



Sandfield Close Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120047
LEA Leicester City
Inspection number 280720
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Kessell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sandfield Close
School category	Community		Leicester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Leicestershire LE4 7RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2660333
Number on roll	413	Fax number	0116 2680087
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Patsy Freer
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Dhillon

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. Pupils are mostly of Indian heritage, although small numbers of other ethnic groups are represented. Children start school with levels of attainment that are below those normally found and communication, language and literacy skills are particularly low. Many pupils are at the early stages of learning English. A lower-than-average percentage of pupils has learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has a new headteacher who joined the school in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This happy, welcoming school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. This is the school's own evaluation of its provision. Pupils are well behaved and well cared for by the staff. Parents are supportive but their views are rarely sought.

Children in Reception receive a satisfactory start to their education and make sound progress but do not always reach the goals they need to start the National Curriculum by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and make good progress. In Years 3 to 6, progress is satisfactory overall but a significant minority of pupils do not achieve as well as they can, which limits the progress they make. For example, girls do not always do as well as boys. Teaching is satisfactory with some good features, particularly in Year 2. However, there are lessons where higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged in their studies and could be doing better. Sometimes teachers' expectations of their pupils are too low. Consequently, activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. Assessment information is not used well enough to track pupils' progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is beginning to address these with the senior management team. It is too early to judge the full impact of many new initiatives. Improvement since the previous inspection has been slow but has accelerated since the beginning of the current academic year. The school now has the capacity to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Help teachers, senior managers and subject co-ordinators make better use of assessment information:

- to plan activities for all pupils that meet their needs and are more accurately matched to their stage of learning
- to keep better checks on achievement and progress, particularly by the older girls in Years 3 to 6 and the higher-attaining pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in Reception, although the standards they reach are below the level expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, standards are broadly average and pupils make good progress. This is the result of successful focused strategies to improve pupils' reading and writing and good teaching, particularly in Year 2.

Progress slows down as pupils enter Year 3, which is a concern to parents. Although progress is satisfactory overall through Years 3 to 6, a significant minority of pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. This particularly applies to girls and the higher-attaining pupils. The school recognises this and has begun to introduce initiatives to address this weakness. There has already been some success

because girls in Years 5 and 6 say that they enjoy their work far more than they did in previous years.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make the same progress as their classmates. It is satisfactory overall but good when the quality of teaching is better and when activities are accurately planned for their needs. All pupils are set suitably challenging targets but these are not always achieved as a result of weaknesses in teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils clearly respect the beliefs and customs of others. They feel safe in school and take responsibilities seriously, for example, the older pupils as 'Red Caps' conscientiously support younger children at playtime. Pupils are very proud of their school, behave well, have good attitudes to learning and enjoy very warm relationships. Consequently, they enjoy school and work hard. Attendance rates are above average. One pupil said, 'School is fun, we laugh a lot and it helps us to learn.' Parents commented about their children being happy and feeling valued. Pupils are very knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles. They know about the benefits of exercise and the need for a balanced diet. Members of the school council fulfil their roles diligently and have, for example, made useful suggestions to the school cook about school meals. Pupils contribute satisfactorily to the community by supporting charities with fundraising activities. As they get older, pupils develop satisfactory skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to help them in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The pupils enjoy their work and show very positive attitudes to learning, such as when Year 4 pupils spoke eagerly about the magic wardrobes they had made that opened into a different world. However, teachers do not always capitalise upon the enthusiasm of the pupils. There are times, particularly in Years 3 and 4, when teachers' expectations are not high enough. Work in Learning Logs, which is undertaken at home, is often of a higher standard than that produced in class. Pupils are sometimes given work that is not always well matched to their needs. When this happens, these pupils could do better. Where teaching is well matched to pupils' needs and teachers' expectations are high, as is often the case in Year 2, pupils make good progress.

Teaching assistants make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning by providing appropriate support in classes. Occasionally, there are times when they enable pupils to make good progress as a result of well-directed and organised activities. The

bi-lingual assistants work particularly well with reception children who are at the early stages of learning English. At times, the teachers' marking supports pupils learning well. However, this is not consistent across the school and many pupils are not always provided with sufficient information to help them improve. Most of the pupils have targets for learning but they are not fully understood, particularly by those pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Most activities build securely on what pupils have learned before and ensure satisfactory progress. Recent successful adaptations for mathematics and science enable the interests of girls to be met more effectively, improving their attitudes to learning. Curriculum planning is not yet suitably adapted in all classes to take account of pupils' different needs. This is especially the case in Years 3 and 4. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and contributes well to the pupils' personal development. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through an extensive range of clubs, visits and visitors to the school. To provide this wide range, some clubs such as Judo, French and Asian dance are provided by outside agencies and require payment. However, all these experiences contribute well to pupils' sporting, artistic and musical achievements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory. A consistently followed Code of Conduct promotes the pupils' good personal qualities. Good procedures, including child protection and risk assessments of health and safety, ensure pupils' welfare. Pupils and parents expressed their confidence in the staff, who respond very effectively if there is a problem. Attendance is monitored and encouraged well. Guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work and make better progress is less well developed. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported appropriately but other pupils are not always given sufficient information on how to advance their learning. However, initiatives such as Learning Logs and Home-School Partnership Books are beginning to encourage pupils' independence and parental support in their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The relatively new senior management team now has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Accurate analysis of test results provides a clear focus for raising standards and the need for additional support for pupils. This has led to improvements, for example, in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2, and to pupils' improved attitudes to learning. The school has the capacity to improve. Procedures for monitoring and

evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. They ensure that developments such as the introduction of Learning Logs are now fully in place and impacting positively on pupils' enjoyment of learning. Although senior managers are well placed to ensure that teachers now receive better support and guidance, more needs to be done to help them use the range of assessment information to track pupils' progress and identify any differences in pupils' performance from class to class and from one year to the next.

Governors are supportive and suitably informed about national test results but are only just beginning to question the effectiveness of funding decisions and whether pupils are doing well enough.

Pupils have a suitable say in what happens in the school. As a result, new playground equipment is available at playtimes. Most parents say they have confidence in the school but they are not consulted frequently enough about how they view the school or how they can help influence their children's learning. Good links with outside agencies to support pupils from minority ethnic groups result in school staff and the support services working well together for the benefit of these pupils.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils,

I am sure you will remember that we inspected your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking with you about your work in school. You were all very friendly.

What we liked best:

You are all well behaved and polite. You get on well with each other and the staff.

You are keen to learn and very enthusiastic about your work. Particularly impressive is the work you do at home in your Learning Logs.

Those of you in Year 2 make good progress in your work.

All the adults in the school look after you well.

Your new headteacher and the rest of the staff are working hard to make the school better.

What we think the school can do to improve:

Make lessons better so that you are given work that is not too easy or too hard.

Keep an eye on the work you are doing so that any of you that need any extra help can be supported, particularly the girls and those of you who find work easy.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Kessell Lead Inspector