected to meet their religious requirements. They engage enthusiastically in the wide range of physical activities made available to them. They initiate fund-raising activities to support earthquake victims in Haiti and flood victims in Pakistan. They willingly take on leadership responsibility. They behave well in lessons and engage enthusiastically with the tasks set. They are equipped

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with relevant life skills, which are encouraged by the way teachers link literacy and numeracy to real life situations. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils developed their measurement skills by working out the amount of carpet required to fill the school's hall space. Pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is not better than satisfactory because standards in English and mathematics remain below the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
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?

Teaching is improving rapidly because of robust action taken by the headteacher to eradicate a small amount of inadequate teaching in Key Stage 2 last year. Strengths in teaching include the way transition between activities is skilfully managed so that no time is wasted and pupils' learning is maximised. Expectations are generally high. Where teaching takes into account pupils' understanding, the work is usually matched to pupils needs. There is a focus on assessing pupils' understanding in lessons but on some occasions teachers' do not rigorously check that all pupils have grasped the key words or the mathematical concepts being taught, so they are able to fill the gaps in future lessons. In most lessons but not all, effective use is made of powerful visual images to accelerate pupils' understanding of the key subject vocabulary words and the concepts taught. Marking of pupils' work is also improving but, some inconsistencies remain.

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Creative, innovative and relevant, the curriculum successfully engages pupils' interest and enhances their learning. Personal development is promoted well through good links with outside groups such as the police and a local football club. Good liaison with a local secondary school provides specialist teaching in physical education and for the development of pupils' data handling skills. In addition, the school purchases the teaching of Spanish for its pupils on a weekly basis. Provision for sport, music and raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity are particularly strong features of the curriculum. Specific developments to raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics are beginning to have a positive impact.

The school is able to demonstrate well through case studies, how it has intervened to support pupils and families in vulnerable circumstances to improve significantly their well-being and attainment. When pupils from a new ethnic group come into the school, the headteacher researches carefully their educational experience in their countries of origin, and uses this to plan support for them in adjusting to a new educational system. Interpreters are used effectively. Many staff offer bilingual support in a wide range of languages. The early-morning breakfast club provides pupils with a nutritious breakfast and a welcoming start to the day. Great sensitivity and care is shown to ensure pupils' cultures and religious beliefs are treated with dignity and respect. Multi-agency links support pupils with special educational needs well. Close work with the local authority education social worker and a raft of imaginative strategies put in place to raise attendance have led to some rapid improvements. Nonetheless, it remains low, in part because of a delay in establishing the school's expectations with newly arrived parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team show a commitment to school improvement. Their drive to raise standards is supported by the whole staff and morale within the school is buoyant. All staff and governors contribute to the school's satisfactory planning for improvement. All teachers and teaching assistants share the vision to eradicate any form of discrimination, and to remove barriers to learning faced by pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English, even though strategies are not fully effective in practice. The range of monitoring and evaluation activities shared by the senior leadership team and the governing body is suitable. A behavioural issue appertaining to one ethnic group was identified and has been totally and sensitively eradicated. Tracking shows that the school is on target to reach its challenging goals, and it also flags the inconsistencies in progress in different year groups throughout Key Stage 2. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular but does not always sufficiently hone in on the impact teaching has on learning in lessons.

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Governance is satisfactory. Governors visit the school regularly. They provide good support in respect of the new school build and challenge the leadership team about spending decisions. Governors do not probe academic achievement so effectively, for example the different rates of progress in Key Stage 2 year groups. Good practice in safeguarding is evident in several aspects; for example, the curriculum covers a wide range of relevant topics, from road safety to rigorously combating racism in a community which faces many challenges. Community cohesion lies at the heart of the school. There is an excellent plan and evaluation of the plan shows that it has been highly effective in achieving its aims. The school draws in support to benefit parents, carers and their children. For example, the school's nurse provides good support to families about the health facilities available to them in the community. Through an effective link with a local college, adult classes to teach parents and carers to speak English are hosted by the school. As a result, their children make rapid gains in speaking English.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The curriculum, quality of teaching and care the children receive are good. They make immense gains in confidence in speaking in English and in their personal development. They play collaboratively with their friends and show a high level of independence. Teachers focus very effectively on developing the children's English speaking and listening skills. In a good lesson children's early writing and exploration skills were developed well as they enjoyed finding a Gingerbread man both inside the classroom and outdoors, using early writing skills to record their discoveries. Then their knowledge and understanding and creative skills were extended as they used their senses to smell the Gingerbread man and ended up baking some themselves. Assessment is used to discover their interests, check children's progress and to plan for their next steps in learning. This assessment starts with home visits which build a trust with parents and carers. Children's awareness of

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safety is promoted well and they enjoy exciting physical activities in a stimulating outdoor play area.

Leadership and management are good. The early years team are deeply reflective and continuously keep their practice under review. They are aware of strengths and areas to improve such as children's number problem solving skills where development is not as strong. Secure routines and high quality care result in the children behaving well and because they are happy and sensitively challenged they all achieve well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires returned by parents and carers showed an overall satisfaction with what the school provides for their children. However, a few parents and carers expressed a concern about the progress their children make, the way in which the school tackles unacceptable behaviour and how the needs of their children are met. A small minority expressed a concern about how they are helped to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that whilst progress is satisfactory overall some inconsistencies in the rate of progress pupils make in different year groups in Key Stage 2 remain. The school is rapidly improving how it meets the needs of pupils and work in lessons is suitably matched to meet their needs. There was a recent behavioural issue within the school but, it has been successfully addressed and behaviour is now good. The school provides workshops to help parents and carers support their children's learning but attendance at these workshops is variable.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at George Dixon Junior and Infant 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	46	26	43	5	8	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	54	20	33	5	8	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	51	23	38	7	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	49	24	39	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	49	28	46	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	46	19	31	13	21	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	54	27	44	1	2	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)	17	28	30	49	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	38	27	44	5	8	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	41	24	39	7	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	34	26	43	2	3	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	27	44	26	43	0	0	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	44	27	44	3	5	1	2

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



8 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of George Dixon Junior and Infant School, Birmingham B17 8LE

Thank you for making us welcome at your school. We enjoyed seeing you learn and talking with you about your work and school life. We decided that yours is a satisfactory and improving school. Children of all backgrounds get on outstandingly well. You contribute to the school and wider community well and are keen to take on responsibility. We are pleased that almost all of you we asked said you feel safe at school. You learn a good deal about keeping healthy, enjoy taking exercise and enthusiastically opt for healthy foods at lunch time. Your understanding of cultures from a wide range of countries is exceptional and you so willingly support communities around the world who suffer from flooding and earthquakes. Your behaviour is good and the school is a pleasant place to be. There are good links with people and organisations outside of school, which provide a range of interesting and enjoyable activities for you. The arrangements to ensure that you are secure and safe at school are good.

Some things need to be improved. We have asked teachers to make sure they always check how well you are doing in lessons, so they can go back to anything if they need to. You can help by always saying if something does not make sense. We have also asked them to always give lots of help using pictures for those who are not fluent in English yet. We noticed that although many of you attend school regularly there are some who are absent too often and do not make enough progress. We would like all of you to come to school every day unless you are ill. Finally, we want the people who lead the school to look carefully at how well you are learning when they watch your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Jeffery Plumb
Lead inspector

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