



Boldmere Infant School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103342
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286633
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Arnalena Bee

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Cofield Road
School category	Community		Sutton Coldfield
Age range of pupils	3–7		B73 5SD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4642338
Number on roll (school)	315	Fax number	0121 4644342
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Peter Green
		Headteacher	Liz Osborne
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school which currently has an acting headteacher. Most pupils are of White British origin but there are pupils from a small number of other minority ethnic groups. Attainment on entry to Nursery is in line with expectations. A below average number of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where adults and children work happily alongside each other, respecting and valuing what each other says and does. Pupils' personal development is good with outstanding features. Pupils are keen and eager to please their teachers. As a result, they behave well and get on amicably with each other and the adults who help them. The pupils thoroughly enjoy all the exciting things that the school offers including the many opportunities they have to develop their personal independence. Pupils enthusiastically 'apply' for important jobs such as being a Christmas postman or a playground friend. When 'appointed', these jobs are taken very seriously. One boy, in Year 1, wearing his special playground friend cap said, 'I look out for children who haven't got a friend. This school is full of nice children and it is always sparkly clean.' Pupils become confident speakers and mature listeners from an early age. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Pupils make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and achieve well. The good level of achievement continues through Years 1 and 2. By the time they leave the school, pupils reach well above average standards in reading and above average standards in mathematics and writing. However, school data shows that girls consistently do significantly better in writing than the boys and it is not consistently used well to identify groups of pupils who might achieve even higher.

The good progress that pupils make in literacy, numeracy and in their personal development ensures that they have the skills needed to prepare them well for the next stage of their education and future life. The personal, social and health programme is a strength of the good curriculum.

In a very small minority of lessons, work could be better matched to the needs of all abilities, in particular those pupils who are more able. Relationships in all classes are warm. One parent wrote, 'It is hard to hand your child over to someone else but my child is always greeted with a friendly smile from his teacher or teaching assistant.' Care, guidance and support are good. The care and personal support that pupils receive is of the highest quality. Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher is managing the school successfully to ensure that pupils continue to achieve well but not enough is being done to check on the impact of recent developments such as those to improve boys' performance in writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that boys are challenged more so that they do as well as girls, particularly in their writing.
- Make better use of information about pupils' performance to track the progress of different groups and ensure all pupils are challenged by their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In Year 2, standards are above average in writing and mathematics and particularly high in reading. Achievement is good in relation to the pupils' starting points. Results in 2006 show a significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Girls far outperformed boys in writing and to a lesser extent in reading because the work given is not consistently stretching the higher attaining boys. This is slowing their progress, particularly in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are effectively supported and achieve as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good with some outstanding features. The overwhelming majority of pupils display extremely positive attitudes to school. Pupils show pride in their school and are keen to do well. Good levels of attendance are a testament to the extent to which they enjoy their learning. Pupils are highly confident, independent learners who take full advantage of the many exciting opportunities on offer. They maturely and willingly accept responsibility and carry out their duties very conscientiously. Members of the elected school council are very good ambassadors for the school and have raised funds to purchase new playground equipment.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Everyone treats each other with great care and respect. Assemblies successfully celebrate personal achievement but do not always allow pupils time for personal reflection. Pupils keep fit through sporting activities and talk very knowledgeably about the importance of eating healthily. They are confident about keeping themselves safe both in and out of school and have very good knowledge of road safety. In preparing for a visit to a local nursery's Christmas production, one girl in Reception said, 'It's best to hold hands to be safe when crossing the road.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The vibrant and stimulating classrooms encourage pupils to want to learn. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils make good progress. Adults develop very good relationships with the pupils and give them many opportunities to work independently. Pupils in a Year 2 class displayed good independent learning skills as they worked out the answers to their money sums. They showed mature attitudes to learning and worked confidently and enthusiastically. All lessons are interestingly planned and as a result, the pupils are keen and eager to learn. Occasionally, the same writing activity is given to the whole class and higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Some marking

of pupils' work is good but this is inconsistent. Occasionally teachers do not give pupils enough guidance to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and the way in which it promotes pupils' personal development is outstanding. It is also generally highly effective in making sure that pupils acquire a good set of basic skills. Many interesting visits and visitors add extra stimulation to pupils' learning, and make a significant contribution to the standards they achieve. In the Foundation Stage links between all areas of learning are interestingly made and areas where pupils can 'dress up and pretend' are resourced well. The outside play opportunities are also a very strong feature complemented by excellent school grounds. There is some good extra provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities that ensures they make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The outstanding level of care and support provided for the pupils is an important factor in their success at school. However the school does not use the variety of information on how children are doing appropriately to identify groups of pupils who might achieve even more. Pupils say that they feel well looked after and that everyone is very kind and helpful. Good links have been forged with a range of medical and social support agencies to help provide for the specific needs of some pupils. The work of the learning mentor in helping some pupils to build good social skills is a positive feature. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and robust. The very positive relationships between adults and pupils result in pupils feeling confident to seek help and knowing that they will receive guidance to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher is managing the school successfully. Management of the performance of teachers is effective and links well with the ambitions of the school development plan. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for improvement. The improvement plan focuses on the right priorities but lacks a clear set of criteria by which to judge the success, or otherwise, of the actions taken to improve. The acting headteacher and senior staff have continued to maintain the school's many strengths but, because of their relative lack of experience, the capacity to improve is only satisfactory. Effective relationships with the local junior school ensure continuity of learning for the pupils. The recent introduction of shared training between the two schools on, for example, assessing writing and mathematics, is a good example of what is now being achieved by joint co-operation. The acting headteacher has enthused the governors to become more involved in evaluating the school's

performance. Parents are very appreciative of all the school does and feel that their views are taken into consideration when appropriate.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

You may remember that we visited your school to see how well you were doing. Thank you for being so polite and friendly and talking to us about all the interesting things you do.

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school

- We think you are very lucky to go to a good school where all adults work hard to make sure you do well in lessons and have fun as you learn.
- We know that you are all well cared for and that if you have a problem you can go to an adult for help.
- You behave well and are kind to each other.
- We think you have an excellent idea of how important it is to eat healthily and keep fit.
- We think you are very well prepared to move to your next school.
- We think that the school is well led and managed by the adults who help you.

To make the school even better, we have asked your teachers to

- Make sure that boys do as well as girls in writing.
- Check that different groups of pupils are learning as much as they can.

Thank you for showing us your lovely school.