



Flixton Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106318
Local Authority Trafford
Inspection number 287482
Inspection date 31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Stephen Wall

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Delamere Road
School category	Community		Flixton, Urmston
Age range of pupils	7-11		Manchester M41 5QL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7485141
Number on roll (school)	253	Fax number	0161 7485141
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr P Cowburn
		Headteacher	Mr J Redmond
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Flixton Junior is an average sized school serving an urban area of predominantly private housing. Most pupils are of White British heritage and have English as their mother tongue. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. However, well below average numbers have statements of special educational need. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Flixton is an outstanding school in every respect because its pupils make excellent progress in both their academic and personal development. Modesty and a belief that only perfection could lead to an outstanding judgement mean the school undervalues its own effectiveness, judging itself to be good. Parents are almost unanimous in praising the education the school provides. Its deserved popularity in the locality means the school is full, despite falling numbers of potential pupils in the local area.

Smiling and enthusiastic faces are the norm for pupils and adults in this exceptionally happy and purposeful school. It is a pleasure to see how keen the pupils are to learn and how much they enjoy their lessons. 'The teachers are great! They make learning fun,' was one pupil's perceptive comment. Excellent relationships are at the heart of all the school does. Pupils are treated with genuine respect and affection so that they feel valued and safe. Their behaviour is excellent and their manners exemplary. Saying 'please', 'thank you' and opening doors for others are automatic. They know how important healthy lifestyles are and large numbers join in the wide range of sporting activities after school. By the time they leave school, the pupils have become confident and mature youngsters, fully equipped to meet the challenges of the next steps in their education.

Teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. It is lively, imaginative and really engages pupils in their learning. Pupils are sometimes so engrossed in what they are doing that they do not notice visitors to their classroom! This enables them to make outstanding progress. Pupils enter the school with just above average standards and make very good progress to leave with standards well above average. Their achievement is outstanding. The outstanding and innovative curriculum plays a huge role in helping to stimulate pupils' interest and positive attitudes. In addition to studying the normal school subjects, every pupil is involved in outdoor activities. They tend the school allotments with pride to produce vegetables, which they use in the very popular food technology lessons and for the annual Flixton Junior vegetable show. This adds significantly to their adoption of healthy lifestyles and their personal development. The sight of smiling pupils in hard hats and Wellington boots digging on a cold winter's afternoon was heart-warming! In addition, the pupils enjoy performing drama in the outside amphitheatre and, with adult help, are constructing their own assault course and outside environmental classroom. Our outside area is fantastic! We help to plan it and build it and we really are helping to make the school even better,' said one older pupil.

The levels of success the school achieves could not happen without the vision, drive and determination of the headteacher to provide the framework in which every member of this highly effective school can reach their potential. He makes sure that the aims and values of the school are realised so that every individual is valued and nurtured. The headteacher has not only the support but also the respect of a dynamic leadership team and an experienced governing body. There have recently been some very good appointments, bringing further quality to the management of the school, and giving

it outstanding capacity to sustain very high standards and continue to give excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school knows exactly what it needs to do to improve even further, so there are no key issues to add.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

All groups of pupils achieve outstandingly well. The school tracks pupils' progress meticulously as they move through the school and the information gained from this indicates clearly that all pupils make at least very good progress and some make outstanding progress. Areas of relative weakness are identified using assessment data and are tackled ruthlessly. For example, the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving the higher grades in writing has risen dramatically, following the introduction of targeted strategies for improvement. This shows how effectively the school is working to raise standards in writing to match those in reading. Demanding targets are regularly met and, in the case of pupils attaining the higher grades, exceeded. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

At the heart of this wonderful school is the excellent emphasis it gives to developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is seen in their excellent behaviour and their respect for themselves, others around them and their school. They understand that they are well cared for and come to school to learn; consequently, their personal development thrives. Pupils' above average attendance levels show how much they enjoy coming to school. They are confident in approaching adults when upset and know 'our teachers will sort things out quickly'. The school council provides pupils with opportunities to voice their opinions and make a difference in their school. For example, it has brought about better playground equipment and has helped plan the outside areas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are invariably well planned, and conducted with verve and enthusiasm. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they use to excellent effect in asking questions which are demanding and really

make the pupils think. The creative and effective use of interactive whiteboards adds another dimension of interest to lessons. Teaching assistants support individuals and small groups of pupils effectively by running mathematics clinics and reading recovery, for example. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers' comments are of a high standard, indicating clearly what pupils need to do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's outstanding curriculum provides a rich mix of activities and opportunities that stimulate and inspire pupils' academic and personal development. The provision for outdoor learning and exploration is second to none and really excites the pupils. The study of the Second World War in history, for example, is brought to life by visits to the outdoor Anderson shelter which acts as an on-site museum for World War artefacts. It was planned, constructed and stocked by the pupils themselves!

Large numbers of pupils take part in the wide range of sporting activities offered by the school. There are regular educational trips out and a much valued and anticipated residential trip for Year 6 pupils to the Isle of Man. These activities add significantly to the pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils work and grow in safety and harmony. Policies and procedures to ensure pupils' safety are firmly embedded and understood by staff. Vulnerable children are identified early and the school's effective links with outside agencies are used to support them when necessary. The school provides a very stimulating environment in which the care, guidance and support of the pupils are given the highest priority. Enjoyment, happiness and security are the underpinning principles of all the school does.

Support for pupils' academic progress is very good. Data are used effectively to track pupils' progress and the school responds quickly to intervene if underachievement is identified. Pupils know their individual targets and know what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher strives for perfection and is constantly looking for ways to improve the school. He is ably supported by other senior managers and the staff as a whole. Everyone, including the pupils, knows that only the best will do and responds with hard work and commitment. Risk taking is part and parcel of managing the school. For example, in English and mathematics, the traditional structure of single subject managers has been replaced with curriculum teams to encourage more effective ownership of initiatives to bring about improvement.

The school takes into account the views of a wide range of stake holders, including pupils and parents, in helping it to gain a very accurate picture of how well it is doing and where it could improve further. The school improvement plan is of the highest quality, with clear priorities and success criteria identified. Governors carry out their duties conscientiously. They are knowledgeable and supportive but not afraid to challenge when necessary in the interests of the pupils.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school recently. I really enjoyed my day at Flixton Juniors. You were all keen to talk to me about your school and I have rarely heard so many positive comments!

I think you are very lucky to go to such an excellent school. The adults who work with you really do everything they can to make sure you are happy and well cared for. Your teachers work very hard to provide you with really interesting lessons. It is no wonder, therefore, that you make such very good progress as you move through the school. I was really impressed with how well you get on together and care for each other. The outdoor education areas you have helped design and build are truly stunning! I am so pleased you are learning about gardening at first hand and using the vegetables you grow in your food technology lessons! I have never come across such a successful scheme before. Your headteacher and all his staff are doing a fantastic job to make sure you get the best education possible. I know you are proud of Flixton Juniors and will continue to work hard with your teachers to make sure it stays such an outstanding school.