



Asquith Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132250
Local Authority NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number 294004
Inspection dates 8–9 January 2007
Reporting inspector Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Asquith Street
School category	Community		Mansfield
Age range of pupils	3–11		Nottinghamshire NG18 3DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01623 454969
Number on roll (school)	323	Fax number	01623 469092
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Phillip Oldknow
		Headteacher	Mrs Anne Daffern
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	8–9 January 2007	294004

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

The majority of children starting in the nursery are not as advanced in their knowledge and skills as children generally. This stands out most in their personal development and language skills. At the beginning of Year 1 most pupils' attainment is well below the standard expected. The great majority of pupils are White British and the number of pupils with a learning difficulty is average. A few children who are mainly Eastern European and learning to speak English have recently joined the school.

The school has the Gold Standard Healthy Schools Award. It is supported by Speech and Language Therapy services, who are helping its trained speech and language teacher lead a programme of language development. A significant number of teachers are recently recruited and several of these are newly qualified.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory. While standards are below those expected for their ages, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards have improved gradually over several years. Children in Nursery and Reception achieve well because the provision made for them is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language are provided for well and make good progress.

The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school on raising achievement, which is wholeheartedly supported by staff and governors. They share a firm grasp of the school's key development priorities. The school's capacity to make further improvements is satisfactory based on the effectiveness of its self-evaluation activities. The momentum for improvement is no greater because of the impact of the significant level of unavoidable changes in teaching staff. The pace of improvement is also reduced because monitoring, although comprehensive, is not always as sharp as it needs to be in evaluating the consistency of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils are making reasonable progress in lessons. They are often engaged well in learning and find many lessons enjoyable and fun. The curriculum provides all pupils with a wide range of interesting learning opportunities. The emphasis given to pupils' targets and to promoting their speaking and listening skills, both of high priority to the school, are being handled inconsistently in lessons across Key Stages 1 and 2.

Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively by the school. Most pupils are quick to adopt positive attitudes and contribute enthusiastically in school and beyond. They take an active part in the many engaging activities school has to offer. Pupils are strongly encouraged to be fit and healthy and they enjoy physical activity and sports. Their behaviour is good and this underlines the significant progress made by some pupils in their personal development and awareness of personal safety. The school's positive ethos means most pupils enjoy it and, very importantly, gain in confidence and self esteem. Absence from school has been a persistent problem, with low attendance levels over several years caused by a small minority. The school takes good care of pupils, especially through the strong links made with many parents and professional agencies, who contribute significantly to promoting pupils' early language skills, well-being and safety. Many parents have expressed positive views about the success of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' targets and their speaking and listening skills are being skilfully and consistently promoted at every opportunity.
- Monitor teaching more closely to ensure that good strategies for learning are being used effectively in every lesson.
- Improve the level of pupils' attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. While children in the Nursery and Reception Year make good progress because of effective teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, only a small minority gain the knowledge and skills expected for their age. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are below national expectations but these have been rising as the school gets increasingly to grips with pupils' progress. In 2006, the school had its best set of results for several years at the end of Key Stage 2. English and mathematics standards were below national expectations but were an improvement on previous years. In science, pupils' standards were above expectations. The developments in tracking pupils' progress, setting targets and focusing on groups on the borderline of higher levels of work are beginning to have a positive impact. This is creating the momentum needed for raising achievement. However, the pace of improvement is slowed somewhat at present because of the significant turnover in teachers. This is also creating some inconsistency of approach to teaching across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is effective in improving pupils' often challenging behaviour and in guiding them on understanding right and wrong. It plays a key role in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop a positive outlook and form good relationships with each other and staff. The school council actively contributes to school life, and many pupils take part enthusiastically in annual community events, especially in performing music and drama. Behaviour in the classroom and around school is generally good. Most pupils have the right attitude to work, although a minority of older boys do not always concentrate well in lessons. Most pupils enjoy school, but a small minority do not attend regularly. The school works hard to reduce absences and is achieving some success.

The school is proud to have earned the Gold Standard Healthy Schools Award, confirming its all round good practice. Whilst pupils know about healthy lifestyles, this is only having a moderate influence on their habits.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but are good in the Foundation Stage. There is some good teaching in each key stage, when teachers have high expectations of every pupil and the pace is brisk and purposeful. In those lessons pupils find learning fun and they are keen to answer questions and be actively involved in learning. Teachers and support staff work well together and good use is made of information and

communication technology (ICT). In some lessons, where behaviour is not so well managed, pupils do not learn as well as they should. In other lessons, pupils are not provided with enough opportunity to extend their speaking and listening skills, although the school has made this a priority. While good assessment procedures are in place there are inconsistencies in their use, largely because of the many staff changes. Assessment is often used well to identify appropriate targets and to track pupils' progress but the extent to which targets play a part in pupils' learning is too variable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum offers a breadth of work and activities that focus well on the needs and interests of all groups of pupils. Importantly, the wide range of learning opportunities have been planned effectively to engage and interest pupils. Personal, social and health education, literacy and numeracy have high priority and pupils gain a satisfactory range of skills for the next stage in their education. All pupils also benefit from a good range of enrichment activities such as regular visitors to support topics, educational trips and 'feature' weeks. This makes school exciting and broadens pupils' experiences of the world around them. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal and social development. There are many stimulating learning activities for children in the Foundation Stage and this gives them a good start to school. The resources for ICT have improved significantly and are used well to enliven and support learning across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support. All pupils receive good quality pastoral care because the staff know them well and are alert to their individual needs. The school makes good use of a wide range of outside support agencies and their speech and language teacher to support pupils' communication and language needs. Pupils feel happy and secure in school and they trust the adults to help them should problems occur. As a result, they act with their own and other's safety in mind. Adequate arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are in place and understood by all staff. The school has satisfactory procedures to measure pupils' progress and to set challenging targets and learning objectives. These procedures are often used effectively but not to the extent of being well embedded in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the teaching team has undergone considerable change in the past year and this is still ongoing, morale is high. Staff are working with a common sense of purpose because the senior leadership has set a clear direction on raising standards coupled with a high priority on pupils' well-being. Leadership roles are being developed more widely and successfully across

the school through key stage management and subject coordination roles. This leadership shares clear direction and is helping to sharpen the focus of all staff on pupils' performance, including their understanding and use of information on pupils' progress.

Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are satisfactory. A comprehensive programme of monitoring helps the school and governors understand strengths and weaknesses. This is used effectively in identifying priorities for improvement. These are contained in a sound school improvement plan although this does not detail enough what difference the improvements would make to pupils' achievement in particular. The lack of clear success criteria makes the monitoring of teaching less rigorous. The school is somewhat hampered, as a result, in determining how embedded improvements are, such as the use of targets or the promotion of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

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?	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	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	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?	3
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?	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.

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	2
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

10 January 2006

Dear Pupils

Asquith Primary School, Asquith Street, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 3DG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you about school and your work and appreciated the school council members who shared their views with us. This letter is to tell you what we thought about your school and how it can be made better.

These are the things we found best about your school:

- The headteacher and all of the staff are determined you will all do well in school.
- Your work is improving because of your efforts to achieve.
- You behave well.
- Teachers make many of your lessons enjoyable and fun, which is helping you to learn.
- School provides you with a good range of interesting work and activities.

This is what we have asked the headteacher to do to improve your school:

- Create as many opportunities and encourage you as much as possible to speak with confidence.
- Make absolutely sure that teachers take all the necessary steps to make the ways you learn as effective as possible.
- For the pupils who are too often absent, encourage them and their families to make sure they attend school every day.

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly.

Alan Lemon

Lead Inspector