

Imperial Avenue Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120014
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	358668
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Kerr

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Arthur Manger
Headteacher	Jenny Pickering
Date of previous school inspection	17 April 2008
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. All nine teachers were seen teaching and nine lessons were observed. Inspectors held meetings and discussions with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, teachers' planning and assessments and 72 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

How well does the school meet the wide range of needs among its pupils?

- How effectively does the current curriculum enable pupils of all abilities to learn and apply their skills?
- How well do pupils learn in mathematics compared with reading and writing?

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to other infant schools and serves a very diverse population. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and half speak English as an additional language. An increasing number of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Nearly one third of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is an above average proportion. An average proportion of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities but very few have a statement of needs. A broad range of needs is represented including behavioural, emotional and social, speech, language and communication, moderate and specific learning difficulties and physical disabilities. The school also has a small number of looked after children on roll.

An independently managed children's centre, which operates within the same building and serves a wider area, is inspected separately.

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 provides a satisfactory quality of education and pupils make satisfactory progress. Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is well below that typically expected for their age. Progress is good in the Nursery and Reception because of good provision but the children's attainment is below average at the end of Reception. Pupils' attainment has been below average but is now rising at the end of Year 2 and progress is satisfactory for all groups of pupils in Key Stage 1. Progress has improved over the past two terms because the school has identified pupils falling behind at an earlier stage and helped them to catch up. This is increasing the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations each term. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall but those with the most complex needs make good progress because of extra specialist help and support. Behaviour is good around the school and pupils apply themselves well to tasks in lessons. They are particularly good at working together. They are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and have a good understanding of how to stay safe.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is often good in English and mathematics lessons because these are highly structured and usually engage and challenge pupils. In some lessons, however, learning is restricted because of too much teacher input and insufficient independent work by pupils. Challenge for more able pupils is more consistent in English than in mathematics. Teaching in other subjects is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are beginning to develop but are not yet systematically planned. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving with a wide range of activities now provided beyond lessons. These are popular with pupils and appreciated by parents and carers. Care, guidance and support are good and parents and carers appreciate what the school does for their children whatever their needs may be. The school does all it can to encourage good attendance, but frequent and prolonged absences by a small number of pupils keep the school's attendance figures low compared with the national average.

The headteacher and senior staff work well together to sustain a sense of ambition and purpose and are beginning to successfully involve all teachers in the process of whole-school self-evaluation. Monitoring is not yet fully effective however, because the school development is not clear enough about how to improve the quality of learning. As a result, some successful strategies for promoting good learning are not widely used and some less effective ones persist.

The governing body supports the school well but is insufficiently rigorous in its oversight of the implementation of policies. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. It has reversed a declining trend in attainment, involved more

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staff in planning whole-school improvements and built up good morale within the school and among parents and carers.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Raise attainment at the end of Year 2 for all groups of pupils by:
 - sustaining the support given to lower attaining pupils so the proportion reaching age-related expectations continues to increase
 - providing more consistent challenge and support for more able pupils to extend their skills, especially in mathematics
 - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills across the curriculum in challenging and creative activities
 - further reducing persistent absences and raising the overall attendance rate so that it is in broadly in line with the national average.
- Make school self-evaluation more effective in improving the quality of learning by:
 - more regular and focused monitoring to identify elements of provision that encourage or inhibit good learning
 - involving all staff with management responsibilities more fully in monitoring and evaluating learning so that successful strategies can be shared and less successful ones eliminated.
- Improve the oversight of the school's work by senior leaders and the governing body by:
 - ensuring that all policies are systematically reviewed
 - improving the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of policies on the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved between 2008 and 2010 and the current Year 2 is on track to maintain this rising trend in 2011. Pupils from all ethnic groups make similar progress and there is no significant difference in progress between girls and boys. Pupils new to English quickly settle in and begin to understand, communicate and learn, eventually making satisfactory progress. Looked after children learn as effectively as other pupils because their needs are carefully considered at all times.

Pupils learn well in English and mathematics lessons. They enjoy the structure and respond well to the many opportunities they are given to use good quality resources including computers to enliven their learning. When given the responsibility to work independently, they sustain concentration on the task and take pride in their work. During the inspection, pupils were observed on many occasions happily engaged in creative, practical and written tasks independently of the teacher. Their good behaviour supports their learning in all lessons because teachers do not have to spend much time reminding

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them of rules. Pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well in the nurture group because carefully structured routines and activities encourage them to socialise and communicate effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall because their moral and social awareness is strong. They also have a good capacity for reflecting on feelings and ideas and a good awareness of the variety of cultural influences within their school and local community. They enjoy taking on roles of responsibilities such as playground buddies and are well prepared for the move to junior school. They participate enthusiastically in the good range of activities that are now provided and there is a waiting list for some after-school clubs.

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	3
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	3
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	3

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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge in English and mathematics and usually employ a wide range of techniques to engage pupils actively in the lesson, for example through talk partners and selecting pupils to demonstrate. Lessons are well planned, but sometimes there is too much teacher input and not enough active learning by pupils. Opportunities are missed to evaluate the quality of pupils' learning, for example by listening carefully to what they say to each other in talk partner work. On some occasions, not all pupils are actively engaged and, therefore, not learning as well as others and this goes unnoticed.

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The use of a wide range of good quality resources, including modern technologies, motivates the pupils and keeps their interest.

Assessment information is used more effectively than it was to plan lessons that match pupils' needs, addressing an issue identified at the last inspection. However, in some lessons, teachers do not take into account the extent to which some pupils already understand what is being taught and miss opportunities to provide more challenge early on in the lesson.

The curriculum is becoming more motivating for pupils with the introduction of a thematic approach, but this initiative is at the early stages of implementation and does not yet ensure secure development of skills in each subject. Partnerships are used well to provide activities such as sports and cheer-leading that the school could not provide from its own resources.

Care, guidance and support are good. The school provides a vibrant, welcoming environment for pupils and their parents and carers. Transition into the school and on to junior school is handled well.

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 headteacher provides clear leadership and has created a climate of high aspirations and continuing school improvement. Staff are keen to help the school move forward, but their efforts to do so are hampered by a lack of clarity about aims and objectives. The improvement plan sets out targets and actions to be taken but does not spell out clearly enough what good learning will look like and how it is to be achieved. This is because monitoring and evaluation are not sufficiently geared towards this end. The monitoring of teaching is used as an appropriate tool in professional development but is not yet part and parcel of the school improvement process.

The governing body is enthusiastic and industrious and provides a degree of challenge as well as support to the headteacher. It ensures that the school meets statutory duties, but is not assiduous enough in ensuring that all policies are up to date and implemented. As a result, it is not always straightforward to check that any given aspect of school policy is being implemented. Equality of opportunity is assured in practice, for example, but the school's policy does not set out clearly how this is to be monitored for all groups potentially at risk from discrimination. All required arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. Site security is good and child protection procedures are robust. Community cohesion is promoted well within the school and local community, ensuring that the pupils

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develop open and positive attitudes to people of different faiths, cultures or ethnicity. Steps to extend this work to the national and global scale are in the early stages of development.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision is consistently good both in the Nursery and Reception classes. For much of each day, the children play purposefully indoors or out as they choose, supported and monitored by staff. An excellent range of good quality resources is arranged to entice them into enjoyable activities that stimulate learning across the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. One group of children for example were busily occupied building a wall with plastic bricks, mixing pretend mortar in a cement mixer while another group were bird watching. Both of these activities supported the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Mathematical development is encouraged continually in a variety of ways. For example, when children were observed playing on tricycles, each one had a number label that corresponded with the correct numbered parking space. Similar guidance is given through play towards reading and writing skill in both teacher-led and child-initiated activities. The children's physical development is very well provided for through all the outdoor activities and timetabled sessions in the school hall and there are always creative activities such as model-making and painting available.

The children's personal, social and emotional development, which is low for many on entry to the Nursery, is strongly supported by the clear routines that govern the children's day. They quickly adapt and enjoy having clear boundaries in which to operate. This greatly enhances their independence and facilitates the exercise of choice in their learning. For example, children know there are limits to the numbers allowed to play at any one time in

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each area and regulate this independently by placing their name cards in the appropriate place if there is a space available. Staff are released by this degree of self-sustaining activity to observe, interact with and assess the children as they play. This is particularly helpful in developing the children's communication, language and literacy skills. Staff are skilled at doing this and keep meticulous records of the children's progress. These show that from a very low start, children make good progress across all the areas of learning but are still about half a term behind the average levels expected overall by the end of Reception. The specific areas of learning that lead into reading, writing and mathematics are particularly weak on entry to the nursery. The staff plan and deliver regular class, group and individual sessions to improve these specific skills, but despite good improvements they are still under developed at the end of Reception. The setting is well led and managed with close collaboration among all the staff in planning weekly and daily programmes of activities and preparing the resources to support them.

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

Parents and carers' views are overwhelmingly positive. No significant concerns were expressed. Nine of the 11 written comments were totally positive and expressed a high level of appreciation of the approachability of staff, the extent to which the school caters for individual needs and the quality of the information parents and carers receive about their children. The views are summed up in the following example: 'It is a lovely school and the staff are fantastic with the children.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Imperial Avenue 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 223 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	78	16	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	69	22	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	53	34	47	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	54	32	44	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	65	25	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	51	35	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	50	34	47	1	1	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)	23	32	43	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	42	40	56	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	42	37	51	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	33	43	60	0	0	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	50	33	46	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	64	25	35	0	0	0	0

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.



3 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Imperial Avenue Infant School, Leicester, LE3 1AH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing how hard you work and all the different things you do. You all enjoy school. You behave well and know how to stay safe and healthy. You are kind to each other and polite to adults. You are getting on fine in reading, writing and mathematics but some of you could do harder work.

You are very good at working together and getting on with your work independently. Most of you only miss school when you are ill, but some parents and carers keep their children at home when they are well enough to attend school.

Your headteacher, teachers and other staff look after you well and prepare interesting lessons. They make sure the school runs smoothly and gives you a satisfactory education. Here is what we found that they could do to make your school better:

- help more of you to get higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure those of you who find work easy are given harder work
- help you to use and improve your literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school day
- find out what kind of activities help you to learn best and make sure you all do more of these.
- making sure even more of you do not miss lessons unless you are ill.

You can all help by continuing to work as hard as you can when you are at school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr

Lead inspector

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