

Oldknow Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103260
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308266
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI

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	589
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Achmad Da'Costa
Headteacher	Bhupinder Kondal
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
School address	Oldknow Road Small Heath Birmingham B10 0HU
Telephone number	0121 4648771
Fax number	0121 7533162

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oldknow Junior is a large school that is located in a multiracial part of Birmingham. Most pupils are of Asian origin, mainly from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds. A small number are of Black, White or mixed heritage. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is very high. A small minority are at the early stages of acquiring English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is well above average. The percentage claiming free school meals is high. The number of pupils and staff entering and leaving the school is higher than normal. Six newly qualified teachers joined the school in September 2007. The school has gained Active and Quality Marks plus Healthy Schools accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oldknow Junior is a good school with some outstanding features. It is well placed to improve further. The chair of governors is right when he says this school has moved 'light years' in the past four years. The dramatic improvement in standards and the quality of education provided are the result of good leadership at all levels. There is no air of complacency here, simply a drive to improve on previous best. The leadership has a clear vision based on equality of opportunity, fairness and respect for all cultures and lifestyles. The vision is lived in practice. The school's self-evaluation is good. It is accurate because monitoring and evaluation procedures are secure. Whilst the leadership has a clear picture of pupils' attainment, it does not track pupils' progress across the school effectively enough.

In 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were below average, but reflected good and improving achievement. Pupils' progress in English and science is good. Whilst pupils' progress in mathematics is satisfactory, the gains in learning are uneven and not enough pupils reach the higher levels of the National Curriculum in either mathematics or science. Good teaching and a rich curriculum enable pupils to make generally good gains in their learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is because insufficient use is made of assessment information to ensure that work is effectively matched to pupils' differing capabilities. The displays around the school are stunning. They not only celebrate pupils' achievements but also are used as 'Working Walls' to consolidate and extend learning.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils have a real appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes racial tolerance and harmony and respect for cultural diversity. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent. Pupils are happy, love coming to school and attend regularly. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and improve the progress made by the more able.
- Better use assessment information to ensure that work is always closely matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Further refine the tracking of pupils' progress to determine the achievement of different groups year on year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 3 with attainment that is below average. A significant proportion have reading, writing and mathematics skills that are well below average.

Achievement is good. Last academic year the oldest pupils made good progress in English and science. Their progress in mathematics was satisfactory. Boys made particularly good progress over time. Girls of average ability made good progress but the more able girls' progress was satisfactory. In 2007, standards were below average, but they have risen markedly since 2003 at a rate that is much faster than that seen nationally. The attainment of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils is close to that achieved by their counterparts nationally. Pupils for whom

English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in reading and writing. Challenging whole school targets have been set for the oldest pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thrive in an environment which values their cultural, linguistic and religious differences. The school turns out well-rounded, reflective and caring individuals who have a very positive outlook on life. Pupils' behaviour and consideration for each other are exemplary. They are friendly, welcoming and say that they feel safe and secure. There are positive signs that pupils are adopting a healthier lifestyle. For example, 80% use the salad bar at least once a week and most choose filtered water to drink when thirsty. The school council does a great job and certainly makes a difference. For example, they have improved playground resources and raised large sums for good causes and charities. A school bank has just started in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are applying for bank jobs and have savings accounts. Such work is successfully helping pupils develop financial acumen and an understanding of the responsibilities of adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and is good overall. Lessons are characterised by excellent relations between adults and pupils. A good feature is the sharing of lesson objectives so pupils know what they must aim for. Teaching assistants are used well. They ensure that those who find learning difficult, or are beginners in English, are effectively supported and achieve the lesson objectives. The effective use of 'talking partners' enables pupils to cooperate with others to improve their understanding of technical vocabulary and clarify their ideas. In the good or better lessons, work is challenging for all ability groups, and teachers have high expectations as to what can be achieved. Lessons move along at a cracking pace and the topics covered engage pupils' interest and increase their enjoyment of learning. Satisfactory teaching results from variation in how well staff use assessment information to match work to pupils' needs, particularly those of the more able. Marking is good and it helps pupils improve. Homework is regular and successfully supports and extends what pupils learn in class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad range of interesting and worthwhile activities that pupils enjoy. Parents and pupils have welcomed the separate teaching of boys and girls for physical education (PE). Girls say that they prefer a less competitive atmosphere in which to learn and participate more when boys are not around. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of additional activities, including after-school clubs, educational visits and visitors and a residential visit to Spain. A good feature is the regular news round slot at the end of each day. The discussion of local and global events helps increase pupils' awareness of life in the world at large. Assemblies are outstanding and play an important role in enhancing pupils' spiritual and moral development. The use of computers across the curriculum is not yet fully developed. The school has reorganised

the way it delivers information and communication technology, and plans to further develop the use of laptop computers across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Excellent pastoral support helps pupils grow into self-confident and well adjusted individuals. Pupils are very well cared for. Child protection, staff vetting and health and safety procedures are robust and effectively implemented. The school site is secure and very well maintained. Academic support is good. Pupils have regular one-to-one conferences with their teacher to determine their attainment and termly progress. It is therefore no surprise that they have a clear understanding of their targets, what National Curriculum level they are working at and what must be done to reach the next level. Support and guidance for the more able are not yet fully effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a very effective leader who has been pivotal to the school's rapid improvement. She has been the driving force for change and has displayed strong and determined leadership to raise standards and improve provision. Governors, deputy headteachers and middle managers have ably supported her.

The successful introduction of single sex PE and an Islamic assembly one day a week shows how the school has listened and responded to what the community wants. The school has successfully recruited staff and governors that represent the community the school serves. It confirms that the school is inclusive, serious about community cohesion, and removing the barriers that hinder pupils' success.

Subject leaders are effectively monitoring standards and curricular provision to identify strengths and areas for development. Appropriate action is being taken to remedy any shortcomings in teaching and learning. Pupils' progress is tracked and the information gained has been used to inform intervention. However, performance data are not analysed effectively enough to identify how well different groups are achieving across the school. The new teachers spoke highly of their induction programme. They valued the effective support they had received from mentors and senior staff.

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Annex A

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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

30 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oldknow Junior School, Birmingham, B10 OHU

Hello, I am one of the inspectors that visited your school. I am writing to tell you what we found out. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being so open and honest when answering our questions. We have judged that your school is providing you with a good education.

- These are the things that we found out about your school.
- You love coming to school and your behaviour is excellent. We were very pleased to see that your attendance is good.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors are leading the school well. They are moving the school forwards at a fast pace.
- You are well taught and this means you make good progress, particularly in English and science.
- People from different backgrounds get on so well together. You respect adults and children who may be different from you.
- You have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed.
- Your assemblies are outstanding. They help you to understand about your own and others' lifestyles.
- The displays in classrooms and corridors are stunning. We especially liked the way you use the 'Working Walls' to further improve learning.
- The school council does a great job. You have raised lots of money for good causes and charities.
- We have asked the headteacher and governors to improve three things.
- To improve your progress in mathematics and ensure that the more able do even better.
- To ensure that teachers make better use of the information they have about your performance so that you are always given challenging work to do.
- To get even better at checking the amount of progress you are making as you move through the school.

Best Wishes

David Rzeznik Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

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