

Central Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122524
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380484
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2012
Lead inspector	Joanne Harvey HMI

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Ydlibi
Headteacher	Anna Spencer
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2007
School address	Garden Avenue Foxhill Road Nottingham NG4 1QS
Telephone number	0115 9100887
Fax number	0115 9115607
Email address	head@central-inf.notts.sch.uk

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joanne Harvey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sharona Semlali

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out at one day's notice. Inspectors observed six teachers teaching six lessons of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to a series of phonics (the sounds letters represent) and guided-reading sessions, the majority of which were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, parents and carers, governors, staff and leaders and managers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, assessment information, the school and local authority monitoring information, lesson plans and school policies. The team analysed the responses to 63 questionnaires from parents and carers, and questionnaire responses from staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized infant school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is larger than average. The large majority of pupils are White British. There are very few pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds and none is currently believed to be in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that found in most schools. Most of these pupils have a moderate learning difficulty. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The current headteacher has been in post for one year. Two existing members of staff became acting deputy headteachers in January 2012.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their praise. Achievement is good. Pupils have made good progress from below expected starting points to attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics over recent years. However, during this time, attainment has shown a steadily upward trend so that many pupils are currently on track to attain standards which are above those found in most schools. The school is not yet outstanding because this improved performance has not yet been sustained for all pupils over time.
- The quality of teaching is good and ensures pupils progress well over time. A very few inconsistencies remain which result in the occasional slowing of progress. Teachers engage pupils with an exciting curriculum. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers work closely on tasks with children to ensure they get off to a good start. They do not always ensure there are enough independent learning opportunities to extend children’s learning further. In Key Stage 1, teachers use assessment well to plan activities to meet pupils’ needs. Good support is provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and indeed any pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable or in danger of falling behind, so that these pupils also do well.
- Positive and trusting relationships underpin pupils’ good behaviour, which makes a strong contribution to their learning in lessons and to the smooth running of the safe school environment.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has shown exceptional drive in the leadership of teaching and in implementing rigorous systems to check and improve on the school’s work. Staff, the governing body and parents and carers all work together well to achieve the school’s vision for pupils’ success. New senior leaders have yet to fully develop their role in setting the strategic direction of the school, particularly in the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and so raise attainment to be consistently above average and quicken pupil progress, by:
 - ensuring the most effective elements of teaching seen are consistently applied across the school
 - providing more well-planned and meaningful opportunities for children to learn independently in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by enabling all leaders, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to play their full part in setting the strategic direction of the school and driving improvements.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspectors share the view expressed by parents and carers that the achievement of pupils from all groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is good. This is because work, and any additional support provided, are well matched to pupils' needs. For the last three years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been broadly average, though there has been a trend of steady improvement. This represents good progress given that children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and skills below those expected. By the time they enter Year 1 they have almost caught up and, importantly, they are prepared with the skills they need to make the most of their time in school.

A rigorous approach to developing an understanding of phonics is taken throughout the school. Other strategies to develop early reading and writing skills, such as closely targeted guided-reading groups, are less well developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage than they are in Years 1 and 2. In these year groups early literacy skills are built on successfully so that, for example, an increasing number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 surpass the levels of attainment expected for their age. There is a similar picture in mathematics, where the focus on giving pupils plenty of opportunities to carry out practical and problem-solving activities is resulting in above average attainment. Where gaps in learning and between the achievements of different groups are identified, for example, for boys known to be entitled to free school meals, these are closing swiftly and securely.

Pupils develop good communication skills, they are confident that they can be successful and are keen to do their best. They apply their basic skills well in other subjects. High-quality work was also seen in the visual arts. Importantly, the school turns pupils into eager learners, excited to come to school.

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Quality of teaching

Teaching has many consistent features and results in almost all pupils progressing well. There remain a very few occasions where progress slows, because for example, independent learning activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not planned well enough to promote good learning. Adults, busy focusing on the task they are directing, sometimes miss opportunities to intervene and extend learning whilst children are at play. In Years 1 and 2 teaching activities are planned based on accurate assessments which are constantly monitored so, if progress slows, plans are modified and additional support given so that it accelerates again. Consequently no one gets left behind. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are particularly well supported by additional adults and the provision of well-tailored programmes. Parents and carers consider they are well supported by teachers to help their children learn, through 'family homework' and training on the social and emotional aspects of learning, for example.

In the best lessons, questions are used skilfully throughout to make sure everyone is on track or to add challenge. Expectations are made clear so pupils know what they have to do to succeed. Lessons involve pupils being active and highly engaged so they develop the skills to lead their own learning. Additional adults contribute well to learning. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson pupils made good progress in their understanding of the use of language in the development of characters. This was because all adults in the class were actively engaged at all times in pupils learning, using probing questions to check for, and promptly address, misconceptions and adapting lesson planning and teaching methods to suit differing needs. A very few lessons remain where all of these features are not consistently applied so that learning slows.

The curriculum is broad, well enriched and often involves exciting topics such as 'wild animals'. It supports pupils' progress and the development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were seen to marvel at the awe and wonder of living things as they examined caterpillars and stick insects. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 returned from a trip to the zoo buzzing with questions about the animals they had seen. Their discussion and writing demonstrated their ability to show empathy and concern for animals living in the wild and in captivity. Teaching strategies are often highly effective in meeting the individual needs of pupils. Innovative approaches led by staff include free ice skating and other extra-curricular activities which help to ensure that, for example, the most potentially vulnerable pupils do well. Phonics skills are taught well throughout but this is built on more successfully through guided reading groups in Key Stage 1 than it is in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in and around school is typically good and contributes well to effective learning over time. This view is echoed by the vast majority of parents and carers and staff to the inspection questionnaire and in discussions. A very small minority did

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not feel that the school dealt with poor behaviour appropriately but inspectors found that the school managed the rare incidents of poor behaviour well and did not allow them to interfere with learning. It is evident to visitors that the school is a harmonious community and has a culture of tolerance and respect. Pupils work together supportively in lessons. They are courteous, helpful and well mannered. The school's logs to monitor behaviour or racist incidents, for example, demonstrate that these are rare and, if they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Pupils talk maturely about bullying, such as name calling, and say that it is not tolerated. They, along with their parents and carers, are confident that they are safe at school. They are well motivated by rewards and clear about sanctions which might be imposed. Curriculum programmes and extra-curricular activities ensure that pupils develop confidence about how they can keep safe. They are adamant that should they have any worries or concerns there is someone available to help. Pupils say they are happy to come to school and demonstrate this through their average but improving levels of attendance.

Leadership and management

Parents and carers rightly have confidence in the leadership team. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership to a highly committed staff. There is clarity and attention to detail in all things that the headteacher does. In a relatively short time she has ensured that the pace of improvement has accelerated. The issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Shared spaces and classrooms have been transformed to provide a positive and stimulating learning environment, and safety is ensured. This is particularly apparent in the Early Years Foundation Stage where swift action was taken to combine separate classrooms to provide a more cohesive Early Years Foundation Stage unit. Displays throughout school show that pupils' work is valued, and support further learning. Along with assembly themes they reinforce well the work done to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are able to reflect on and discuss issues that concern them. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, get on well together and are well prepared for life in a multicultural society.

Continued success is underpinned by rigorous procedures for checking on the effectiveness of the school's work. Self-evaluation procedures and documentation are of high quality, as is the information shared with the governing body and parents and carers. The system for tracking pupils' progress is exhaustive at individual, group and whole-school levels. Improvement planning is meticulous and monitored closely for success. Everyone knows about the effectiveness of the school's work and what needs to be done to improve. At present, the headteacher takes the lead on ensuring this overview and planning for improvement. However, in partnership with the governing body, steps have been taken to involve more leaders and managers in this work. The new deputy headteachers have already demonstrated their impact on improving outcomes for pupils through the lead they have taken, for example, in the 'achievement for all' initiative and in promoting greater involvement of parents and carers. There are high levels of care for disabled pupils and those who have special

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educational needs and others who require more specialist support. Leadership from within the Early Years Foundation Stage is relatively less well developed and progress here is more variable. Whilst a vibrant environment is provided to promote enjoyment, there is sometimes insufficient rigour in the use of assessment data to promote consistency in teaching and learning.

Leaders hold teachers to account for pupils' performance through regular achievement reviews and performance management. Staff are provided with support to improve where required. As a consequence teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, is securing good progress for pupils over time, though leaders have already rightly identified that a very few inconsistencies remain. The school's many improvements since the last inspection demonstrate its strong capacity to improve further.

The governing body is knowledgeable about the school's work. Governors offer practical support and challenge to leaders and share their ambition for continued success. They ensure statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding and child protection, are met. There is a strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, as can be seen in the equally good achievement of all groups, and discrimination in any form is not tolerated. One parent expressed the view, representative of many of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, 'My child has been very happy here. She has made significant progress in her literacy and numeracy since Foundation and remains curious and engaged in all of her lessons. The school feels very friendly and has a lovely community atmosphere and the headteacher and staff welcome and value parental involvement.'

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



11 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Central Infant and Nursery School, Nottingham, NG4 1QS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We think Central Infant and Nursery School is a good school. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and to plan exciting activities for you to do. As a result, you make good progress in your learning and your attainment is at least as good as that of pupils in most schools when you leave. The youngest children get off to a happy start in the Early Years Foundation Stage though we have asked leaders to make sure that they make good progress all of the time. Those of you who find work more difficult or need other practical help in the classroom get good support so that you can do well too.

You told us that your school is a happy and friendly place. You also said that teachers look after you well so that there is always someone there for you if you have worries or concerns. We were impressed with how well you behave and get on with each other. You concentrate well on your work and try hard to do your very best.

One key thing that makes your school so good is that your headteacher and governing body are always checking how well it is doing. They want the best for all of you and set challenging targets for improvement. They are always looking for ways to make the school even better. That is why we have asked them to make sure that all of the teaching is as good as the best we saw. We have also asked them to find more ways for other leaders to help the headteacher with the job of leading the school so that improvements take place as quickly as possible. You can play your part by continuing to behave well and by coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector

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