

Sandiacre Cloudside Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112702
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310986
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Waring
Headteacher	Mrs Lydia Lastowiecki
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2003
School address	Stanton Road Sandiacre Nottingham NG10 5DE
Telephone number	01159392263
Fax number	01159396079

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than average but because the birth rate is falling in the local area the roll is declining. Pupils are mainly White British with small numbers from Black British Caribbean backgrounds and a few from the Travelling community. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Attainment on entry was average for current Year 6 pupils and has been above average in younger year groups. The eligibility for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. About a fifth of the school join or leave at different times of the school year which is around the average. Some of these pupils take time to settle. The school has gained awards for promoting healthy lifestyles and its work in developing basic skills in English and mathematics. The school is at various stages of applying for or awaiting news of applications for accreditation for its financial management, anti-bullying and work on developing international understanding.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 and the progress made by pupils are average and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development, their attitudes and behaviour are good. The school has a friendly and calm ethos and pupils clearly enjoy their lessons. Most parents are positive about all aspects of the school. The headteacher is very committed to the pupils and the school and provides dedicated and resilient leadership. The progress since the last inspection has not been smooth and the headteacher, on her return from extended absence, faced a dip in overall behaviour and standards. The school is now on an even keel because the school's leadership has tackled this effectively.

Standards have remained stubbornly around the average for some years. Currently there is a momentum for improvement in the school. The key factor which has triggered this is the creation of a strong senior leadership team. Members are now able to lead on initiatives and act as key professionals within the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an effective working partnership. They share a determination to drive up standards and focus the staff on the needs of the pupils. There is now, across the school, a sense of teamwork amongst all staff and a professional honesty and openness, reflected in their preparedness to share and develop skills. The school now has a unity of purpose and accountability. The school's very accurate and honest appraisal of its own effectiveness identifies its strengths and what it needs to do further. Good conditions and a culture have been created in which to build pupils' achievement and raise their standards. The school's leadership has many very positive qualities and clearly demonstrates the potential to take the school forward, although the impact of improvements in learning is not yet reflected in pupils' consistently good progress.

Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning when they are engaged actively in practical tasks or discussion. They talked about how much fun their biscuit topic was and how it linked into other subjects. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning drops because the work does not build effectively on what pupils already know, so that the work may be too easy or too challenging. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils help to provide a positive working atmosphere in classes. Pastoral aspects of care and guidance are strong. Marking is generally thorough and supportive but does not consistently give pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work.

Personal development is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and to school. They feel safe in school and get on well with each other. Pupils are confident that any problem could be sorted by the headteacher and that there is an adult they could turn to if they were troubled. They think that all adults in school are kind and helpful.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that learning and progress are good across the school.
- Raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve by ensuring they know how to improve their work.

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

Pupils' achievement shows improvement in the last three years. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007 rose from below to more securely average standards in 2007. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in the tests was in line with national averages. Pupils who find learning more difficult make satisfactory progress towards their targets. School data shows that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. They often make good progress in lessons but this is not yet consistent. The small number of minority ethnic pupils taking the tests in 2007 made satisfactory progress and most attained standards above the national average. The school has a very small number of pupils from the Travelling community whose progress is closely linked to their attendance and their specific needs. The school provides pupils with a satisfactory foundation for the next steps in their school career.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school fosters their self-esteem and confidence well because it recognises a wide range of achievement. Pupils report that they mostly 'get on well' with each other. The school has a strong anti-bullying policy. There have been no racist incidents in the past year. Behaviour is good. A very small number of pupils present challenging behaviour and are supported very well. Pupils have good opportunities to take on roles within the school community, such as acting as 'buddies' for others, which they carry out responsibly and with maturity. They know how to look after themselves and have a good understanding of the principles of healthy living and the importance of exercise. Attendance is around the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school has tackled weaknesses in teaching identified at the previous inspection effectively. The pace of most lessons is brisk and purposeful. However, on occasions the pace drops so that pupils progress slows. Lessons are well structured and make improved use of medium-term subject plans. Grouping pupils according to attainment supports the school's efforts to match work to their abilities. This is usually effective, though at times the work set is too easy or too hard for some pupils, so that their progress slows.

In the better lessons, teaching engages pupils well, often through practical activity such as using a small white board or talking to a partner. Teaching makes consistently good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to capture pupils' interests. When the teaching is satisfactory, it is sometimes characterised by the teacher talking for too long or failing to use brisk pace or practical tasks to fully engage pupils. In most classrooms, relationships between teacher and pupils are of the highest order. All teaching assistants receive training and have mentors to maximise their effectiveness. Pupils say that teachers are very supportive and encouraging. However, marking does not give all pupils a consistently clear view of what they need to do to improve, and some pupils do not have a secure knowledge of their learning targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the range of pupils' capabilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Suitable provision for English, mathematics and science enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress. Other subjects, including French in Years 3 and 4, and ICT, are well represented. The curriculum promotes pupils' enjoyment. There has been good progress in developing meaningful links between subjects, although the school wants to take this further. Writing in a range of styles and contexts is a good feature across subjects.

Visits, including two residential trips, a range of visitors to school and a satisfactory range and take-up of after-school clubs, support pupils' personal development. There is good attention to safety issues and how to stay healthy because of the emphasis given to physical education and swimming. Through the school council, pupils develop their awareness of the rights and responsibilities of community life. Participation in award schemes, including the work for the International Award, is helping the school to continue to develop and enrich its curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are good procedures in place for ensuring health and safety. Risk assessments are carried out in a rigorous manner. Child protection training for the designated person and staff is up-to-date. There are robust arrangements for safeguarding. Very good links with specialist agencies provides valuable support for pupils and there is close liaison with parents. There are good support mechanisms in place to support vulnerable pupils. The school has an effective tracking system, using periodic assessment to check on all pupils' progress. Staff keep a close eye on the progress of the small number of pupils with specific emotional needs. The school provides good pastoral care in a safe and secure environment. Support for pupils' academic development is less strong because marking does not always give pupils a clear indication of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are many good features that have established the foundation for continuing improvements in the school's provision, such as the close monitoring of pupils' progress and development of teaching skills. These have yet to show an impact on pupils' progress and achievement. The school's leadership has established the secure and warm ethos in which pupils develop well personally. The school functions well on a day-to-day basis. Governance is good although there is not a complete complement because of difficulties in recruiting parent governors. Governors are well informed and provide challenge and support to long-term strategic planning, for example in managing the implications of falling rolls. Because of recent training, they are focused on how the school is improving pupils' achievement across the school, particularly in the light of the raised attainment on entry. Governors are concerned with getting the best value out of any expenditure; they are very aware of the optimism and momentum for improvement in the school and want to ensure that short-term financial constraints do not impinge on this development.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	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	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	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?	3
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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	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

12 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandiacre Cloudside Junior School, Sandiacre, NG10 5DE

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. I enjoyed my brief stay very much. I especially enjoyed your singing in assembly. My particular thanks to the pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to us. What you had to say was thoughtful and very helpful.

The school is giving you a secure foundation for your future school careers. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were what you would see in many other schools. You are making steady and often good progress in your learning. I have asked Mrs Lastowiecki to work with the teachers to try and ensure this happens more regularly by making sure that the work you are asked to do builds on what you know so that it isn't too easy or too hard for you. The school helps you develop as young people well. I was impressed by how seriously you took your various responsibilities, and how confident, relaxed, happy and enthusiastic you seemed.

Your behaviour is good and I was glad to hear that you get on well with each other. Playtimes looked fun. You said that you had an adult to go to if you were troubled. It was also good to hear that you were confident that Mrs Lastowiecki would sort out any problems. I know some of you prefer to use the 'post box' to raise concerns and that staff take these very seriously. I agree with you that the adults in school are 'kind and supportive'. They want you to do as well as you can and they keep a close eye on your progress. You clearly enjoy school because, as you said, (and I agree with you), 'most lessons are interesting'. You have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. To help you, I have also asked Mrs Lastowiecki to make sure you know how to improve your work so that you can aim high and push yourselves on.

What also came across from my visit was the teamwork amongst the adults. Staff are working hard on your behalf and to make the school even better. With your help, they will achieve this all the sooner.

Sincere good wishes for your future school careers.

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector