

# Nishkam Primary School

3-11 Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 9SN

**Inspection dates** 11–12 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching does not enable all pupils to make good progress because work is not always set at the right level. In particular, more-able pupils do not make good progress because they are frequently given work which is too easy.
- Marking does not give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Consequently, they do not learn as quickly as they could.
- Teaching does not always interest the pupils enough. When this happens, they quickly become distracted and do not always behave well enough. This slows the pace of learning.
- Leaders and governors do not check on the work of the school well enough. They do not have a clear understanding about the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The school does not plan its improvement work well enough. The improvement plan does not state clearly who will lead improvement work and when it should be completed. Consequently, it is difficult for leaders and governors to check on the effectiveness of their actions in improving pupils' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Bullying is extremely rare and pupils get along well with each other. Pupils feel safe and secure due to the good care and support of the staff.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by seven teachers. Three of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' writing and mathematics books with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked with them about the work in their books.
- Inspectors met with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the patron of the school's trust.
- Questionnaire responses from 18 members of staff were reviewed. Inspectors also took account of 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, pupils' achievement data, and minutes of governing body meetings. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Wayne Norrie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Mumby

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Nishkam Free School is a multi-faith, Sikh-ethos primary school. It is of similar size to the average primary school.
- The school opened in September 2011 and now has pupils from Reception to Year 4. It caters for pupils of all faiths.
- Virtually all pupils are from Sikh backgrounds; the remaining few pupils come from a range of different faith groups and those of no faith. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed services, is below the national average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, are below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.
- Over the past 18 months, an extensive building project has been taking place which has led to the remodelling of the existing building, which was formerly large residential properties, and the addition of a new extension.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring teachers plan engaging and challenging lessons, which are based on accurate assessment of pupils' prior learning and knowledge so they meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able, and ensure that pupils always behave well in class
  - ensuring all teachers identify areas which pupils could improve upon when marking work and give them clear targets for their next steps in learning
  - improving the use of questioning in lessons, in order to develop pupils' thinking skills and help them to understand their work
  - ensuring all teachers check how well all pupils are learning during lessons and use this information to address any misconceptions and challenge pupils to make more progress in their learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that checks made on the quality of teaching focus closely on the progress made by all groups of pupils
  - implementing effective systems to check how well the school is performing and identify areas for further improvement
  - ensuring improvement plans contain clear timescales and measurable criteria for success
  - developing the role of the subject leaders so they take a more active role in whole-school improvement planning and developing teachers' professional skills
  - ensuring governors are actively involved in the development and monitoring of the school's improvement plan
  - planning regular opportunities for the whole governing body to work with the senior leadership team to evaluate the impact of the effectiveness of the school so they have an accurate view of the strengths and weakness of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. In 2012, standards at the end of Year 2 were similar to the national average in English and mathematics. However, the most-capable pupils did not do as well as they could have done, particularly in mathematics. Standards are beginning to rise, although the rates of progress across the school remain inconsistent.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in English and mathematics within lessons throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. However, children make good progress in Reception due to skilful teaching.
- Pupils have not previously had enough opportunities to write for sustained periods; this has limited the progress they have made in writing. The school has recently taken steps to ensure pupils are given more opportunities to consolidate writing skills and to develop stamina in writing. As a result, pupils' achievement in writing is now beginning to improve across the school.
- More-able pupils are not making the progress they are capable of in Key Stage 2. This is because of work not always being matched to the individual needs of the pupils.
- Children make good progress in Reception and achieve above the expected level of attainment by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Leaders have taken action to improve the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), and this is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy reading. They read with confidence, expression and fluency. They are able to answer questions about what they have read and use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words.
- Attainment of pupils in English and mathematics for whom the school receives additional funding (pupil premium) is in line with their peers in school in Key Stage 1. This is because they are benefiting from extra teaching sessions and additional support. The progress of this group of pupils is lower than their peers in Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pastoral care for any pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is good. This means that they build up confidence and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language made similar progress to that of others throughout the school; their attainment is in line with their peers across both key stages.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. There is not enough teaching which is good enough to enable pupils to learn as quickly as they should. The best teaching is in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children make good progress.
- Teachers do not build effectively on pupils' previous skills and knowledge. They do not have high enough expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve.

- In lessons where work is not matched to pupils' learning needs and teaching is not engaging, pupils become distracted. This leads to interruptions in pupils' learning time and slows the progress pupils make in lessons.
- Teachers mark work and set targets for pupils in both English and mathematics but these do not consistently provide pupils with a clear understanding of how to improve their work. Consequently, they do not learn as quickly as they could. The school has, however, recently introduced 'gap' tasks in literacy; these are additional activities for children to complete after the teacher has marked their work. This is beginning to improve the standard of marking.
- Teachers do not use questioning frequently enough to assess pupils' understanding across the school; this means that they are not able to change teaching tasks or to provide more challenge within lessons. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to ensure that all groups of pupils, including the more able, make good progress in their learning during lessons.
- Where teaching is more effective, activities are interesting and children are actively involved in their learning. In one successful example, the teacher rapidly developed pupils' scientific skills by providing practical opportunities for pupils to investigate the differences between solids, liquids and gases.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and teaching assistants plan sessions carefully to ensure there is a good balance between activities led by an adult and those that children can choose for themselves. There are well established routines which develop children as independent learners. Good use of questioning enables staff to accurately assess children's understanding and move their learning forward.
- Teachers plan effectively for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; there is a wide range of systems in place to support these pupils to work both independently and as part of a focused group. As a result of good planning and the targeted use of interventions, this group of pupils make good progress.
- Teaching assistants provide a good level of support to individuals and groups of pupils during whole-class teaching sessions. They work with a wide range of pupils both individually and in groups.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils become easily distracted when teaching does not capture their interest. On these occasions they do not display good attitudes to learning and this slows down the rate of progress they make during the lesson.
- Teachers do not always manage behaviour as well as they could. As a result, pupils are occasionally over exuberant and do not settle quickly enough into learning.
- During break times and lunch times, pupils behave well and enjoy using the range of playground equipment.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, but say that it is very rare in school. The school uses a range of rewards to encourage all pupils to behave responsibly; pupils are very proud to be given badges when they reach a set number of house points.

- The school provides pupils with a high level of care and support. Consequently, pupils say they feel well supported and cared for at school, and they also say that this helps them to feel safe at school.
- Pupils reported to inspectors they enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in the school's attendance figures which are in line with the national average for primary schools. The school has worked very effectively with parents to promote good attendance. This has reduced the number of school days lost through pupils taking extended leave.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. School assemblies help to promote a positive ethos around the school. Pupils act sensibly around the school and on the playground and are extremely polite and welcoming to visitors.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leaders and governors do not have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This leads to areas of the school's work being evaluated as being better than they actually are.
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- Teaching is observed regularly and teachers are given areas for improvement. However, evaluations of teaching are not sharply focused enough on the impact the teacher is having on improving the progress of all groups of pupils within the lesson.
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- School improvement plans clearly identify actions to be taken, but do not give clear steps on how improvements will be made or give an indication of the timescale for actions to be completed. This means that leaders at all levels find it difficult to accurately assess the impact of the plan.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for senior leaders and governors to check the progress or impact of the specific actions in the improvement plan. Key staff are not clearly identified as being responsible for implementing actions in the plan. Consequently, it is difficult for the governing body to hold leaders to account for their work.
- Performance management is used by the school to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. All teachers have targets to work towards. They meet with the headteacher to discuss their progress; as a result, teaching across the school is improving.
- The recently appointed subject leaders are beginning to make an impact on the work of the school. One example is the focus on improving boys' writing; new targets have been introduced alongside a reorganisation of how boys are taught writing in Key Stage 2. This is already beginning to make an impact in raising standards of writing. However, subject leaders are not yet having the impact intended on school development planning and teaching quality.
- The inclusion leader provides strong leadership. Detailed tracking of interventions highlight the impact the school has on improving the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The headteacher is determined to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well. Senior leaders are using the information they have about pupils' progress to arrange additional support for pupils who have been identified as underachieving.

- The school provides a broad range of learning experiences. These include a range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors to provide variety and add enjoyment. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the regular enrichment afternoons where they take part in a range of musical, artistic and sporting activities – including attending the local secondary school. Pupils’ personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is promoted well.
  
- The governance of the school:
  - Governors have worked extremely hard to establish a new school. They have ensured the school is well resourced and have worked with the senior leadership team to recruit an entirely new staff team. Although they ask relevant questions of leaders, they do not have an accurate view of the school’s effectiveness in all areas. Governors have requested external views of the school in the past and have taken the information received from these reports into account when evaluating the school. As governors were not involved in creating the improvement plan, it is difficult for them to measure the effectiveness of the specific actions within it. Governors set the headteacher challenging targets for performance management. Procedures are in place to review the progress of the headteacher towards meeting her targets. There is an inaccurate view of how well the school is presently performing in all areas. Governors know pupil premium money has provided additional teaching resources but they are not as knowledgeable about its impact on the achievement of eligible pupils. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met and financial management is secure.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137492
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	400341

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy free school
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brinder Singh Mohan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Narinder Brach
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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