



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**Oldknow Junior School**

**Birmingham Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 7-8 June 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

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## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	Oldknow Junior School
Type of school:	Junior
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs B Kondal
Address of school:	Oldknow Road Small Heath Birmingham B10 0HU
Telephone:	0121 4648771
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr A Da Costa
Local education authority area:	Birmingham
Unique reference number:	103260
Name of reporting inspector:	Ms A Baird
Dates of inspection:	7-8 June 2004

## Introduction

1. Oldknow Junior School is situated in the Small Heath area of Birmingham. It is a nineteen-class junior school with a five-form entry in all year groups, except in Year 6 where there are four classes. There are 543 pupils on roll. About 46 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Most of the pupils are from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds and almost all speak English as an additional language. Thirty five pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Pupil mobility is high and few pupils come from high social class backgrounds. Eight pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need and the proportion of the pupils who have special educational needs is 24 per cent which is well above average. Pupils enter the school with a range of attainment but, overall, they are well below average for their age.
2. The school was inspected in October 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and it was judged to have serious weaknesses.
3. In June 2004, two HMI and two Additional Inspectors returned to inspect the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the further progress the school has made.

## Main findings

4. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school requires special measures, since it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. The main findings of the inspection are:
  - insufficient progress has been made in tackling the serious weaknesses identified during the inspection of October 2003;
  - in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the school's results in English, mathematics and science were in the bottom five per cent nationally. When compared with similar schools, the results were also very low and were in the bottom five per cent in English and science. When prior attainment is taken into account, the school's performance was in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally;
  - in 22 out of 38 lessons, standards were below what is expected for the pupils' ages. In some classes, the higher-attaining pupils achieved closer to the age-related expectations but too few reached above that level;
  - standards in English are too low and the pupils have poor achievement given their starting points. Reading, writing and comprehension skills are well below age-related expectations for the current Year 6;
  - standards in mathematics are too low throughout the school. In Year 6 standards remain well below the level expected for this age group. Many pupils do not reach the levels of which they are capable and there is little evidence of pupils achieving the higher levels;

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- standards in science have not improved since the previous inspection. Many pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable. There are suitable plans to improve provision but the pace of change is too slow;
  - in all but one lesson, the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were satisfactory or better; in 19 lessons they were good and in three very good. The pupils behaved very well in lessons and around the school. In some lessons, the pupils were too passive; this was usually due to a lack of challenge in their work or due to their not being given sufficient opportunity to participate;
  - provision for social, cultural and moral development is satisfactory. Provision for spiritual development is uneven across the curriculum but was satisfactory in an assembly. The pupils have access to an appropriate range of extra-curricular clubs and activities and different cultures and religions are appropriately celebrated;
  - at 93.11 per cent, the pupils' attendance is below the national average for primary schools but the school implements a range of appropriate strategies to try to improve the attendance levels;
  - the progress made by the pupils varied between year groups and classes, but was unsatisfactory overall. The rate of progress and the quality of the learning in the lessons were closely linked to the teaching the pupils received;
  - in 33 out of 38 lessons, the teaching was satisfactory or better including 10 where the teaching was good. In five lessons the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. The proportion of satisfactory or better teaching has not improved since the inspection of 2003. Many of the lessons judged as satisfactory had important shortcomings which hindered the pupils' learning;
  - much of the work in assessment is at a very early stage of development and is not having a strong enough impact on the way the pupils' work is planned or how their progress is tracked;
  - provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory and improving. The co-ordinator is managing the provision well. The pupils are making satisfactory progress overall against the targets in their individual education plans;
  - the provision for those pupils who speak English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. A few pupils, who are most in need of support, receive targeted help out of class. Those pupils with more advanced skills receive little additional support to ensure they can fully access the curriculum;
  - the school environment is well maintained and some of the pupils benefit from the stimulating and interactive displays in several classrooms;
  - leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The headteacher has a clear view of the weaknesses within the school but has been hampered in dealing with these effectively by internal conflict. The senior management team has
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functioned ineffectively and has not had a significant impact in creating a clear educational direction for the school;

- most subject leaders are committed to raising standards. However, they have been unable to develop the full potential of their role in the current school climate;
- governance is unsatisfactory. The governing body is supportive of the school and has identified relevant training needs. It has not been able to deal effectively with the internal problems within the senior leadership team that have adversely affected the progress being made in addressing the key issues from the inspection of 2003;
- although the school has very recently received a significant amount of well-targeted support from the local education authority (LEA) to strengthen the leadership and management, the impact of this work in remedying the school's weaknesses is not yet discernible.

## **Key issues**

5. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers, staff and LEA need to:

- raise standards and increase the rate of the pupils' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science;
- develop the role and skills of the senior managers to ensure they work effectively as a team to eradicate urgently the weaknesses in provision;
- improve the quality of teaching and learning to eliminate the unsatisfactory elements and increase the proportion which is good or better;
- improve the systems for and use of assessment to track progress and to ensure that the teaching appropriately matches the pupils' needs.

## **Inspection findings**

### **Standards achieved by the pupils**

6. Insufficient progress has been made in tackling the serious weaknesses identified during the inspection of October 2003 and in a number of significant aspects the provision at the school has declined.

7. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the school's results in English, mathematics and science were in the bottom five per cent nationally. When compared with similar schools, the results were also very low; they were in the bottom five per cent in English and science. Over the last three to four years, standards in all three subjects have been in decline. The school's performance when the pupils' prior attainment is

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taken into account was also in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The results in the national tests in 2004 are not expected to show any significant improvement.

8. In 22 out of 38 lessons, standards were below age-related expectations. In some classes, the higher-attaining pupils reached closer to what is expected for their age but too few achieved above that level.

9. Standards in English are too low and the pupils have poor achievement given their starting points. Reading, writing and comprehension skills are well below age-related expectations for the current Year 6. The pupils' poor literacy skills adversely affect their attainments in other subjects. The proportion of the pupils gaining Level 4 and above is not expected to exceed the 2003 results.

10. Standards in mathematics are too low throughout the school. In Year 6 standards remain well below the level expected for this age group. Many pupils do not reach the levels of which they are capable and there is little evidence of pupils achieving the higher levels. There were insufficient opportunities for the pupils to explain their methods and give reasons for their answers; consequently many lacked confidence in these important skills. Problem solving and mathematical investigation are underdeveloped. The pupils in Year 3 learned the appropriate multiplication facts and number bonds for their age and ability and were more confident with their mental recall. In one Year 4 lesson, information and communication technology (ICT) was used appropriately to support mathematics but around the school there was little evidence of the use of ICT in mathematics. Some classrooms had interesting and informative mathematics displays which supported the pupils' learning, but this was not a consistent feature across the school.

11. Standards in science have not improved since the previous inspection. Many pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable. There are suitable plans to improve provision but the pace of change is too slow. The poor literacy skills of the pupils in Year 3 limited their ability to make use of simple text books independently to extract essential information. In Year 5 very few pupils were able to describe a fair test. Generally, scientific language was only used by the pupils when they were prompted.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. In all but one lesson, the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were satisfactory or better; in 19 lessons they were good and in three very good. The pupils behaved very well in lessons and around the school. In some classes, the pupils were too passive; this was usually due to a lack of challenge in the lesson or due to their not being given sufficient opportunity to participate. In a few lessons, the pupils were harshly treated or were shown a lack of respect by their teachers. The pupils generally did not misbehave or create disturbance, even when the lessons were being unsatisfactorily implemented. In several classes, the pupils were excited by the challenge of the lessons and showed a strong desire to learn but this was not consistent across the school. In a few lessons, the pupils were harshly treated or were shown a lack of respect by their teachers and this adversely affected their motivation and active participation. This unfair treatment has the potential to affect adversely the pupils' self-esteem and attitudes to school.

13. Provision for social, cultural and moral development is satisfactory. Provision for spiritual development is uneven across the curriculum but was satisfactory in an assembly.

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The pupils have access to an appropriate range of extracurricular clubs and activities. The pupils understand clearly the difference between right and wrong and show respect for adults and each other. They have developed a satisfactory understanding of other cultures and faiths.

14. At 93.11 per cent, the pupils' overall attendance is below the national figure for primary schools but the school implements a range of appropriate strategies to try to improve the attendance levels.

### **The quality of education**

15. The pupils' progress varied between year groups and classes, but was unsatisfactory overall. The rate of progress and the quality of the learning in the lessons were closely linked to the teaching the pupils received. In the best lessons, the pupils sustained good concentration levels and were actively engaged in their learning. However in too many lessons, the pupils were passive and not given sufficient opportunity to offer their ideas.

16. In 33 of the 38 lessons, the teaching was satisfactory or better including 10 where the teaching was good. In five lessons the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. The proportion of satisfactory or better teaching has not improved since the inspection of 2003. Many of the lessons judged as satisfactory overall had some important shortcomings which hindered the pupils' learning. Although joint planning took place across classes containing the same year group, the implementation of lessons in different classes was inconsistent. Consequently, the content of the curriculum was variable across the school. In the best lessons, the pupils received good feedback on their efforts and their work was carefully marked to identify how they could improve. However, this was not consistent and in some classes marking was unsatisfactory.

17. Much of the work in assessment is at a very early stage of development and is not having a strong enough impact on the way the pupils' work is planned or how their progress is tracked. Some teachers have begun to analyse data and, in the most successful lessons, this information is used to support planning. Some classes have a useful file of assessment information which includes reference to the pupils' attainment at the age of seven. This helps the teachers to track the pupils' progress but the information is not used consistently by all the staff.

18. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory and improving. The co-ordinator is managing the provision well. The pupils are making satisfactory progress overall against the targets in their individual education plans, which are reviewed each term. The pupils are aware of their individual education plan targets, which are linked to a reward system. Although the teachers' lesson planning generally matches work to different ability groups of pupils it does not include reference to specific individual education plan targets.

19. The learning support assistants work in harmony with the teachers and their support for the pupils is generally sound and sometimes good; they know the needs of the pupils well. The assessment co-ordinator is appropriately using the data available to measure the pupils' progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. Assessments which measure the very small steps of progress made by some pupils are not being used sufficiently. The co-ordinator is liaising effectively with other schools and outside agencies and has a well-judged

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development plan in place. However, the school has been slow to construct an accessibility plan in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

20. The provision for the pupils who speak English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. The pupils who are at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language are appropriately identified and a few of those, who are most in need of support, receive targeted help out of class. However, this work is not always closely matched to the work they do in class. Those pupils with more advanced skills receive little additional support to ensure they can fully access the curriculum and lessons plans rarely address the wide range of language needs found in most classes.

21. The school environment is well maintained and some of the pupils benefit from the stimulating and interactive displays in several classrooms.

### **Leadership and management**

22. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The headteacher has a clear view of the weaknesses within the school but has been hampered in dealing with these by internal conflict. The senior management team has functioned ineffectively and has not had a significant impact in creating a clear educational direction for the school. A recent LEA review of leadership and management has been successful in refocusing attention on the areas that need to be addressed. However, there remains uncertainty about the long-term stability of the leadership systems at the school and, overall, these are too fragile to assure sustained school improvement.

23. Most subject leaders are committed to raising standards. Nevertheless, they have been unable to develop the full potential of their role in the current school climate.

24. Governance is unsatisfactory. The governing body is supportive of the school and has identified relevant training needs. It has not been able to deal effectively with the internal problems within the senior leadership team that have adversely affected the progress being made in addressing the key issues from the inspection of 2003.

25. Although the school has very recently received a significant amount of well-targeted support from the LEA to strengthen the leadership and management, the impact of this work in remedying the school's weaknesses is not yet discernible.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

26. The inspection of October 2003 required the school to address four key issues. These related to: raising standards in English, mathematics and science; improving the quality of teaching; developing the role of senior staff to ensure they have more impact on raising standards; and improving the use of assessment information. At best there has been limited progress in each of these key issues since the inspection of October 2003.

27. The literacy co-ordinator has taken a range of robust steps to set up necessary systems and procedures to underpin improvements in teaching and learning in literacy. Following a thorough analysis of the pupils' attainment on entry and of the data resulting from other assessments, the co-ordinator has recognised the poor progress made by many

pupils over the key stage. Despite a raft of intervention strategies to address this underachievement, it is unlikely that the Key Stage 2 results will improve significantly in 2004. This is due, in part, to the low base from which the co-ordinator has had to start but also because not all staff accepted the urgency of improving the literacy provision for the pupils.

28. The pupils' work in mathematics has been monitored and some lessons have been observed by the subject co-ordinator and the LEA. When the teachers plan carefully for the range of ability in their class and provide enough challenge, then the pupils are keen and interested and achieve well. However, not all the teachers have high enough expectations of what the pupils can achieve and in some lessons there is too much over direction, which limits the pupils' independent learning and thinking. The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to know what they need to do to improve. The tracking of pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement is at an early stage and is not yet firmly embedded in classroom practice.

29. Standards in science have not improved since the previous inspection. The science co-coordinator has introduced some sensible strategies and has suitable plans for the development of the subject. However, the impact of the strategies is limited.

30. Little has been done to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching since the inspection of October 2003. This is mainly because other whole-school weaknesses have hampered progress. However, the classroom practice of newly qualified teachers has been monitored and they have benefited from good quality feedback. A useful project to monitor and track the progress of able pupils and their likely learning styles has been a first step to support teachers in reflecting on their practice. Other monitoring of the pupils' work, particularly in literacy, has highlighted important areas for the development of teaching.

31. The role of senior staff has not developed sufficiently since the inspection of October 2003. The headteacher has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve and is aware of the unsatisfactory standards being achieved by the pupils. However, the monitoring of whole-school developments has not taken place due to the internal conflict within the school. Recently, after an LEA review of leadership and management, an agreed plan of action for the future was established, and all members of staff signed up to its content. However, there remains significant fragility and, at present, there is an over-dependency on the LEA in taking the lead to drive forward these important changes of attitude and practice among the staff.

32. Target setting and the tracking of the pupils' progress is at a very early stage and has had very little impact on the pupils' standards of achievement. A draft assessment policy has been written and a timeline of assessment actions has been agreed. Examples of pupils' writing are being tracked and attainment levels are identified. The quality of teachers' marking varies and does not sufficiently inform the pupils about what they need to do to improve. More able and gifted pupils have been identified but lesson plans do not indicate specific and challenging tasks for these pupils. Actions in relation to assessment are very recent and have not had sufficient time to have an impact on standards.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in October 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school. The school was judged to be ineffective and had serious weaknesses identified in the standards being achieved and in the efficacy of the senior management team.

The school was visited by two HMI and two Additional Inspectors in June 2004. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Thirty eight lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and several registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff and several informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised.

The inspection assessed the standard of education provided by the school and the progress it has made in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address these key issues.