

Bridge Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119999
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313475
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Sally Noble

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	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Archdeacon
Headteacher	Peter Driver
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Mere Close off Mere Road Leicester LE5 3HH
Telephone number	0116 2536092
Fax number	0116 2536092

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bridge Junior School is a larger than average school situated in the Highfields area of the inner city of Leicester. Pupils come from a considerable range of cultural and family backgrounds. Over half are of Indian heritage and very few are White British. Most pupils do not speak English as a first language. Mobility is above the national average with a significant minority entering the school other than at the usual time. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bridge Junior School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Under the sensitive leadership of the headteacher, staff work very well together to provide a supportive environment enabling pupils to develop confidence and maturity. The headteacher cares strongly about the inclusion of all pupils within the school, and the parents appreciate this. As one parent commented, 'There is a very good understanding between school, parents and pupils.'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although standards are below average by the time pupils leave Year 6, this represents sound progress in relation to their starting points. Standards are higher in reading and mathematics than in writing which is a major focus for improvement at the school. Although teaching is often effective, it is satisfactory overall and this is reflected in the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils enjoy their work and show positive attitudes to learning. Their work is not always developed sufficiently because, at times, activities are not challenging enough or there is not an accurate enough match of work to pupils' individual needs. Although the school collects information on pupils' progress, senior staff and teachers do not have up-to-date information about progress or, know whether pupils are going to reach their academic targets.

The school is exceptionally caring. All staff work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils feel safe and secure at school. Pupils who join the school other than at the normal times, for example, settle in very well and the school supports those with difficulties well. Academic guidance is not so strong. Although there is good practice to be found in some classes in the way teachers mark pupils' work and offer advice to pupils on how to improve, this is not the case in other classes where pupils receive insufficient guidance and feedback.

As a result of the school's good curriculum and high quality care, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are friendly and welcoming and they all enjoy school a great deal because, in the words of one pupil, 'Learning is fun because there are so many different activities.' The school council makes a valuable contribution to the school as well as introducing pupils to the principles of democracy. Pupils contribute well to the wider community, especially through fund raising for a range of charities. During the inspection, pupils proudly informed inspectors of the enterprising charity work they were undertaking to provide water aid for a number of African countries.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The hard work of the headteacher and staff has been particularly successful in having a positive impact on developing pupils' personal qualities and providing innovative practice such as teaching philosophy to pupils. However, achievement and standards have remained at the current levels for the past few years and senior staff have been less successful at improving this picture. The monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievement and the quality of provision have not been rigorous enough. This is recognised by the school, and staff have started to make inroads into improving their assessment procedures. These changes and the successful input into pupils' personal development indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve monitoring and self-evaluation procedures to keep a closer check on the work in lessons and in pupils' books and ensure that action is taken to address and rectify weaknesses.
- Improve procedures for assessing pupils' progress and standards.

- Raise teachers' expectations to ensure the standard of writing produced by pupils is high enough.
- Ensure that lessons are challenging enough for all pupils.

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' attainment on entry to the school is below average. Satisfactory teaching and learning result in pupils making steady progress, but standards remain below average by the time the pupils leave the school. The whole school focus on improving planning and teaching in mathematics has been a success and has resulted in an increase in the number of pupils reaching average standards by the end of Year 6 compared with previous years. Standards in reading are also improving but standards in writing lag behind other subjects due to inconsistent practice in teaching and assessment across the school. Pupils struggle to write at length and do not have the opportunity to reflect on how to improve their work. This slows progress and results in pupils making simple punctuation and style errors time after time. Pupils who do not speak English as a first language or who join the school late receive well targeted support and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall with a number of very good features. Pupils behave well, are very polite and feel safe from anti-social behaviour and racism. They show very good levels of respect for the views, values and beliefs of others. Pupils clearly enjoy school. Their enjoyment is evident in the way they talk about their school with enthusiasm and pride. They are full of praise for the teachers and support staff who, as they say, are very kind and really listen to their ideas and views. This exceptional level of care and respect helps the pupils become mature young citizens with a very well honed understanding of their rights and responsibilities by the time they leave the school. Pupils regularly raise money for charity. They particularly enjoyed the 'Radio Cool' project where they shared their fair trade work on the local university radio station.

The school has striven tirelessly to develop community cohesion and has overwhelming support from parents, carers and all other groups that are linked with it. One parent commented, 'The school provides the correct approach to the children to develop their ethos towards learning and interaction with society.' Pupils talk knowledgeably about the need to eat healthy food and make sensible choices at lunchtime. They exercise regularly within lessons and find creative ways to keep fit with activities such as cheerleading classes and participating in aerobic exercise at breakfast club. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because the curriculum is planned to ensure that the main priority is 'creating young citizens of conscience', focusing on nurturing the whole family, being totally inclusive and developing thinking skills. Attendance is carefully monitored and is satisfactory. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education, but the school recognises the urgent need to improve literacy skills, especially writing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is stronger in mathematics and reading than in writing. However, there are examples of good teaching in all year groups. Clear questioning by teachers, effective demonstrations and pupils' good behaviour make a strong contribution to learning in lessons. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to motivate and model learning, and there are well planned opportunities for pupils to work with others. The daily 'TIO' (thinking it over time) is helping pupils to develop independence skills, but these skills are not consistently transferred to other lessons. This can result in a few lessons where pupils have to listen and be passive for too long. Work is marked regularly, but only a small minority of the oldest pupils consistently act on the comments made to improve their work. Too often, pupils are not clear about the steps they need to take to produce a good piece of written work or do not have enough time to reach an appropriate standard before moving on to new activities. Presentation of work is sometimes poor and, in some lessons, work does not meet the differing needs of pupils well enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Creative use of visits, visitors and a range of extended learning opportunities enrich the curriculum, which responds well to local need. Termly visits to places of educational interest are undertaken in partnership with parents and carers. The very high numbers of parents accompanying pupils on school visits reflect the impressive levels of parental engagement and support. The curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils develop a sense of interdependency, enterprise and environmental awareness. However, the curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure that writing develops across subject areas, builds on earlier learning in literacy lessons or gives enough time for pupils to complete longer pieces of written work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is very good and provides pupils with an environment in which they feel well supported. Arrangements for child protection are rigorous and appropriate risk assessments are in place to keep pupils safe. Vulnerable pupils make steady progress in this inclusive school. The 'LAND' (Language and Nurture Development) project gives the youngest pupils an appropriate induction to school life. However, timetables are not always monitored well enough to ensure that these pupils also access good teaching of the basic skills within the normal class situation. Planning and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for those who join the school late and for pupils who are at the very earliest stages of speaking English are good, and this enables them to make good progress.

Academic guidance is not rigorous enough. The school does not have adequate systems for recording pupils' progress from year to year. Assessments are not used well enough to ensure good progress or plan action to address underachievement. Pupils have targets but the consistency with which they are used varies. They are often not precise enough and pupils are unclear about their next steps in learning. Pupils are not involved closely enough in the process

of setting their own targets and do not have enough opportunity to check on their own progress or to act on marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The calm and dedicated leadership of the headteacher and the senior leadership team has been an important factor in establishing the high levels of support and trust within the community. The headteacher's enthusiasm and commitment to the school, well supported by the governing body, have resulted in the development of a highly inclusive team. Together they have established a clear vision for putting pupils' well-being at the heart of all that happens and for developing a curriculum that suits the pupils' needs. The school is well managed and staff are carefully deployed to make good use of the resources available. The need to improve assessment mechanisms has been recognised by senior leaders. However, school leaders and governors do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness because assessment and monitoring procedures have not been robust or frequent enough. The role of the senior leadership team and subject leaders in checking on the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' progress is not developed well enough. This in turn has limited the extent to which governors can hold the school to account and play a full part in the process of school improvement.

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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	1
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?	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridge Junior School, Leicester, LE5 3HH

Thank you so much for welcoming Mr Kessell, Miss Rochester and me when we visited you recently. We really appreciated the way you greeted us and your polite and very welcoming manner. We know that you and your parents are extremely proud of your school and really enjoy being there. We think Bridge Junior is a satisfactory school with some very special strengths.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress in your work but there are some weaknesses in writing.
- You behave very well and really enjoy school because learning is fun.
- You have a really good idea of how to be a good citizen and know right from wrong.
- The headteacher and staff are very caring, and you and your parents and carers appreciate this.
- You are provided with interesting clubs, visits and visitors.
- Most teachers are starting to show you how to improve your work, but some of your targets and work are not hard enough.

In order to make the school better than it is we have asked the school to;

- check how well you are doing by looking at your work in books, visiting you in lessons and talking to you about your learning in lessons more often
- assess your work more carefully
- help you improve your work in writing
- make sure that your work is hard enough.

You can help your school to improve by making sure you check and improve your work and write longer, more detailed pieces of writing.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Sally Noble Lead inspector



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Sally Noble
Lead inspector