

Nelson Junior and Infant School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	103237
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286602
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2006
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	170
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Henley
Headteacher	Michael Tromans
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	King Edward's Road Ladywood Birmingham B1 2PJ
Telephone number	0121 4642201
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Age group	3–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. It is situated in central Birmingham in an area of high social and economic deprivation. Recently, the number of pupils attending the school has risen sharply. Many children who attend the Nursery do not move into Reception because they go to schools nearer home. Proposals to reorganise the local schools, some two years ago, threatened to close the school and this had a significant impact because many experienced staff left. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for less than one year. There is a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. There are increasing numbers of pupils coming to the school who speak English as an additional language, including those from families who are seeking asylum or have indefinite leave to remain. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in the progress made by pupils and their achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and the use of assessment.

The school has been faced with an unusual set of circumstances which have made improvement hard to achieve. The main cause of pupils' inadequate achievement is instability in staffing due to the high number of temporary staff and changes in leadership. This has resulted in weaknesses in teaching. The current staffing position is now more settled and, over the past year, the school has begun to recover and improve. A further major concern in the recent past has been difficulties caused by the poor behaviour and attitudes of several pupils. The headteacher and other leaders in the school are successfully tackling this issue, having made significant improvement over the past year; pupils' personal development is now satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and trips and residential visits have been particularly effective in developing pupils' social skills. Pupils now come to school ready to learn in a calm and well organised environment. Most pupils enjoy lessons, especially when they are stimulating and involve practical activities. However, a few lessons are mundane and fail to interest pupils. This results in a minority of pupils becoming restless and not listening.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There are suitable procedures in place to evaluate the quality of teaching. However, the impact of the procedures in bringing about improvement has been hampered by the high turnover of teachers. Teaching and learning are inadequate because lessons do not sufficiently meet the needs of the pupils. In too many lessons, work is too easy and pupils are not challenged enough. Conversely, sometimes the work pupils are given is too difficult, leaving them confused. In the Nursery and Reception, where provision and achievement are satisfactory, there are good opportunities for children to develop speaking and listening skills through role play. In Year 2, standards in 2005 and 2006 were exceptionally low. Current standards in Years 3 to 6 are also well below average. However, the Year 6 results in 2006 were slightly above average and this group of pupils made good progress as a result of good teaching and support.

Whilst the school has a satisfactory system in place to track the progress of individual pupils in Years 3 to 6, in other years it is inadequate. Leaders do not have a sufficiently clear view about the progress that younger pupils make from the time they enter the school. Senior staff are clear about areas that need to be improved in the school. Whilst care, guidance and support overall are satisfactory, work to support pupils' personal needs has been good. Leaders are working effectively to improve attendance and forge stronger links with parents and the community. Parents support the work of the school and comment positively on its recent improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement across the school so that pupils make more consistent progress.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, adapting lessons to the particular needs of pupils and matching work to pupils' abilities.

- Improve assessment procedures so that action can be taken quickly to remedy underachievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' progress and achievement are inadequate. Children come into school with below average standards across all areas of learning. They make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage. In 2005, Year 2 standards were exceptionally low and 2006 results show that the standards have fallen even further.

In 2005, standards in Year 6 were exceptionally low, with well below average standards in English, mathematics and science. There were too few pupils working at above average levels. The 2006 results were much improved and show slightly above average standards. However, these results do not reflect the well below average standards currently across Years 3 to 6. Pupils with very limited English speaking skills are making satisfactory progress because of the additional support they receive. Leaders have identified weaknesses in achievement and recognise that standards are not high enough. Their tracking of progress shows wide differences in how well pupils achieve in different years, ranging from good to inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

This is an improving aspect of the school's work. Pupils' moral and social development is good, and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils respect each other and work together harmoniously, regardless of race or background. They say they feel safe and secure in school. Year 6 pupils are good role models for behaviour and look after younger pupils during wet playtimes. Residential visits for Years 4, 5 and 6 have been successful in significantly enhancing pupils' social skills and their understanding about working in teams. The school is effectively helping pupils to raise their self-esteem and deal with emotional difficulties through the work of the learning mentor and after school clubs. This work prepares them well for the future, although weaknesses in the development of basic skills remain.

Although attendance is below average, it is steadily improving because of initiatives within the school to encourage pupils to attend on a regular basis. There are weekly targets for classes and certificates for 'no absence'.

Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and they stand out in school because of their distinctive individualised sweatshirts. They have taken a key role in fundraising for Children in Need, printing tickets and organising the events. Community links are developing strongly. The use of a local park for an outdoor nativity production was particularly successful. Pupils confidently explain why a healthy lifestyle is important. They talk proudly of their Healthy School Award which has been recently achieved.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Whilst there are some good features to teaching, there are several weaknesses which have yet to be tackled effectively. In the Nursery and Reception, lessons are successfully adapted to the specific needs of the children and there is a good emphasis on the development of speaking

and listening through role play, such as when they act out the story of the 'Three Little Pigs'. In other year groups, pupils are often well managed by staff with firmness and sensitivity. In many lessons, teaching is adapted to the needs of pupils with limited understanding of English, making sure they are included. Pupils with learning difficulties are often supported well by teaching assistants.

Despite this improving picture, weak teaching in some year groups has resulted in poor progress being made, particularly when the school has had to use temporary staff. In too many lessons, teachers talk for too long without involving the pupils. Too much teaching does not challenge pupils' passivity. Occasionally, activities are unimaginative and work is too easy or too hard. When this happens, the pupils quickly get restless and a few get upset. Time is not always sufficiently well used because activities sometimes finish too soon and pupils have little to do.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Nursery and Reception, there is good use of space to cover different aspects of the curriculum. In the 'creative' room, children use construction kits to build and explore shape and in the 'playroom' they work with adults to develop role play skills. In the 'think and learn' room, there is good use of computers and the whiteboard. The school's recent investment in new computer equipment has enhanced opportunities for all pupils to investigate and research topics.

The good range of extra clubs is much enjoyed by pupils. The introduction of 'Thumbs Up' and '6/7 Club' to support pupils with behavioural or emotional problems, or who need to develop anger management skills, has had a positive effect on both pupils and their classmates.

The school has rightly identified the need to develop better links across the curriculum. There is often little evidence that challenging tasks are planned for more able pupils. Planning for less able pupils is better. These pupils are set tasks more appropriate to their needs and receive effective additional support from teaching assistants.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are strengths in the care and support provided to meet the pupils' personal needs. The school is a happy place and children respect each other. Effective support is provided to help pupils understand and control their feelings. Staff know pupils well and are strongly committed to pupils' well-being. The pupils feel safe and confident that they can approach adults with problems whenever necessary. Child protection procedures are securely in place; all staff know what to do.

Assessment systems are in place, but these are not always used effectively. Pupils have targets but do not always understand what they mean. Year 6 pupils were confident in explaining targets but younger pupils were much less certain. Marking in Year 6 is consistently good, and these pupils said they found it helpful. Across the rest of the school, however, marking is too varied and less effective in helping pupils to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The newly established leadership team is working well together to improve the school. There have been significant improvements in behaviour and this is a result of a number of initiatives in place to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Coordinators are well supported by the headteacher and they are developing their role well. They have been involved in monitoring and supporting staff across the school and have a secure understanding about what needs to be improved. As a result of this and the recent improvements, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Feedback to teachers about how to improve their work is in place. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and recorded. This work has only been partially effective because of teachers leaving and the need to provide extra support for new and inexperienced staff.

Leaders have made some strides in introducing effective systems to monitor and evaluate the progress made by pupils across the school. This gives clear information about progress in Years 3 to 6 which has helped improve results in Year 6, but less information is available in the Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2. Therefore, the school does not have a sufficiently developed system to identify underachievement early enough so that resources can be more effectively targeted.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We were very impressed with how friendly you were. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. Your school needs to improve because at the moment it is not as good as it should be. However, it is good at caring for you and making sure you are safe.

What we most liked about your school:

- The improvement in your behaviour over the past year.
- The use of trips and visits to help you become more confident and work in teams.
- Your improving attendance; you can help even more by making sure you come to school unless you have a good reason not to do so.
- Your understanding about being healthy and the 'wake up and shake up' sessions.
- The good start you make in the Nursery and Reception.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

- Helping you improve the standards of your work and the progress you make.
- Making sure lessons are interesting and not too difficult or easy.
- Improving the way the school measures how well you are doing so you can quickly get extra help if you fall behind.

We enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.