



Larkfields Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122575
LEA NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 281300
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Edwards LI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Coronation Road
School category	Community		NG16 1EP
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01159194343
Number on roll	233	Fax number	01159190524
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.M Barrett
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Peter Taylor

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Nuthall on the outskirts of Nottingham. Most of the children live locally. There were 233 girls and boys on roll at the time of the inspection. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage and come from homes where English is the first language. The range of socio-economic circumstances is broad but is favourable for most families. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is Year 3 is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It recognises where it needs to make further improvements and its view of itself is accurate. It has a clear plan of action and has good strategies for raising achievement. It has a good capacity to improve further. The headteacher, currently in his second year of office, has successfully steered the school through a difficult period in the school's history. He has established a positive ethos in which every child is valued. The school has the respect of the community that it serves. The leadership team has resolved the key issues regarding the development of information and communication technology (ICT) and the accommodation arising from the last inspection. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, issues remain about the effective use of assessment to match the work set in lessons more closely to the needs of the pupils. Over recent years, standards in English have fallen well behind the national trend; in mathematics the pupils' performance slipped in 2005. However, evidence from the pupils' work shows that the achievement of all groups is now satisfactory, as is the progress pupils make as they move through the school. Standards for Year 6 pupils are largely above average; this represents sound progress from their starting points. There is scope, though, for greater challenge for the higher achieving pupils as work does not always stretch them sufficiently. Too little attention is given to discussing with all pupils what they need to do to improve, especially in English and mathematics. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils and the personal development of the children is a strength. As a result, pupils behave very well and relationships are strong. The curriculum is rich and vibrant and supports the pupils' learning well. The school works well in partnership with the local authority and is strengthening its relationship with the community. Much has been achieved since the appointment of the headteacher, but the senior management team has not always been rigorous enough in raising expectations of the pupils' achievements year-on-year. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the leadership role of the senior management team to establish rigorous monitoring procedures and to establish consistency of practice to raise the pupils' achievements year-on-year.
- Fully implement the school's new assessment procedures to ensure that pupils of all abilities, and particularly the higher attaining pupils, are sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Involve the pupils more fully in what they need to do to improve their performance, particularly in English and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspection findings support the school's judgement that the pupils' achievements, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are satisfactory. Current standards in English, mathematics and ICT in Year 6 are above average. These are in line with the pupils' starting points and represent satisfactory progress. However,

results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science in 2005 showed a broadening gap between what the pupils were expected to achieve and their actual performance. Although the pupils start in Year 3 with mainly average, and occasionally above average attainment, the standards achieved in the national tests have not reflected the potential of all groups of pupils. After significant underachievement in 2005, this trend is beginning to be reversed. The school has set challenging targets for the pupils currently in Year 6 and the quality of the pupils' work in literacy and numeracy shows these are likely to be met. In the past, results in the national tests have been impaired by the school's lack of rigour in its assessment procedures. Although the school analyses results to identify gaps in what is being taught, too little attention has been given to using this data to raise staff's expectations of pupils' achievement. The school is beginning to address this issue. There is still, however, not enough attention given to challenging the higher attaining pupils and to discussing with all pupils what they need to do to improve. This has affected the pupils' performance in tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils like coming to school, enjoy their lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are kind and considerate towards each other and they enjoy trusting relationships with the adults in school. They work well together and are confident in their interactions. Their behaviour is very good. They understand the consequences of their actions and can explain the reasoning behind school rules. Pupils contribute well to improving the quality of school life through the voice of the school council. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good and there are particular strengths in the moral and social aspects. Social development is supported well through the effective links with, and the positive contributions made, to the local community. The spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is promoted well through art and music. The pupils are aware of world religions through their work in the humanities. They have a strong sense of their own rural, cultural traditions but their awareness of cultural diversity is not always strongly promoted. Children know how to be healthy and safe and are mindful to look out for each other. They are very enthusiastic about the school's drive to encourage healthy lifestyles and make satisfactory progress in acquiring work place skills. The school has good systems to promote attendance and has been successful in discouraging lateness. As a result, attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, evidence indicates that over time teaching and learning have been satisfactory. This is because pupils have not always achieved as well as they could. This issue is now being tackled

rigorously. Teaching is consistently good in Year 6 and for some classes in other year groups. In Year 6 teaching is challenging and demanding and learning is made to be fun. Lessons bristle with pace and teachers use their subject knowledge to good effect to help bring learning to life. Activities enthuse pupils who are already highly motivated and keen and eager to do well. Across the school very good relationships and the good management of pupils help to create an environment conducive to learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning. There are, however, occasions when tasks or questions are too easy for the higher attaining pupils, preventing their true potential from shining through. Assessment is satisfactory. The headteacher has recently introduced good procedures for rigorously tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics and for setting challenging targets. However, over time this has not been the case and some underachievement has gone unchecked. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and is at its best when what pupils need to do to improve is clearly stated. However, overall, pupils are not always sufficiently involved in evaluating how well they have done or are informed as to how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. The school places a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and putting them to increasingly good use in other subjects of the curriculum. There is good provision in music and physical education and events such as the annual 'Arts Week' bring creative and imaginative flair to the life of the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are catered for well and the school has rightly flagged up the need to ensure that the needs of the higher attaining pupils are consistently met. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are outstanding and, together with a wide array of visits, visitors and residential visits, bring an exciting edge to the quality of learning. A high percentage of pupils take part in the different activities and pupils and parents are very appreciative of what the school offers. The numerous sporting activities on offer, as well as the good Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) curriculum, do much to promote the importance of keeping fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, support and guidance of pupils are good. This is a very caring school where pupils' individuality is celebrated. Parents are very appreciative of how well the school cares for their children. Pupils say that they feel safe. Good links are in place with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils are met. Health and safety and child protection procedures are fully in place and well known and followed by all staff. Through the school and class councils, the pupils have a genuine voice where their views are listened to and are given opportunities to lead initiatives such as fundraising for charities, setting up recycling bins and selling fruit. Staff know individual pupils well and respond swiftly to their social and emotional needs. However, the school

recognises that there is a need to monitor pupils' academic progress more closely and to increase pupil involvement in the process to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. Arrangements to ensure pupils transfer into the school and onto the next stage of their education are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspection findings agree with the school's assessment that the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Since his appointment less than two years ago, the headteacher has made an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has determined a clear agenda for improvement. Together with the subject leaders, particularly in literacy, numeracy and ICT, he has shown great commitment to ensuring that the decline in pupil performance is arrested, whilst maintaining the school's reputation of having a caring ethos. Staff morale is good because encouraging interim test results for pupils in Year 6 indicate that recent initiatives are beginning to bear fruit. However, the school needs to clearly define the roles of senior members of staff to ensure their professional expertise is fully utilised in monitoring the work of the school to ensure that the children achieve their best. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The provision for ICT is much improved and the school has resolved the issues regarding accommodation. However, issues regarding the closer match of work set in lessons to the pupils' abilities remain. Governors are committed to the school and provide satisfactory support. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold the school to account has grown but there is scope for the further development of their role as critical friends.

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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	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2	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

Mr Newell and I really enjoyed our visit to your school at the end of March because everybody was so helpful and friendly. We really enjoyed our discussions with you and especially the school council, who were brimming with good ideas. We also enjoyed the music, especially in assembly, and the colourful displays of your work around the building. In fact, there are many things that make your school special. Here are some of them: - you clearly try to do your best to learn in lessons and are working hard - well done; - everybody understands the school rules and you behave very well; - everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful; - Mr Taylor is a good headteacher who wants you all to enjoy school and to do well; and - the school provides a super range of activities and visits to keep you interested. But, of course, as in all schools, there are still things that can be done to make your school even better: - firstly, we know that you can do even better with your work, and we are asking your teachers to provide a little more information about what you need to be concentrating on to improve; - secondly, we are asking the senior staff to check on the school's work so that you do your very best; and finally - even though we saw some good teaching, we are asking your teachers to plan lessons a little more carefully to make sure that what you are learning is neither too hard nor too easy. Although there is much to be done to make your school even better, you must never forget that the staff work very hard to help you to learn and you must remember to thank them. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.