



Oldknow Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103260
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 282922
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Susan Morris-King HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 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 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior	School address	Oldknow Road
School category	Community		Small Heath
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Birmingham, West Midlands B10 0HU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4648771
Number on roll	543	Fax number	0121 7533162
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Da Costa
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2003	Headteacher	Mr B Kondal

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oldknow Junior School is situated in the Small Heath area of Birmingham, which is an area of considerable socioeconomic deprivation. It is a five form entry school with a total of 20 classes. Most of the pupils are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and almost all speak English as an additional language. Thirty six pupils who have joined the school since September 2005 are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school during the course of the academic year is slightly higher than average. The eligibility for free school meals is high at 60%. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is higher than average, but the percentage of these who have a statement of special educational need is in line with the national average. Seven new teachers joined the school in September, three of whom are newly qualified. When the school was inspected in June 2004 it was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Oldknow Junior School is a good school. At the time of the previous inspection the school had been ineffective over a period of time; standards were low and the pupils did not make enough progress. In the past 18 months, increasingly good teaching, very high quality leadership and management, and well motivated pupils, have led to rapid and continuous improvement. Standards continue to be much lower than the national average, but are rising. The older pupils in particular are making faster progress than would normally be expected. Progress in Years 3 and 4 has been less consistent and the school has taken a range of actions to address this issue. Good assessment practice is beginning to be rooted in everyday teaching. Marking is sometimes very good, but this is not consistent enough. The school pays close attention to the needs of individuals and different groups. Provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is much better than it was, and the school has good plans to improve it further.

The school has a very clear picture of its own strengths and the areas which continue to need development. It is unrelenting in its drive to raise standards. Teaching is good overall and some of the teaching is consistently outstanding. A very small amount of teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make progress at an accelerated rate. However, the leadership team is well aware of the remaining issues and provides suitable support to staff. Pupils learn well when they are taking part in whole class lessons but sometimes progress is not as good when they are working independently.

Personal development is a particular strength of the school. Pupils' behaviour is very good and attendance has risen since June 2004 from below to above the national average. The school pays careful attention to the pupils' health and well-being. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in exciting activities both in lessons and in a range of extracurricular activities. Pupils are growing in confidence and starting to take more responsibility for themselves and others. The school cares for pupils very well. This is a school where pupils are valued and where there is a buzz and excitement about learning.

Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. This demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Enable all pupils to make consistently good progress by:

- checking that when pupils are working independently in lessons they are learning effectively
- developing the pupils' learning skills, including the ability to take responsibility for their own work
- ensuring that marking and target setting consistently help the pupils to know what they have to learn next
- continuing to develop teaching strategies to support pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment when pupils join the school is generally below average and that of a significant proportion of pupils is well below expected levels. For several years the results in national tests for eleven-year-olds showed that pupils' progress had been inadequate. In 2004 their performance in English, mathematics and science was very low in comparison to schools with similar prior attainment.

However, the results of the 2005 national tests show that, although overall standards remain below average, pupils' progress is now improving significantly. For many groups of pupils, particularly those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, the rate of improvement was significantly above that found in similar schools.

The school is now analysing the results of tests for all year groups to identify where improvements need to be made. This process resulted in significantly improved performance in science last year. The school's data shows that current Year 6 pupils are already on track to meet challenging targets in next year's national tests. The school is aware that progress in Years 3 and 4 has not been as strong as in Years 5 and 6 and is taking steps to ensure pupils' achievement is raised consistently across the school. Pupils' achievement in lessons seen during the inspection was good, and sometimes very good. This is borne out by the school's own rigorous observations. Whilst standards of current work remain below average overall, a small but increasing proportion of pupils is reaching average, and sometimes above average, standards in some aspects of their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are very good. Pupils are very keen to learn and, when they receive enthusiastic and well planned teaching, they respond very well indeed. Pupils were keen to emphasise to inspectors how they are taking increasing responsibility for their own learning and feel well taught and supported in school. The school has involved the older pupils in some important discussions about standards and progress. Attendance this term has improved and is above the national average. The school pays good attention to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Vibrant displays around the school celebrate the pupils' cultures and emphasise the importance of pupils valuing each other. Assemblies, which often involve the pupils, are well planned. The school has paid significant attention to the pupils' personal development, with noticeable positive effect. Monitors are confident and take their responsibilities seriously. The reformed school council is impressive. They have clearly defined roles which they were able to explain articulately to inspectors through a very well planned presentation. Staff have given the school council subtle and sensitive support. Consequently these pupils are poised to become an influential group within the school. Pupils have had several opportunities to take part in fundraising activities. Their fundraising for victims of the earthquake in Pakistan is particularly relevant as several members of the school have family members who were

affected. Good attention is paid to increasing the pupils' understanding of health and well-being. Healthy eating features prominently in displays, there is a healthy tuck shop at break time, and the school council has arranged a meeting with the school cook to discuss further improvements to lunch menus. Good physical education teaching makes an important contribution to the pupils' health. Pupils have welcomed the new house system. They feel safe in school and careful attention is paid to ensuring that bullying does not take place.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good. In some classes the teaching is frequently outstanding. The school has successfully implemented teaching strategies designed to raise standards and achievement throughout the school. In addition, a regular and rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation is in place and teachers are made aware of the strengths of their teaching and the areas in which they can improve. Targets are set and progress towards reaching these is closely monitored. The best teaching combines high expectations with skilful strategies, such as pupils' speaking, work in pairs, good questioning, and clear explanations of lesson objectives. This ensures full pupil participation, concentration and enthusiasm, particularly in the whole class parts of lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and teaching assistants are an integral part of effective teaching and learning. Uniformly good class management throughout the school is reflected in the very good behaviour and attitudes seen in lessons. Less effective teaching and learning occurs when lessons lack sparkle or excitement, and where teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not high enough. There is a tendency for some teaching to focus mostly upon the middle and lower attainers, leaving more able learners too long without guidance.

Although marking has improved the school recognises that there is still inconsistency and is taking urgent action to remedy this. Target setting for pupils has also improved and, in discussion with the school council, many members could explain in considerable detail their personal targets and how they are progressing in their work. Good provision is made in most lessons for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities and for those learning English as an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has continually improved the curriculum to accelerate the pupils' progress. They have thought carefully about the way in which the older pupils are grouped, particularly for mathematics and English. The recent grouping of the most capable pupils in mathematics in Year 6 has been welcomed by the pupils and is well focused

on raising their attainment further. Pupils at an early stage of learning English have started to make better progress as a result of good quality new resources, input from teaching assistants, and leadership. The separate teaching of the older boys and girls for physical education has resulted in the girls in particular being keener to participate in the activities. Pupils are enthusiastic about the recent addition of salsa and rugby to the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources have improved greatly.

The range of clubs has expanded and the pupils are taking part with enthusiasm. During Ramadan several staff ran a club during the lunchtime at which pupils were able to explore Islam and the significance of fasting. At the end of the summer term a dance and drama production of 'Bollywood Midsummer Night's Dream' was very well attended by parents and much enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care for pupils is good. All staff are totally committed to the health, safety and security of pupils. Effective procedures are in place throughout the school and well understood by all. Personal development is embedded in the everyday life of the school and as a result pupils are continually growing in self-esteem and confidence. The marked improvement in assessment procedures and the use of the resulting data, combined with very effective target setting for all pupils, means that pupils feel very well guided and are very clear on what is expected of them in all aspects of their school life. This again is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. These measures have helped greatly in the improvement in standards and progress now evident in the school.

The school follows carefully the government's requirements for child protection. Risk assessments are regularly carried out. The school's policy of giving pupils many responsibilities has helped develop their awareness of the need for a safe environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspection of June 2004 judged the leadership and management of the school to be unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are now good. The headteacher has led the school determinedly through a period of considerable turbulence and her dynamic leadership has had a significant impact. She has allowed the staff to flourish and to take significant responsibility for the continued improvement of the pupils' learning. Almost all of the senior team have been appointed to their roles in the last 18 months. This new senior team are highly dedicated and very effective and support the headteacher very well indeed. Their unrelenting focus on the school's needs has led to significant improvement in a short space of time. New members of staff are well supported by the senior team.

Some positive changes have made the school more welcoming to parents. The relocation of the school offices to the front of the building makes it easier for parents to seek

advice and information. An interactive display in the entrance hall celebrates the pupils' many successes. Photographs of the governing body were put up at parents' request. English classes are provided for some parents and the school has started to explore ways to increase participation.

The chair of the governing body is highly committed to the school's improvement and is rightly pleased with the progress made. However, he and the rest of the governing body also understand the need to continue to focus on ensuring that the pupils are making sufficient progress, and their meetings are structured accordingly. The governing body has recently been strengthened by the membership of several well informed new governors. The governors request regular evaluative reports from the senior leadership team which helps them to monitor the school's work.

The local authority has provided the school with some very good support to help it improve. In particular, the leadership team has benefited greatly from the skilled advice of a senior adviser.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Oldknow Junior School Oldknow Road Small Heath Birmingham B20 OHU

13 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making me and my colleagues welcome in your school and for giving us such an excellent presentation about your school council. As you know, I have visited your school each term over the past year. I have really enjoyed watching it getting better and better. My colleagues and I have all been impressed with how hard Mrs Kondal, you and all the staff have worked to improve your school.

Because of everyone's hard work, there are now many things about your school which are good. Your teachers teach you really well; sometimes the teaching you receive is outstanding. This is helping you to make much better progress in your subjects. You have good attitudes to your work and you are helpful and polite to each other. I was very pleased to see how much some pupils' attendance has improved.

Lots of new things have happened since my last visit, for example your exciting new PE lessons, the Bollywood Midsummer Night's Dream production in the summer term, and the Ramadan club which staff organised for you this term. Your school looks lovely too, really bright and cheerful with plenty of your best work on the walls.

I was very impressed indeed by your well organised school council. In the letter which I received from your chairperson you asked me what you could do to improve. In our discussion you talked to me about raising standards, so I know that you understand how important this is. Standards in your school have begun to rise, but to improve your results further there is a lot more hard work to do. We have asked your teachers to keep up all their good work, and also to do a few more things to make your school even better. These are:

- to check that when you are working on your own in lessons you are learning well
- to help you to take more responsibility for your own work
- to make sure that when your work is marked the marking helps you to know what you have to learn next
- to continue to give lots of help to those of you who are just learning to speak English or trying to improve your English.

You will be able to help by making sure that you are always working hard even when your teachers are busy helping other pupils. You need to check that you understand what your teachers have written when they mark your books. As a school council you can encourage and support other pupils to do their best.

Because your school is now a good one, I do not need to visit you every term any more to see how you are getting on. I wish you the very best for the future.

Mrs S Morris-King Her Majesty's Inspector