

Netherfield Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122498
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number	292419
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Hind
Headteacher	Mrs J Clark
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	Netherfield Lane Meden Vale Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG20 9PA
Telephone number	01623 842683
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school serving the distinct community of Meden Vale near Warsop. Originally a mining village it is now much more socially and economically diverse. The number of pupils known to be eligible to claim free school meals is above average and indicators suggest that many pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Most pupils have White British background. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is above average and there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has a Basic Skills Award, Sports Activemark, and Healthy Schools Gold Award. It is an Investor in People and a Creative Partnership Hub School.

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 providing good value for money. While it has some areas for development it also has a number of strong features. The school's success is due in no small part to the determination and passion of an extremely effective headteacher supported by her able and hardworking team. Their firm belief is that children cannot learn effectively without strong foundations to support their personal, social and emotional needs. Everyone works well together to achieve their stated aim, 'to provide a caring environment which encourages each child to do his/her best at all times and to be considerate to others'.

Good care and support are provided for pupils, and pastoral care is excellent. Even before children and their families first set foot in the Nursery, work begins to make sure each child feels valued, secure, confident and ready to learn. Consequently, pupils make good progress in their personal development which, by the time they leave the school, is good and often better. The behaviour of all but a very few is very good. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility through the roles they are proud to take on in school and often develop confidence beyond their years. The school has introduced individual targets to improve academic guidance but not all pupils know them well enough or how to achieve them.

Achievement is good. The school's approach to developing the whole child is central to this success as most pupils start school with low levels of skills. They are often exceptionally low in literacy and numeracy. Pupils settle very quickly into the happy and stimulating environment of the Nursery and make good progress here, and in the Reception class. While standards are still below average when they leave the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1, pupils have developed vital skills which mean they are ready to learn. They continue to achieve well throughout Years 1 and 2 and most have caught up with other children of the same age by the time they leave the school. The more able often do better. Good teaching, based on extremely positive relationships and a good, well enriched curriculum, helps to ensure that pupils are keen to learn and make good progress. The school is planning a new curriculum to extend the topic based approach but has yet to establish how it will ensure the progression of skills in all subjects.

Leadership and management are good. Work with parents is outstanding because of the way partnership is valued and encouraged. It is no surprise that most parents love the school. Importantly the school is a centre for the community and successfully promotes more positive attitudes to learning. For example, in partnership with other agencies, the school works successfully to improve attendance and encourage adults to attend courses. Leaders know the school increasingly well because they have introduced more robust systems for checking on its work. Leadership is being successfully shared and new leaders are beginning to see the impact of their work on school improvement.

Improvements made since the last inspection, coupled with a determination to do even better, demonstrate that there is good potential for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the new curriculum is carefully planned and creative, linking subjects together whilst ensuring the progressive development of skills and understanding across the school.
- Ensure that individual pupils know their targets well for the next steps of their learning in reading, writing and mathematics and are clear about what they need to do to achieve them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children enter the Nursery with lower levels of attainment than most and they are often exceptionally low in language and calculation. With good teaching and a range of well thought out activities, good progress is made in Nursery and Reception but pupils have so much catching up to do that standards are still below those expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2006 showed that pupils reached average standards by the time they left the school. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils across the school, including those with learning difficulties, continue to make good progress. The more able pupils are supported to achieve particularly well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including social, moral spiritual and cultural development are good. Pupils are friendly and happy to talk about school. They value the trips, visits and visitors the school provides. These help to broaden their horizons provide lasting memories and prepare them well for life in a multicultural society. Pupils make a good contribution within and beyond their immediate community, for example, through initiatives such as designing the community garden and bulb planting. Work for the Healthy Schools Award has helped them to develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy. The family meal service is a joy when conversations flow over healthy school dinners. Pupils know how to keep safe. Attendance is satisfactory. The school works hard to promote the importance of good attendance though too many parents still take holidays in term time. Good personal skills and improving basic academic skills prepare pupils satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is at the heart of the school's success. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. They ensure that behaviour in classrooms is very good and relationships are excellent so that pupils gain confidence in their abilities. Teachers use good subject knowledge and questioning skills to encourage pupils to think and work hard. Marking celebrates pupils' achievements and makes it clear what they need to do to improve.

Because the school's leadership has improved the way it checks on how well pupils are doing, a quick response is made where extra support or improvements to teaching are needed. Teachers use assessment well and conscientiously plan activities to challenge pupils. However, occasionally this does not result in a clear focus of what teachers are looking for at the end of a lesson in order to help teachers and the pupils themselves measure their success. The school has a good number of able teaching assistants who are highly effective in supporting groups and individual pupils who need extra help, ensuring that all progress well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Effective leadership in the Foundation Stage has ensured that pupils experience a balance of delightful adult led and child initiated activities. Across school, there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of basic skills enhanced by further enrichment activities in other subjects, such as topic weeks or an artist in residence to bring learning alive. Improved provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has meant a significant development of the children's computer skills and added a new dimension to their learning.

The school has made a start on planning a new curriculum for September 2007 to extend the topic-based approach. It does not yet demonstrate how it will ensure the progression of skills in all subjects. Attractive displays around the school show that pupils reach high standards in their work, particularly in art and increasingly in ICT. Extra-curricular activities are offered in art and ICT, though pupils say that they would like more opportunities to take part in sporting and other active pursuits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The pastoral care is a real strength of the school. This is because the headteacher and staff believe passionately in going the extra mile to provide the very best care for pupils. This is often in partnership with others such as the school nurse, SureStart, West Notts College and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they have someone to turn to with worries. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are firmly in place; arrangements for child protection are rigorous and staff are kept fully aware of their responsibilities. Excellent systems ensure that starting school and moving to the juniors is a positive experience. New assessment systems to track the progress of key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are starting to have a positive impact. However, the school recognises that there is more to be done to improve systems for setting individual pupils' targets, making sure that all pupils and parents know them well and what they have to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's highly effective leadership and strong support from able senior managers, has ensured the school continues to improve. Teamwork is paramount, as seen through the headteacher's determination to share leadership, and the positive response of staff. Systems for monitoring and assessment have been given a sharper focus. As a result the leadership team has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, helping to make sure more challenging targets can be set and achieved. Newer curriculum leaders are rising to the challenge of leading their subjects but the impact of this has yet to be measured over time. A strength of the school is the very effective partnerships that school leaders promote with outside bodies and within the local community. These add considerably to pupils' experiences. They provide extended school facilities for pupils and families and fund additional resources including 'Netherfield Nippers', 'Learning2Gether' courses and improvements to the Nursery environment. The governing body provides a good degree of challenge and supports the school well.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	3
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	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?	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.

Annex A

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	2
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	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

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Netherfield Infant and Nursery School, Meden Vale, Nottinghamshire, NG20 9PA

I was pleased to meet you and all the staff and very much enjoyed the time I spent with you. Thank you for making me feel so welcome, talking to me and helping me to find out so much about you and your school.

I think you are lucky to go to such a good school where the headteacher and all the other grown-ups do their very best for you. They look after you and care for you well. Your teachers and teaching assistants make learning interesting and enjoyable and they work hard to help you make good progress in lessons. The good behaviour of most of you in class, around school and in the playground really helps you to learn well too. It is clear that you are happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there. By the time you leave the school, most of you do as well as pupils in most other schools and some of you do better.

The school is very keen to find ways to help you do as well as you possibly can. Though you already make good progress, I think you could do even better. I have asked the school to make sure that you have targets for your next steps of learning in mathematics, writing and reading that you are very clear about what they mean and how to achieve them. The teachers are working hard to plan a new curriculum for you. I have asked that they make sure that it includes a way to check that you are carefully building on your knowledge, skills and understanding of all subjects as you move through the school.

I am sure that Mrs Clark, and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by all continuing to behave well, working really hard and making sure you come to school every school day.

I would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector