

Colmore Junior School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	103188
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308242
Inspection date	3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Baker
Headteacher	C Millard
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Colmore Road Kings Heath Birmingham B14 6AJ
Telephone number	01214 642843
Fax number	01214 643870

Age group	7-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector investigated the following issues: current achievement and standards, teaching and learning, pupils' personal development and well-being, personal support and academic guidance, elements of the curriculum and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), assessment and tracking records, observations of the school at work and discussions with staff, the chair of the governing body and pupils. The parental questionnaire responses were analysed. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Colmore is a large junior school. It is a popular school that is oversubscribed and has a waiting list for each year group. The attainment of most pupils when they join the school in Year 3 is above average. The school population is predominantly White British but there are an increasing number of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic groups. A few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that enables its pupils to attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science and also in art, drama and music. The overwhelming majority of parents are justifiably proud of the high quality experiences that are provided for their children. One parental comment captures the views of many, 'Colmore Junior is a fantastic school. It offers children of all abilities a chance to grow in confidence and achieve to their full potential.'

At the core of the school's success are highly effective leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has created a very strong team ethos. As a result, all staff are firmly committed to helping individual pupils to achieve as well as they can. An effective management structure ensures that defined roles are interlinked, complementary and draw on individual strengths. This is exemplified in the work of the senior management team, which plays a crucial role in school improvement. Team members have, between them, devised very comprehensive ways of tracking pupils' progress and have introduced a variety of strategies to successfully improve achievement in writing after a slight dip in 2005 and 2006. They have also ensured that teachers know they are accountable for their pupils' progress. Subject leaders are proactive in developing their subjects. Well-established development planning and self-evaluation provide an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what is needed to improve. Despite enabling pupils to achieve so well, the school is not complacent. For example, after consulting parents and pupils, the school acknowledges the need to make homework more interesting and creative to reflect better the work that goes on in classrooms. This relentless drive to improve provision shows that leadership and management have excellent capacity to take the school further in the future. Governors are very actively involved in helping the school improve. They visit the school regularly and diligently fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

High quality teaching and learning results in pupils of all abilities achieving very well. Standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently above or well above average in English, mathematics and science. Relationships are excellent, making a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and the friendly and calm atmosphere to be found in all classrooms. Teachers plan their lessons to ensure the needs of individuals with different abilities are fully met. To this end, teaching assistants are deployed well to provide extra support to pupils when needed. Teachers make sure that pupils are clear about what they are to learn and what they have to do to succeed in their work. Of special note is the way teachers encourage pupils to assess for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. This makes a significant contribution to pupils developing their skills in becoming independent learners.

The outstanding curriculum ensures that pupils excel across a wide range of subjects. It has been imaginatively organised to provide all pupils with specialist teaching in art, music and drama on one afternoon each week. The results of this are evident in the stunning displays of pupils' art in classrooms and along corridors throughout the school. The school has also forged close links with organisations, such as Birmingham Repertory Theatre and Birmingham Royal Ballet Company, to develop pupils' artistic talents. There is a very wide range of clubs for pupils to join, including choir, samba band, cricket, netball and gardening club. Pupils also have the opportunity to experience many visits to places of educational interest, including a residential stay at an activity centre. These wide-ranging experiences play an important role in pupils' personal development, which is excellent.

Pupils behave in an exemplary manner and are very caring and considerate to others. They are keen to help the school community by taking on responsibilities such as being a member of the school council. Discussions with the council members show they take their duties seriously and are committed to helping the school improve. Pupils also make a very positive contribution to the wider community. For example, provisions brought in for the school's harvest display are donated to the local charity that supports disadvantaged persons in care of the community. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle by maintaining a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. This is shown in the healthy choices they make at lunchtime and their high participation rates in the many out of school sports clubs. They know how to stay safe, talking knowledgeably about road safety and the need to act responsibly in and out of school. Pupils are prepared in an outstanding way for their future lives.

The school takes excellent care of its pupils. Safeguarding procedures are extremely rigorous and pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school. As one commented, 'If we have any worries we know we can talk to any member of staff and they will listen and help us sort things out.' Parents are very appreciative of the way the school cares for and looks after their children. There are very strong links with outside agencies to provide extra support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Links are also highly effective in helping pupils who are at an early stage of learning English to make the same very good progress as other pupils. The procedures for checking the progress that pupils make are second to none, very effectively identifying if any pupil is not achieving his or her full potential. As a result, the school is able to put intervention strategies into place at an early stage and to set realistic and challenging targets for improvement. These procedures play a vital role in the progress that pupils make and the standards they attain.

Perhaps the last words should be left to those who matter most. When a group of pupils was asked what they liked most about school, one comment shone out, 'We really enjoy coming to this school because we all feel part of a family that cares and looks after each of us.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Make homework more interesting and creative for 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Colmore Junior School, Birmingham, B14 6AJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. The pupils I spoke to were very enthusiastic about your school, as were your parents. I would like to tell you I consider your school to be excellent. It helps you to achieve very well, and achieve standards by the end of Year 6 that are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Because of the specialist teaching you receive, you also attain high standards in art, music and drama.

Your personal development is outstanding and you behave in an exemplary manner. I especially like the way you are so polite and show care and consideration for others. Teachers make sure your lessons are interesting and are good at asking questions to make you think hard. You enjoy your work and are particularly good in deciding what you need to do next to make it even better.

You told me you have lots of interesting and exciting things to do at school. You also said you especially enjoy the many activities in art, music, drama and sport in which you can take part. Your artwork is superb and makes classrooms and corridors such stimulating places. All adults take very good care of you and ensure you are safe while in school. You told me that if you have any worries or concerns you can talk to an adult and are confident that he or she would listen to you. The people in charge of the school do an excellent job and continue working hard to improve it even further.

A special word of thanks to the two pupils who took me on a tour of the school. I shall remember your happy and smiling faces for a long time. You are both a credit to your school.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Give you homework that is more interesting and creative.

Best wishes

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

Annex B

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Lead inspector