

Yorkmead Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103284
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308274
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew McDowall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Harvey
Headteacher	Clive Garner
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	York Road Birmingham B28 8BB
Telephone number	0121 4644215
Fax number	0121 4646793

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. It serves an area where levels of social and economic deprivation are above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is that of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average and the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. A breakfast club is provided for the pupils each day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Although there are pockets of good practice in this school the overall quality of education it provides is inadequate. The headteacher is not giving the school the strategic leadership needed to bring about improvement. Consequently, there are serious weaknesses in provision that are failing to meet the needs of significant groups of pupils. Pupils' achievement is inadequate because it varies too much from class to class and significant groups of pupils underachieve. Children generally start school with skills and abilities that are below average and they make satisfactory gains in their learning in the Foundation Stage. However, achievement in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory because higher attaining pupils, those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make insufficient progress. Standards in both key stages are below average and are falling in Key Stage 1.

The pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their good behaviour and positive attitudes. However, some say they find lessons boring and others complain that lessons are too slow. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. They are increasingly choosing healthy options at lunchtimes and enjoy the good opportunities they have to play and exercise. Pupils' understanding of their place in the community is developed well through such activities as fund raising for good causes and when older pupils act as reading partners for the younger pupils. They have a good appreciation of how to stay safe and have confidence in the staff to help them, should they feel threatened or unhappy. Pupils' potential economic well-being is adversely affected by their inadequate achievement.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. However, this is too variable in Key Stages 1 and 2 and results in spasmodic and unsatisfactory pupil progress. Teachers generally explain tasks clearly and establish good relationships with the pupils. However, pupils' learning is often restricted by common weaknesses in teaching. The most capable pupils sometimes mark time because the work set for them is too easy. The pace of lessons is often pedestrian and teachers spend too long talking, leaving too little time for practical learning. Teachers' skills in assessing pupils' future learning are variable. Consequently, lesson planning takes too little account of the different capabilities of the pupils and tasks are not always well matched to their varying needs.

The curriculum is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, but is inadequate in Key Stages 1 and 2 because it is not adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. In particular, the needs of the most capable pupils and those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are not properly catered for. Across the school, provision for the pupils' personal development is good and helps the pupils to develop into caring and responsible individuals.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school is inadequate despite the fact that aspects of the pupils' pastoral care are good. This is because there are significant weaknesses in the academic guidance that pupils receive. Very few pupils know their targets, and marking does not provide pupils with enough guidance on what they need to do to improve. The school

does not undertake any meaningful assessment of the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, these pupils are not receiving the support and guidance they need to reach their potential. Safeguarding arrangements are in place and good support is provided for the most vulnerable pupils.

The day-to-day management of the whole school is satisfactory; this helps pupils to feel safe and secure. However, the strategic leadership of the school is weak and fails to identify clear priorities for improvement. The school improvement plan lacks rigour and does not address known weaknesses in teaching, learning and achievement. The plan is unclear about what the school is trying to achieve or how it will measure its success. Expectations of staff are too low and little guidance is given to teachers regarding the way things should be done. As a result, provision varies greatly from class to class and is inadequate overall.

Procedures for self-evaluation are unsatisfactory and fail to provide the leaders and managers with an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors are supportive of the school and have a general awareness of its performance, but their monitoring of the work of the school is inadequate.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. The staff work well together and provision for the personal and social needs of the children is good. As a result, the children are happy, confident and make good progress in their personal development. The school has recognised that progress in early reading and writing has been slow. Action has been taken to give greater focus to language development and there are signs that standards in early reading and writing are beginning to improve. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and the teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, children are not always fully challenged by the work they are offered and are sometimes left for too long working in groups without adult intervention. Consequently, opportunities to address weaknesses in their speaking and listening skills are missed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the strategic leadership of the school and bring greater rigour to the way that leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school and plan for improvement.
- Improve the quality and consistency of the teaching by raising the expectations of staff, by planning work that meets the needs of all abilities and by increasing the pace of lessons.
- Improve marking and assessment, so that all pupils receive clear guidance on what it is they need to do to improve and ensure that the needs of higher attaining pupils, those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are met.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards in Key Stage 1 are well below average and achievement in Years 1 and 2 is inadequate because too few pupils are attaining the higher levels in reading and mathematics and the number reaching the expected levels in writing is very low. Standards in English and mathematics

are below average in Key Stage 2 and although national data indicate broadly satisfactory achievement in Years 3 to 6 in 2007, this masks very uneven progress over the key stage. Standards in science are below average, but improved in 2007 because of good teaching in Year 6. In both key stages, many pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make inadequate progress and the language acquisition of pupils who speak English as an additional language is inhibited by the lack of any meaningful assessment of their needs. The school sets appropriate targets for the pupils, but many pupils are not on track to reach them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils is good. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They demonstrate a good understanding of what is right and wrong. The child who said, 'If you are nice to a person they are nice back', shows their understanding of the need to respect others. Pupils have a good appreciation of the cultural diversity in the local community and everyone gets along well together. They say any incidents of bullying are rare and quickly dealt with by the staff. Attendance is satisfactory.

The pupils' uneven progress in literacy and numeracy means that they not properly prepared for the next stage in their education and later life. However, they develop a good understanding of aspects of the world of work when they apply to take part in Year 6 work experience activities in the Foundation Stage. Annual visits to the Council House successfully foster an awareness of the democratic process.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching in the school is too variable to promote satisfactory achievement and is inadequate overall. Nonetheless, some classes benefit from good teaching. These teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievement and know just when to intervene with well-judged advice to help pupils improve. Elsewhere, pupils are often too passive and not actively engaged in their learning. At times there is an over reliance on mundane worksheets, resulting in all pupils doing the same work and making little progress. Day-to-day assessment of what pupils can do is too variable. Consequently, work is insufficiently well matched to the needs and abilities of different pupils within each group.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 has not been adapted to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds and this contributes to their under-achievement. Pupils have limited opportunities to practise their speaking and listening, problem-solving or decision-making skills. The school has recognised that the curriculum lacks creativity and has made a start at developing more stimulating learning opportunities for the pupils. The curriculum provides adequate opportunities for pupils to learn information and communication technology skills, but presents few opportunities for pupils to apply and consolidate these skills in other subjects. There is a satisfactory range of visitors and school clubs, which benefits pupils' learning and enriches the curriculum. The pupils particularly enjoy the regular educational visits that help to bring learning alive.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The good pastoral guidance pupils receive supports good progress in aspects of their personal and social development. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure in school. However, pupils' academic guidance is inadequate because teachers provide pupils with insufficient direction on the next steps in their learning. Consequently, they are unclear about how they are progressing or what they need to do to improve. There is inadequate guidance and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Although the school generally addresses health and safety issues as they arise, action has yet to be taken to deal with the overcrowding issue raised in the report on the school written by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in February 2007.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school does not have the capacity to improve because weaknesses in provision are not being addressed effectively. The headteacher is not providing the leadership and direction the school needs. The school has invested heavily in non-class-based senior staff, yet monitoring and evaluation in the school are weak. The senior staff are not effectively monitoring achievement or tackling the considerable variation in the quality of teaching and learning that is at the root of the underachievement in the school. There are systems to track the progress of individual pupils, but these are still being developed and are not used consistently to identify and tackle under-achievement. The most recent monitoring of pupils' work, undertaken by the deputy headteacher, is more rigorous, but it is too early to see any impact of this on achievement. Progress since the previous inspection and in addressing the issues raised by HMI on the visit in February 2007 is inadequate.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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 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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Yorkmead Junior and Infant School, Birmingham, B28 8BB

I would like to say a big 'thank you' to you all for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you think about your school.

We were pleased to see how well you behave in school and how you all get along so well together. You told us you like school and that you feel safe because the staff look after you and make sure nothing is worrying you. You told us you like the school clubs and particularly enjoy the school trips.

At present, we think your school is not providing you all with a satisfactory education. We think you can all do better if your school improves. Therefore, we have asked the school to do the following things:

- Help you all to get better in your literacy and numeracy.
- Improve the way the senior staff and the governors check on the work of the school and to make sure they plan carefully so your school improves.
- We have asked the teachers to make sure they set work that is just right for you and to make sure lessons move along quickly so you can learn more.
- We have asked the teachers to improve the way they check on how your work is progressing. We have asked them to make sure your work is carefully marked and that they tell you what you need to do to improve and reach your targets.

You can help your school by always trying your best and remembering your targets when you are doing your work. Your school will be having other inspectors visiting from time to time to see how things are improving.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall Lead inspector



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Andy McDowall
Lead inspector