

Queens Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113731
Local Authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	311350
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Raf Frias-Robles
Headteacher	Pat Whitehead
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	East Way Bournemouth BH8 9PU
Telephone number	01202 528805
Fax number	01202 859481

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • How much progress do children make in the Foundation Stage? • What is preventing the school from improving the good standards achieved from year to year even further? • What is the impact of all the extra activities on helping children develop their personal skills? The evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of information about children's progress and attainment, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, discussions with staff, children and governors, and analysis of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found little evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Although the school is about the same size as most primary schools, it is larger than a typical infant school. Considerably more children leave or join the school in each year group than is typical. In addition, planned local re-organisation of school places means that there will be a further influx of children next year. Extensive building work to upgrade the school was taking place during the inspection and is due for completion in the next academic year. About a fifth of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds. When children start school in the Reception class, their skills and experiences vary, but overall are below the levels expected for their age. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than average. The school was awarded Healthy Schools Status in 2004 and again in 2007. It was awarded an Artsmark Gold Award in 2005 and again in 2008. In addition it received the Activemark in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Perfect school. Perfect headteacher. Really good quality teachers. Well done!' wrote one parent, summing up the views of many more. This is an outstanding school that has the support of the overwhelming majority of parents and the local community. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has led the school from strength to strength. The reflective approach of all school leaders and staff means that they very carefully examine the effect of their many new ideas, and make sure that children benefit from new initiatives. This approach is based on very high quality professional development for all staff. Outstanding leadership at all levels has secured ongoing improvements and the drive to make things even better reflects an excellent capacity to improve the school. A few parents have understandably expressed their concerns to governors about proposals for local re-organisation of school places, which is due to take place in September. However, the school is extremely well placed to meet the needs of the new group of pupils when they arrive, and at the same time to ensure that current pupils continue to thrive.

It is the excellent quality of provision from the Foundation Stage to Year 2 that enables children to flourish. Very effective teaching breaks down learning into bite-size pieces for children. This, coupled with extremely high expectations, leads children to achieve considerably higher standards than could be expected given their starting points. Year 2 children avidly tackled a simple puzzle and quickly worked out how many numbers could be made from the digits 0, 1 and 3. This led them to talk about ordering the numbers correctly and secured their understanding of place value. Diligent checks on children's progress mean that teachers know exactly what the next steps in learning are for all the children. This includes rigorous assessment and planning for children who join the school, to ensure that they too make as much progress as possible after they join. As a result, standards have been consistently above average since the last inspection. Curriculum innovations have given a further boost and standards are set to be higher still this year.

The curriculum is hugely enjoyable for children but also provides them with a thirst for learning. They settle straight down to work as soon as they arrive at school. Classrooms and children's books are filled with evidence of the power of the 'thinking skills' project that has transformed children's approach to their work. Their ability to make choices, work independently, work with others and put forward ideas to be tested out is preparing them extremely well for the next stage of their education. Children in Year 1 were highly entertained by a model that showed how a troll was trying and failing to hide a box of treasure under his bridge. There were shrieks of laughter as the treasure box kept falling down, but perceptive ideas emerged as the children worked out together how the troll could counterbalance the weight of the box. Plenty of highly successful extra activities and clubs are planned to motivate children. Children talk about all the healthy exercise they do with great animation. Boys can barely contain their enthusiasm when writing and talking about the farm visit or the trip to HMS Victory. Many children have been inspired by the African topic that sprang from some teachers visiting South Africa to look at education there. Delicate, thoughtful artwork all around the school is complemented by vibrant African displays and carefully detailed drawings of the heavy machinery involved in the building project which is right on their doorstep. Children are fascinated by the food growing in the school allotment and sell their excess produce in the local community to raise funds and buy more seeds and tools.

All aspects of children's personal development and well-being are outstanding, with the exception of their attendance. School leaders do more than could reasonably be expected to encourage better attendance on a day-to-day basis, and this is typical of the excellent care, guidance and support provided for all pupils. Nonetheless, more could be done to identify patterns in the data over time to help school leaders in their quest to improve attendance further.

Children who have specific learning, or other, needs are cared for exceptionally well and make very good progress as a result of the extremely good links with outside agencies. The school Nurture Group is a haven of peace for those who struggle to manage their own behaviour, and provides children with clear strategies and simple rules to help themselves. As a result, no children are excluded from school. All around the school children behave extremely well and show great maturity for their age. They think of others without being prompted and know how to keep themselves safe, showing great pride that they remembered to bring their sunhats. A distinctive feature is that children confidently demonstrate how, if anyone started to bully them, they would first hold up their palm and say clearly 'Stop!' to try to help themselves before going to an adult if necessary.

Children learning to speak English as a second language make very good progress because all the children are encouraged to talk about their learning and pose questions to adults and each other at every opportunity. This rich, language-filled environment helps all the children, whatever their starting points, to make tremendous progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a great start in the Foundation Stage and make rapid progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year they reach average standards, and are eager to come to school. Although outdoor learning was severely restricted during the inspection by the building work encroaching on the outdoor space, this was more than compensated for by the lively and interesting learning taking place in all the classrooms. Children playing at being scientific explorers worked in their 'tent' using a 'laptop' to record what they had discovered. Another child busily made them all a 'picnic lunch' to eat when they got hungry. Minibeasts are everywhere, and detailed maps and diagrams show exactly what children already know about some of the creatures. There were gasps and shrieks as some studied the wriggling creatures with magnifying glasses, and by contrast great concentration on the writing table where other children made information books and labelled the pictures carefully. 'Thinking skills' development begins in the Reception classes, where children are encouraged to think about what they are learning and ask questions right from the start. Simple games and puzzles extend their understanding and confidence with using numbers in all kinds of situations. Reception classrooms are buzzing and filled with fun.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Improve attendance and analyse the data available to identify patterns and trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Queens Park Infant School, Bournemouth BH8 9PU

Thank you all for making me so welcome and helping me when I visited your school. Your school is outstanding: you are making very good progress, so that standards are above average for those of you in Year 2. The staff and governors work extremely well together to help you to succeed at school.

Here are the things that are best about your school:

- The headteacher has helped everyone to make your school excellent.
- The teaching makes you think really hard and work things out together.
- You try hard to stay healthy by taking lots of exercise.
- You are particularly good at keeping yourselves safe; you behave excellently all through the day and help one another.
- You have lots of exciting things to do and you have a lot of fun in your lessons.
- The school looks fabulous because of your beautiful artwork.
- The school allotment helps you to learn about growing and selling food.
- Children in the Nurture Group get plenty of help so that they can stay at school.

There is just one thing that could be better. I have asked the school to encourage you and your parents to improve your attendance. You could help by trying to come to school every day.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Yours faithfully

Liz Kounnou Lead Inspector