

Catherine Infant School

Ulverscroft Road, Leicester, LE4 6BY

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's calm and purposeful leadership has formed a strong team of leaders and managers. With the full support of staff, they have made rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement, following a decline in standards since the last inspection. The school continues to improve.
- Senior leaders accurately check how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve. They closely monitor how well every pupil is doing.
- Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising throughout the school.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle quickly, enjoy school and make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. They understand and are tolerant of racial, religious and cultural diversity in modern Britain.
- Pupils are well behaved and feel safe. They are keen to learn and they enjoy their lessons. Their attendance has improved and is now average.
- The school is successfully engaging increasing numbers of parents and carers in supporting their children's learning at home.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough sharing of outstanding teaching to promote even more rapid progress.
- In a few lessons, the work set for the most able pupils is not hard enough.
- Not all governors have the skills needed to gather evidence of the school's performance so they can take action to improve it.
- The improvement targets set in the school development plan are not specific enough to enable the school to accurately determine when they have been achieved.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Senior leaders also joined the inspectors in reviewing pupils' written work.
- The inspectors observed one assembly and made a number of short visits to classrooms.
- Pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Groups of pupils were heard reading.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be made available to inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of 150 responses to the school's own survey of the views of parents and carers. Inspectors also met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies, teachers' plans, samples of pupils' work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kathryn England	Additional Inspector
Yvonne Watts	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger in size than most other infant schools.
- Almost all pupils are of minority ethnic background. The majority are of Indian background with the remaining pupils coming from a number of other heritages.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend the Nursery for either morning or afternoon sessions and then start attending school full-time in the Reception Year. At the start of the Reception Year they are joined by about 50 children from a variety of other settings.
- Almost nine in ten pupils speak English as an additional language. This is well above the national average. Many pupils enter the school in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs (is just under one in ten, which is below the national average.
- The pupil premium provides support for about three in ten pupils in the school. This is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has increased in size since the last inspection. An increasing number of pupils, most of whom are in the early stages of learning English, join the school partway through the school year. Some are new to the country and a few join with no previous educational experience.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be outstanding and so raise achievement by:
 - sharing the examples of the most successful teaching available in the school
 - ensuring that pupils capable of reaching higher levels are always given appropriately challenging work.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - specific and measurable targets are set in the school development plan
 - all governors have the skills needed to check how well the school is doing and are able to challenge it to improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. With the strong support of other senior leaders, staff and governors, significant improvements have been made in key areas of the school's work since the last inspection. The successful promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are central to the work of the school. Pupils thrive because they know that all adults have their best interests at heart.
- The desire to promote better teaching permeates the whole school. Procedures for evaluating individual teachers' performance and setting targets that are based on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress are effective. Teachers confirm that they are given good support through training to improve their skills and achieve their targets.
- Procedures for checking pupils' progress have been improved. Much better use is now made of assessment in regular meetings to identify underperformance, so that appropriate action can be taken. This has been successful and contributed to the rise in standards. Following the removal of National Curriculum levels, the school is in the process of introducing a tracking system that will allow pupils' skill development to be accurately measured.
- The accurate evaluation of the school's work provides all leaders with a clear understanding of the school's performance. This ensures that planning identifies appropriate areas for improvement. However, the success criteria specified in the school development plan are too general to enable the school to state with certainty when a target has been achieved.
- Successful action has been taken to improve attendance, which is now average. Underpinning this improvement are the rigorous monitoring of attendance and innovative ways of engaging parents and carers in their children's education. For example, weekly sessions to familiarise parents and carers with the ways in which their children are taught and how they can support them at home, are well attended and much appreciated. These sessions are particularly helpful for those who are new to the country or have limited spoken English.
- Subject coordinators and other staff with leadership responsibilities are well supported through training to fulfil their roles. They check the quality of provision in their areas of concern and make good contributions to school effectiveness. This is particularly seen in improvements in writing and mathematics, for example. Leaders have successfully planned for the introduction of the revised national curriculum.
- The curriculum promotes achievement and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are prepared appropriately for life in modern Britain. This is seen in pupils' understanding and acceptance of cultural and religious diversity, and of what is right or wrong. These values are consistently promoted by all staff and underpin pupils' good behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning.
- Good use is made of pupil premium funding to provide support for eligible pupils through, for example, additional staff and resources. The use of this resource is helping to narrow the gap between the achievement of eligible pupils and that of other pupils nationally. The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is regularly checked to ensure that the variety of support the school provides to enhance these pupils' progress is having a positive effect.
- Pupils' well-being and physical development benefit from the effective use of the primary school sport funding. The increased range of activities and coaching available means that more pupils participate regularly and there are more opportunities for competitive sport.
- The local authority provides the school with good support through the school improvement adviser. She supports the school well and has been engaged, for example, in helping the school improve teaching and learning and the work of governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been a number of recent changes in the membership of the governing body. New co-chairs

have been appointed and several new governors have joined. All are keen to support the school and share a determination to ensure that the school will continue to improve. Governors have a reasonable understanding of how the school's performance compares with that of other schools and have procedures for holding the school to account for outcomes, including the management of teachers' performance. They understand that pay rises should be linked to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. However, not all governors fully understand the use of assessment information to recognise good teaching and challenge underperformance.

- Governors make certain that there are appropriate procedures for keeping pupils safe and that the school meets the requirements for safeguarding. Governors are representative of, and have strong links with, the local community. They refuse to accept discrimination of any sort. The school's finances are managed well. Governors make sure the primary sports funding and pupil premium funding are used for the intended purposes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In this calm and orderly school, pupils behave well both inside and outside the classrooms. They display positive attitudes to learning, which contribute well to their good progress in lessons. The vast majority listen carefully, share ideas and want to try their best for their teachers.
- Pupils and staff say that good behaviour is usual. Adults manage pupils' behaviour well and interruptions to learning are rare. This is confirmed by school records, which show that there are few incidents of poor behaviour. Parents and carers agree that behaviour is good. They are very positive about the way that the school supports their children's personal development.
- Pupils support each other well both in lessons and at break times. Pupils from differing backgrounds play together happily and those who arrive at the school during the school year are well supported and quickly make friends.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the improvement in attendance and pupils' punctuality at the start of the day. There is a friendly and supportive working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are polite and welcoming. Most take great pride in their work take care to present it neatly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' safety from the Nursery and Reception classes onwards. Leaders make sure the building is secure. All staff are checked for their suitability prior to appointment and all visitors and volunteers are also appropriately checked.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have a reasonable understanding for their age of different types of bullying, including for example, name-calling, racial bullying, or religious intolerance. They say, and school records show, that such behaviour rarely occurs.
- Pupils are confident that adults will look after them well if they have any concerns. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, at school and in the community. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection echoed the view that this is a welcoming school in which their children are kept safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much of the teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers' high expectations of what pupils can achieve and good class management ensure that pupils concentrate hard throughout most lessons. This, together with the enthusiasm for learning shown by most pupils, underpins the good progress pupils are making.

- Accurate day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress and attainment enables teachers to plan challenging work that takes account of the needs of different pupils. Throughout most lessons, teachers continuously check that pupils understand the work and are making the progress intended. Consequently, pupils of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, the most able and those who are in the early stages of learning English make good progress. However, in a few lessons, the progress of the most able pupils is slowed because the work they are given is not hard enough.
- The effective teaching of reading, writing and mathematical skills is supported by the consistently good marking of pupils' work. Teachers' marking provides pupils with clear guidance on what to do to improve their work. Most pupils respond positively to the comments and respond to requests to complete or re-do work. This helps them to make progress and reach their challenging learning targets.
- A strong feature of all lessons is the use of 'talk partners' for pupils to share and extend their ideas with each other and with adults. This practice is particularly effective in developing, for example, their creative writing and understanding of mathematical terms and concepts. It also helps to develop pupils' ability to communicate clearly in spoken English. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher's very clear and careful use of spoken English, enabled pupils, almost all of whom have English as an additional language, to make rapid progress in understanding and using the past tense in describing events.
- All staff are fully committed to providing pupils with equality of opportunity. Regular checks on pupils' progress enables teachers to identify any pupils who are in danger of falling behind, particularly those who have special educational needs. All make good progress because they are given effective support from teachers and skilful and well-deployed teaching assistants.
- Homework is set regularly and used well to consolidate and extend classroom learning, and to engage parents and carers in their children's education. Through pupils' 'Home Learning' books, parents and carers are given suggestions on ways in which they can work alongside their children to support their learning at home. Similarly, 'Summer Writing' and 'Summer Reading' books have proved to be popular ways of providing continuity in pupils' learning through the summer holiday.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with weaknesses in most areas of learning. Most are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Communication, language and literacy skills, and personal and social development are particularly weak. Although children make good progress from their starting points, about one-third do not reach levels that are typical for their age by the time they enter Year 1, with continuing weaknesses in communication and language.
- In Year 1, pupils make good progress in learning about letters and the sounds they make. In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average. The results dipped in 2014, largely because changes in the school timetable reduced the amount of teaching time. This has now been rectified and inspectors found the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) to be effective throughout the school.
- Pupils' good progress continues through Year 2 and standards are rising. In 2014, overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics rose to be above average. These standards represent good achievement when pupils' starting points are taken into account. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and the school's assessment records show that pupils of all ethnic heritages are making equally good progress and the improvement in standards is set to continue.
- In all classes, pupils' writing is developing well. Pupils in Year 2 make increasing use of adjectives and adverbs to make sentences more interesting. Reflecting the good progress made in phonics, most pupils read accurately and with increasing confidence. In mathematics, pupils enjoy practical activities that reinforce understanding of the four rules of number.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because teachers and teaching assistants keep a close check on their progress and provide additional support as needed. This is

particularly helpful for the increasing number of pupils who enter the school in the course of the school year, most of whom have very little or no English. These pupils make good and often better progress, although few reach average standards by the end of Year 2.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective extra help through individual support, small-group activities and the use of extra resources. These actions are ensuring they make good progress.
- Although the performance of both disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for pupil premium funding) and that of their classmates rose in 2014, the rise in the performance of disadvantaged pupils was slightly less than that of other pupils. As a result, from broadly similar standards in 2013, they were about a term behind in mathematics and half-a-term in writing in 2014. There was little change in the standards reached in reading. However, in comparison with all pupils nationally, the gap in reading, writing and mathematics narrowed from just over two-terms in all three subjects in 2013, to about half-a-term in 2014. Eligible pupils, like their classmates, make good progress from their starting points.
- The most able achieve well. Although there remains a little inconsistency in the level of work expected from them, the school has successfully focused on raising the achievement of these pupils. As a result, there was a sharp increase in 2014 in the proportions of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.

The early years provision is good

- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because good leadership and management ensure they are taught well. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes, there is a particularly strong focus on English language development together with social and emotional development. This ensures that the large number of children who are in the early stages of learning English, settle quickly and become used to class routines.
- Adults make sure that children experience an enjoyable learning environment. Children make good progress in learning English because they are immersed in a language rich environment. Consistently good teaching, particularly in communication and language, helps to ensure that children's needs are largely met, especially those at an early stage of learning English.
- Children quickly learn the importance of good behaviour and sharing with others. This establishes the foundation of the good behaviour seen in the rest of the school. Children behave well most of the time and become increasingly confident in trying new activities. This prepares them well for entry to Year 1.
- Regular checks on children's progress are used well to plan activities that meet children's diverse needs. Well-planned indoor and outdoor learning environments provide children with a wide range of activities and a stimulating variety of resources. These are used well to engage children's interest and help them to develop from their differing starting points.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make good progress because sensitive support enables them take part in all activities.
- There are effective procedures for keeping children safe and regular checks are undertaken to make sure that equipment is safe.

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

Unique reference number	120002
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	449614

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	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Raj Riyat and Maureen White (Co-Chairs)
Headteacher	Nirmal Basson
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2010
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