

Northfield Manor Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103304
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286622
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Hynds
Headteacher	A Blake
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Swarthmore Road Selly Oak Birmingham B29 4JT
Telephone number	0121 4752489
Fax number	0121 4759627

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. Most children's attainment on entry is below that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is above average. A significant minority of these are at an early stage of learning English. A high number of pupils join school in classes other than Reception during the school year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides a friendly and caring environment for pupils to learn and play.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and, by the time they leave Year 6, they attain broadly average standards overall. However, attainment in mathematics is below average and performance in this subject is a weakness throughout the school. A range of strategies has been put into place recently to bring about improvement. The early signs are that these are proving successful and standards are beginning to rise. However, teachers do not yet have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics, especially the more able. Children in the Reception class make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, are working at the levels expected for their age. Mathematical development is relatively weaker than other areas of learning. Though progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory, it is variable between classes. This stems from inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning that mean some pupils are challenged more effectively than others, and so their achievement is better. Boys perform considerably better than girls overall. The main reason for this is that boys are given more attention in lessons and are encouraged to be actively involved in their learning. Girls tend to be left to work independently, with less intervention from adults to help them improve their work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most of them behave well and many enjoy coming to school. They are polite and show a caring attitude towards others. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, with one comment capturing the views of many: 'I am so glad I sent my children to Northfield Manor, they are so happy there'. The satisfactory curriculum is effectively enriched by a wide range of out-of-school clubs and visits to places of educational interest, such as Worcester Cathedral. The provision for music has been much improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Curriculum planning is effective in promoting pupils' creative talents. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good relationships between teachers and pupils making classrooms friendly and calm places in which to learn. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work and show enjoyment in their activities. Teaching assistants give valuable support to pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils whose first language is other than English are also given extra help, so they can be fully involved in all activities. Care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory. All staff are committed to the safety and well-being of pupils and there are rigorous safeguarding procedures in place. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school. Academic guidance is not always successful in showing pupils how to improve their work, especially in mathematics.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is well respected by parents and provides a clear vision for future school development. All staff and governors share this vision and a strong sense of teamwork is evident. A lack of rigour in the school's monitoring procedures means that the difference between the performance of boys and girls was not identified. Effective steps have been taken since the previous inspection to promote improvement. There is sound capacity for future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Raise the attainment of girls by involving them more purposefully in lessons.

- Ensure all pupils make good progress by improving the consistency of teaching and learning, especially to make work challenging for all pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

At the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average overall but below average in mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory overall but progress is inconsistent between classes. In recent years there has been a growing number of pupils who join school other than in the Reception class. Most of these have learning difficulties or disabilities and this has adversely affected the overall achievement of pupils, which has declined over the last two years. Leadership and management have taken positive steps to reverse this trend and pupils are doing better this year. The school has convincing evidence to show that pupils who remain in school from Reception to Year 6 achieve well. An increasing number of pupils are joining school at an early stage of learning English. These pupils are given extra support that helps them achieve in a satisfactory manner. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also make satisfactory progress because of extra help they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils clearly know right from wrong and behave well, but a few behave less well. Pupils say there is little bullying and when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly. They show much enthusiasm in their activities and are keen to do well. They are confident and willing to take on responsibility, such as being a member of the school council. They also make a good, positive contribution to the local community, for example, by delivering goods to homes during the Harvest Festival. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Pupils know well how to stay safe, as is shown in how they play well together and move around the school in an orderly fashion. Pupils have a good awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle through eating healthily and taking regular exercise. This is reflected in the good take-up of the many out-of-school sporting clubs. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives. Their personal qualities develop well and their literacy skills progress satisfactorily, but numeracy skills are below average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Children have a good start to their education in the Reception class because of the good quality teaching they receive. Activities are stimulating and tailored well to meet their individual needs. Teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is more varied. Classrooms are managed well, so they are orderly places in which to learn. Activities are often practical and interesting. This was evident in a science lesson for pupils in Year 4, in which they were investigating a variety of substances to see if they were soluble. However, in some classes, the level of challenge is not sufficient and so pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is particularly the case in mathematics, in which teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of, are not high

enough. Marking is not used consistently to show pupils how to improve their work. Because they are given less attention and encouragement, girls do not perform as well as boys. Throughout the school, relationships are good and pupils show interest and enjoyment in their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for Reception children is planned well to provide them with exciting practical activities that help them make good progress in their learning. The curriculum for pupils in years 1 to 6 is more variable which leads to inconsistencies in progress. Pupils say they especially enjoy the many out-of-school clubs they can join. These include chess, football, German and art clubs. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular sporting activities, which makes a positive contribution to their personal development. The curriculum is enlivened by a variety of themed weeks. During the inspection, this was seen in the range of activities pupils were engaged in as part of Art Week. These included making African musical instruments and Mexican tabards, which was beneficial to their cultural development. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. This limits their achievement in English and mathematics. The curriculum is effectively extended by links with other providers such as professional sports coaches, which helps pupils improve their sporting talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents are rightly very pleased with the way their children are looked after in school. As one commented, 'The school promotes confidence in its children and is a warm and friendly place'. Health and safety routines and risk assessments, including all checks for safeguarding pupils, are fully in place. All staff have been trained in child protection procedures. The good induction arrangements enable children to settle quickly into the Reception class. There are good links with outside agencies to provide pupils with extra support when needed. The procedures for checking the progress that pupils make are thorough. However, teachers do not always use the information collected to show them what steps to take to make improvements in their work. The school is beginning to involve pupils in assessing for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve, but this is not firmly embedded.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The procedures for checking the performance of the school are satisfactory and the school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate. This has enabled it to identify the right areas for development, such as raising standards and achievement in mathematics and improving the consistency of teaching. However, the analysis of data is not rigorous enough. Because of this, the school had not identified that girls achieve considerably less well than boys. The school works closely with others, such as the Local Authority, to promote improvement. This is seen in the positive steps being taken to improve provision in mathematics and the consistency of teaching. The school also works hard to involve parents in their children's learning. A good example of this are the INSPIRE workshops held for each class in which parents work alongside their children on a

variety of activities. Governors are very supportive of the school but their role in holding the school to account is not fully developed.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northfield Manor Primary School, Birmingham, B29 4JT

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were very friendly and told us you were proud of your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and consider your school to be a satisfactory one.

Your personal development is good and most of you behave well. Teaching is satisfactory, as is your achievement, and you reach average standards in English and science by the end of Year 6. You do not achieve as well in mathematics and standards are below average. All the adults in school take good care of you, which really pleases your parents. All of you feel safe and secure in school and, as one of you said, 'We like this school because it is fun and friendly and we are looked after well'. You told us you enjoy the satisfactory curriculum, especially the many sporting and musical activities you can take part in. You also told us you liked the theme weeks, such as the Art Week that was taking place during the inspection. Girls do not do as well as boys and sometimes the work you are given is too easy, especially in mathematics. The few pupils who do not always behave responsibly could help the school improve by behaving as well as everyone else. The adults in charge of managing the school do a satisfactory job and are helping it to improve.

A special word of thanks to the head girl and head boy who showed us round the school when we arrived. I shall remember your happy and smiling faces for a long time. You are both a credit to your school.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure teachers give you work in mathematics that makes you think hard.
- Give more help to girls to improve their achievement.
- Improve teaching and learning in some classes so all pupils make good progress.

I hope you all keep enjoying your learning and continue showing care for everyone you meet.

Best wishes for the future

Melvyn Hemmings Lead Inspector