

Arboretum Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112792
Local Authority	City of Derby LA
Inspection number	311006
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	David Matthews

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	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Ali
Headteacher	Mrs A Cruickshank
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Corden Street Derby Derbyshire DE23 8GP
Telephone number	01332 291140
Fax number	01332 363478

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving an area of considerable economic and social deprivation. Almost all the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the majority being of Pakistani origin. Nine out of ten pupils have English as an additional language and two thirds are at the early stage of learning English. Few speak English at home. The percentage of pupils with identified additional learning or other needs is similar to that nationally, while the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above the national average. A special educational needs unit (enhanced resource unit) provides for ten pupils with learning and physical difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is approximately twice the national average. The school has gained the nationally recognised Arts Mark, Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Health Promoting Schools and ECO School awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the school's accurate self-evaluation is a useful tool in helping it to plan for future developments. The headteacher provides strong leadership, knows exactly what needs to be done to improve the school and has put in place well thought-through strategies for improvement. Attendance rates have already improved and other strategies are beginning to take effect. She recognises the need to develop the satisfactory effectiveness of co-ordinators so that they have greater impact on teaching and learning.

Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, though there still remains work to be done to address some of the issues, particularly in challenging the more able pupils and in ensuring that co-ordinators observe teaching in order to improve it. Given the school's track record since the last inspection and overall satisfactory leadership, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Standards are well below average through the school. However, given children's low starting points when they enter the nursery, they achieve satisfactorily. Standards in mathematics were exceptionally low in the 2007 tests for Year 6 pupils, though the school's assessment information indicates an improvement in current Year 6 standards. Few pupils reach the higher level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 and the higher level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is currently seeking to raise the attainment of more able pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily and most with additional learning needs and disabilities achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school, feel safe and have a good understanding of how to be healthy. The school provides pupils with good care, guidance and support. Teaching is satisfactory. There are a number of strengths in teaching, though more able pupils are not always consistently well challenged. The curriculum is satisfactory. Resources for Information Communication Technology (ICT) have improved and subject links are developing well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Staff are attentive to children's welfare, and they respond increasingly positively. Children enter the nursery with well below the expected levels of skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in English and physical development. They make satisfactory progress by the time they enter Year 1. Most make good progress in their physical development. The nursery is a supportive, calm oasis where pupils develop skills well. The majority require intensive language support and they quickly make gains as a result of purposeful activities and good provision. Children move easily between the indoors and outdoors and enjoy climbing, gardening and running. In the reception class there is too much reliance on indoor activities. Sometimes teaching is loud and intrusive, and children respond in a similar fashion. There is insufficient adult intervention during learning to develop language and other skills effectively. Self-registration works well in developing children's independence. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is insufficiently effective in ensuring that provision is good throughout.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics
- Increase the amount of good teaching by building on current strengths and developing the role of co-ordinators to include classroom observations
- Ensure that the more able pupils are consistently well challenged
- Ensure that teachers and co-ordinators systematically use assessment information to guide teaching and plans for school improvement.

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 are well below average through the school. However, given the children's low starting points when they enter the nursery, most make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 6. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Most pupils with identified additional learning or other needs make good progress because of the well-focused support that they receive, particularly in the enhanced resource unit.

Standards were well below average in the statutory assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2007. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels 3 and 5, respectively, was too low. Consequently, the school is focusing on making learning challenging for the more able pupils.

Although standards were exceptionally low in mathematics in the 2007 tests for Year 6 pupils, the school's assessment information indicates that standards in mathematics are rising in Year 6. However, they remain well below the national average, as do those in English and science, and the school is aware of the need to develop pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary in all classes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are good, representing remarkable progress from often low starting points. All but a very few pupils behave well. Pupils say they enjoy school and they demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are good at keeping safe and at understanding healthy lifestyle choices. They enjoy nutritious school dinners and have plenty of physical activity. The school's work to improve attendance has been a real success and, from a very low starting point, this is now satisfactory. Leaders are not complacent and continue to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to improve this further. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school, and are proud to carry out their many jobs including the School Council, the Arbo Eagles and Mini Leaders and particularly their work in the school office. They have played an important part in the regeneration of Normanton through their work in the wildlife area, the production of a mosaic and participation in 'Derby Dance' at the Derby Assembly Rooms. They are also keen to take the lead in raising money for others who they feel are less fortunate than themselves by making and selling items at school events. Their latest project is to set up and sell their own school

newspaper. Good personal skills and improving basic skills prepare pupils satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are some good lessons but not sufficient to raise achievement quickly enough. Good teaching shows confidence, lively pace, good knowledge and imagination and meets all pupils' needs well. There is too much ordinary teaching where inspiration levels are modest and progress is not rapid enough. A symptom of this can be too much teacher talk. New tracking and assessment procedures have generated much information about pupils' levels of learning. Planning and preparation are thorough but sometimes take insufficient account of these assessment data. Consequently, work does not meet pupils' needs consistently well, especially for the more able. Teachers have responded well to the demands of new technology and are more confidently using interactive whiteboards to support their teaching. Classroom assistants play a satisfactory part in enhancing learning, and their impact is good in the enhanced resource unit.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating. Lessons in personal, social and health education have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and well-being. There have been significant improvements to resources for ICT and teachers work hard to overcome the limited size of the computer suite. The school continues to strive to develop pupils' ICT skills to the full but has some way to go. The introduction of a more coherent and imaginative curriculum is seen in the study of Tudor Britain in Year 5 where history, art and literacy skills are taught together, enabling pupils to make better sense of subjects. The school is introducing further subject links. Good progress is being made towards the teaching of French to juniors by 2010. There is an interesting range of after-school clubs such as the Children's University, which are timetabled not to clash with the local mosque school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. This is because of the high level of commitment of senior leaders and all staff who know just how much work is needed to support the pupils and their families at Arboretum in order to reduce barriers to learning. Pupils' social and emotional development is a high priority, and the introduction of a Learning Mentor is already having a positive impact on the development of positive relationships within and beyond school as is the Tea and Toast Club. Pupils report that they feel valued and safe. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are firmly in place and arrangements for child protection are rigorous. Pupils arriving at different times in the year settle quickly because of the effective systems in place to make their entry to the school a positive experience. The school's monitoring systems quickly identify where pupils are vulnerable or are finding learning difficult and enable staff to put measures in place to care for them or to help them improve, often working effectively in partnerships with other agencies. The needs of those with a learning difficulty or a disability are met particularly well through the 'Diamonds and

Pearls' group which ensures that these individuals make good progress. The school provides satisfactory academic guidance. Marking of work tells pupils how well they have done, though it sometimes misses opportunities to inform pupils about how they could improve. Pupils say that they find their learning targets helpful, though some do not fully understand them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership. Her clear understanding of the school's strengths, and what needs to be done to improve its satisfactory provision, means that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. She and senior staff have introduced well-conceived systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress that are now providing potentially useful information about how well different groups of pupils are learning.

Teachers, subject co-ordinators, and those responsible for the Foundation Stage and pupils learning English as an additional language, do not yet make consistently good use of this information. Data is not analysed sufficiently well by co-ordinators in order to spot strengths and weaknesses in year groups. The impact on planning for pupils' learning and in identifying where action needs to be taken to improve pupil progress is therefore lessened. The headteacher rightly sees this as a priority. There are suitable plans to develop the satisfactory effectiveness of co-ordinators by enabling them to observe teaching as a means to making it consistently good. The co-ordinator of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has a good impact on the extent to which the needs of these pupils are met.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are extremely supportive and are developing their role in holding the school to account. There is a good level of parental support for the school.

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 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 ¹ reached by learners	4
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	2

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?	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?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arboretum Primary School, Corden Street, Derby, Derbyshire, DE23 8GP

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school to see how well you are learning. You told us a lot about your school. This helped us to decide what the best things are and what can be improved.

These are the best things about your school.

- Your headteacher and the other adults look after you well.
- your headteacher has some good ideas about how to make the school even better.
- Those of you in 'Diamonds and Pearls' are particularly well looked after.
- most of you say that you enjoy school
- we are pleased that your attendance has improved so much and that most of you attend regularly
- you behave well

This is how things could be better.

- although your progress is satisfactory, we think that you could do even better in English, science and especially in mathematics
- we and your headteacher think that although teaching is satisfactory, more of it could be good
- we have asked teachers to make sure that in all lessons they challenge those of you who learn quickly and easily so that you always do as well as possible
- teachers and co-ordinators could make better use of what they learn about your progress when they plan lessons and decide how to make the school better still.

As everyone tries hard to put these things in place, you can help by continuing to work hard and by behaving as well as usual. We wish you well.

D Matthews Lead inspector