

# George Dixon Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 103200               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Birmingham           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308247               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 19–20 September 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Ian Hodgkinson       |

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

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|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary                            |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11                               |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                              |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                    |
| School                                    | 210                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Vimal Dodd                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Maria Carter                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 2 February 2004                    |
| <b>School address</b>                     | City Road<br>Birmingham<br>B17 8LE |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01214 292775                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01214 344205                       |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

### Description of the school

The school is located in a socially, economically and ethnically diverse part of Birmingham. It draws most of its pupils from areas of severe social disadvantage in the west of the city, although some pupils travel from much further afield. The rate at which pupils join and leave the school is very high, because for a significant minority of the pupils, their time in the school and local area is transitory. Some, for example, are children of recently arrived immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, while a few are children from overseas whose parents work in the diplomatic service. The large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, and a significant minority, including those who are newly arrived from overseas, are beginners in learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is below average.

The school cooperates with the local authority and private organisations in offering a range of extended services, including before and after school clubs and adult education opportunities for parents.

### 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. It has a strong ethos that fosters harmony and understanding between pupils who come from widely differing backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. It extends a warm welcome to those newly arrived in the community and equips them well with the skills they need to learn. One parent of a child recently arrived in the UK wrote of being 'really impressed' by her daughter's enjoyment of school and of how she had 'made a lot of progress in adapting to her new environment'. However, there is a significant variation in the rate of progress made by different groups of pupils, and a minority, especially in the middle of the attainment range, underachieve. To remedy this problem school leaders have taken effective action to improve the way in which pupils' work and progress are assessed. This has brought about considerable improvements to the quality of academic guidance since the last inspection, so that teachers now give pupils clear information about how they can improve their work. Standards are rising as a consequence, especially in writing.

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. While standards are below average, pupils make generally sound progress given their very low starting points. Teachers work skilfully with their teaching assistants to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, and those who are beginners in learning English make generally good progress. However, the tasks set for pupils in lessons are not always sufficiently well adapted to meet their personal needs, to ensure that all can make the best progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, including in the Foundation Stage (Reception class). Managers do not yet use assessment information sharply enough to identify in which classes or which groups pupils make most and least progress, to help them identify where further support is most needed. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, and the steps leaders have taken so far to address weaknesses in pupils' progress have demonstrated sound capacity to improve further.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. A good, broad curriculum makes learning enjoyable through interesting themes and topics, and reinforces pupils' strong understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils of different faiths routinely write and lead prayers in multi-faith assemblies, helping pupils to celebrate shared values as well as recognising the differences between them. The school has developed very effective links with parents so that they can better support the learning of their children. Parents clearly value the good care, support and guidance given to their children and which help pupils to enjoy school and feel safe. 'The school is all my son thinks about!' said one.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Overall, the attainment of children who join the school in the Reception class is very low, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their social and emotional development. Children make satisfactory progress given their starting points, even though by the end of the Foundation Stage attainment is still below that expected nationally. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff make good use of assessment and other information to recognise children's needs and help them settle into school. An appropriate range of activities is planned to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. As in the rest of the school, however, sometimes tasks are not always well matched

to the capabilities of all children, and this restricts the progress they can make. Use of the new outdoor area is underdeveloped at present, but offers an exciting new resource for learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Close the gaps in attainment and progress between particular groups of pupils, especially by improving progress for those in the middle attainment range.
- Ensure that teachers plan lessons which consistently offer appropriate challenge for different groups of pupils, to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Evaluate the information on pupils' progress more sharply to identify where pupils make most and least progress, so that managers can take more effective action in support of quickening pupils' progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards measured in national tests at Year 2 and Year 6 fluctuate very considerably year on year, reflecting to a degree the high levels of mobility of pupils. Generally, however, standards are below average. The rate of progress made by different groups of pupils has shown significant variations in the past, with some pupils, particularly in the middle attainment range, underachieving by Year 6. These gaps are being closed now that teachers are tracking pupils' progress more carefully and giving them clearer targets for improvement. Pupils are also given some good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in projects involving other subjects, and standards of writing are showing clear improvement. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, now make satisfactory progress given their overall low starting points, and achievement is satisfactory overall.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' understanding of and respect for the cultures and beliefs of others is outstanding. This is evident in the high quality of relationships between the pupils, in the numerous cultural references which enrich their work across many subjects, and in their exemplary input into multi-faith assemblies. While the satisfactory development of their literacy and numeracy skills means that their preparation for their later life and future well-being is satisfactory rather than good, the strong development of pupils' social skills and cultural understanding will stand them in particularly good stead. Pupils learn to cooperate closely and lend each other good support in solving problems. They accept responsibilities willingly and make a good contribution to the school community by, for example, taking their roles as school councillors very seriously. Pupils' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons, although some restless behaviour occurs in lessons where tasks set for pupils do not give them adequate challenge. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily, and many participate enthusiastically in the good opportunities provided for sport and recreation. Parents and pupils speak enthusiastically of pupils' enjoyment of school. Some children have poor attendance records, though, because they are taken out of school for holidays and visits by their parents in term time and this adversely affects their progress. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but

while the school has many systems in place to promote better attendance, it remains below average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers promote good relationships between pupils in their classes. They stimulate pupils' interest in learning by planning varied activities in a range of engaging themes. These draw on pupils' own cultural backgrounds and their understanding of local and global issues to make learning relevant. Teachers make effective use of visual aids, such as the interactive whiteboard, and practical activities to reinforce key learning points. However, the tasks set for pupils do not consistently offer all pupils in the class an appropriate degree of challenge. Work is, on occasions, too difficult or too easy for some groups. As a consequence, their progress slows and their behaviour can become restless. Teachers and teaching assistants plan very effective programmes of support for pupils in the early stages of learning English, and they make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A good curriculum is provided for all pupils with an interesting range of topics. For example, 'The School's Centenary' topic included history, art, music and drama, and gave pupils good opportunities to develop their literacy and computing skills. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively in teams to plan such curricular activities, although the plans do not always have tasks to challenge all abilities. For example, pupils who did not reach the goals expected nationally at the end of the Foundation Stage struggle to cope with some aspects of the Year 1 curriculum. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Good attention to the social and emotional aspects of learning is having a positive effect on behaviour. A good choice of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is offered, some in the lunchtime, which includes sports, choir, chess and modern foreign languages. The school makes very effective links with partner schools and the local community to enrich the curriculum through visits and shared expertise.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils feel safe in a secure and well-maintained environment. Procedures for safeguarding the health and welfare of pupils are robust. The school, however, has , yet to fully comply with requirements to check that its provision and policies offer access to people with disabilities. Teachers respond to pupils' social and emotional needs well. Well-qualified teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which ensures they make satisfactory progress to achieve their targets. Teaching assistants have regular behaviour management training which includes emotional literacy, and this has a positive effect in helping pupils with behaviour problems. Academic guidance has improved markedly since the last inspection. Pupils are now given clear targets for improvement, particularly in English, which are reinforced through marking which provides constructive comments to develop pupils' skills. The school works particularly hard to involve parents in supporting their children's

learning, including through workshops on aspects of the curriculum, and through organising the delivery of adult education and literacy programmes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and senior management team have led the school in a clear direction since the last inspection. They have maintained the strengths in the school's inclusive ethos while taking more account of the academic progress made by pupils. Good structures have been set in place to distribute leadership responsibilities for subjects and whole-school matters across the school's staff. Leaders at all levels undertake monitoring of teaching and learning and share their findings with staff, giving the school a generally clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of its provision. However, gaps in standards and rates of progress between different groups of pupils have been slow to close. This is because of some shortcomings in the otherwise satisfactory self-evaluation. At the level of the individual pupil, targets are appropriately challenging and are now raising standards. However, the progress of classes and groups of pupils against their collective targets is not evaluated sharply enough, both to help managers identify where most and least progress is made, and to decide where to target further support.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors have been effective in maintaining financial and staffing stability in the face of rapidly fluctuating pupil numbers. They have helped ensure that the school gives sound value for money.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|                                                                                                       |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|

### 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   |
| 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?                                                         | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage                                                                                                         | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements                                                                                                   | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

|                                                                                                          |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How well do learners achieve?                                                                            | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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                              | 3 |

### 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                                     | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles                                                         | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices                                                             | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education                                                                       | 2 |
| The attendance of learners                                                                                    | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners                                                                                     | 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?          | 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?                                             | 2 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|                                                                                                                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards                                                              | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation                                                                                            | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| 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

21 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of George Dixon Junior and Infant School, Edgbaston, Birmingham B17 8LE

Many thanks for the welcome you gave to me and my colleague when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We very much enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and play. It was clear to us from the start how much you enjoy the school. The assembly we saw was just one indication of the way in which the school helps you to develop an excellent respect for and understanding of each other's faiths and cultures.

The school gives you a satisfactory education. Its rich curriculum and other activities help you to enjoy school and lead a healthy lifestyle. You work together well and make good contributions to school life by taking your responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, seriously. You made it clear to us that you feel safe and secure in the school, because of the good care and support the school gives to you.

You make satisfactory progress overall, but some groups make less progress than others. The headteacher and other leaders in the school recognise this, and have taken some action to close these gaps, but recognise that more needs to be done. In lessons, the teaching is satisfactory and teachers plan enjoyable activities for you, although some of you find the tasks set too easy while for others they are too hard. Those of you who arrive in the school with little English, though, make good progress as you are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants in developing your language skills.

- To help the school improve further, we have asked that:
- the gaps in the rate of progress between different groups of pupils are closed
- the tasks set for pupils in lessons are matched more closely to their capabilities so that everyone has enough challenge and can make good progress
- the school managers check carefully where pupils are making best and least progress to help them to decide where more support is needed.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully Ian Hodgkinson Lead inspector

## Annex B



21 September 2007

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Birmingham B17 8LE**

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We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully  
Ian Hodgkinson  
Lead inspector

