

Imperial Avenue Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120014
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313480
Inspection dates	17–18 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Lynch
Headteacher	Jenny Pickering
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Imperial Avenue Leicester LE3 1AH
Telephone number	01162 824503
Fax number	01162 827457

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	17–18 April 2008
Inspection number	313480

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils come from the area immediately surrounding the school. Many of the pupils come from families that face considerably challenging social and economic circumstances. Over a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The two largest groups are from Polish or Indian backgrounds. A significant number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A well above average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

The school has been selected as a site for a Children's Centre, which is due to be fully operational later this year. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2008 and several of the Key Stage 1 staff are on temporary contracts owing to staff illness and maternity leave.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Imperial Avenue Infant School provides a satisfactory education. With good support from the local authority (LA), the school has improved its procedures for tracking pupils' progress and has a clear picture of pupils' attainment and achievement. Virtually all the parents are pleased with the way their children are cared for. One parent captured the views of many in commenting, 'The school has a lovely feel and all the staff are very kind and warm towards the children.' A very small number of parents have concerns regarding pupils' behaviour but inspectors discovered nothing to cause concern during the inspection.

The good provision for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they have a happy and successful start to school and from a low starting point achieve slightly below average standards on entry to Year 1. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout Key Stage 1, although standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average at the end of Year 2. Pupils' writing skills are weaker than their reading and mathematical skills and this is particularly true for boys and more able pupils. More effective teaching of phonics is beginning to have a good impact on pupils' literacy skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those at an early stage of learning English are supported satisfactorily and do well in getting to grips with speaking the language. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well by trying hard with their work. The slowly improving attendance is a reflection of the pupils' enjoyment of school and the effective strategies to encourage parents to bring their children regularly. Teachers' planning is improving because of better assessment of pupils' work and planning for pupils' different ability levels. As yet, Key Stage 1 teachers do not consistently match the work sufficiently closely to the pupils' ability, so pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

The school's good links with outside agencies, the LA and other schools enrich and enliven the satisfactory curriculum. There are sufficient chances for pupils to practise their speaking and listening and literacy skills in all subjects. However, pupils have few opportunities to practise their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The new school council and eco club give pupils increasing opportunities to express their views and contribute well to their good personal development. Throughout the school, good pastoral support helps pupils to feel safe and they are confident that staff will help them if they have any worries.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new senior leadership team is beginning to monitor pupils' progress more rigorously and, as a result, they are developing a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders know what they have to do to improve. However, in recent times school improvement has not been easy as there are several temporary staff in Key Stage 1, which makes establishing consistent practices difficult. The school has yet to embed its new monitoring systems, particularly in ensuring the rigorous implementation of strategies to improve teaching. The governing body is supportive and is starting to challenge leaders about the school's performance. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and it is well led and managed. Good teaching by the experienced and established staff team means that children achieve well in a bright, happy and very caring environment. From a low entry point, most children attain slightly below average standards in all the areas of learning at the end of the Reception year. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants make learning fun and enjoyable. Adults are readily at hand to extend and develop children's learning and language, for instance by using good questions when designing and making a home for the three bears. The good emphasis put on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development enables them to settle happily, share nicely and build their self-confidence. Children who are learning English do well and many quickly become bilingual. Staff have correctly identified that the outdoor areas could be further developed to provide an even greater range of learning opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, especially for boys and more able pupils, by ensuring work is well matched to the pupils' ability.
- Ensure that Key Stage 1 teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan work.
- Make sure school leaders monitor teaching and learning more rigorously so that there is more that is of good quality.

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

Children's levels of skills on entry to the school are significantly below those expected for their age. Many children, including some whose first language is English, start school with very limited spoken English. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the end of the Reception year, most are working slightly below the levels expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. More able pupils and boys achieve satisfactorily but do not do as well as girls, especially in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress in line with their classmates. Key Stage 1 pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily but for those who join the school in Year 2 there is insufficient time to develop fluency to achieve well in the end of year assessments.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good moral and social development helps pupils to develop effective personal skills. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons is evident when they talk about school and in the steadily improving attendance. Pupils love collecting 'Daily Doris' and 'On-time Ted' awards for regular attendance and punctuality. Pupils enjoy the increasing number of physical and sporting activities and have a good understanding of healthy foods. The recently formed school council and eco club enable pupils to express their views. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community. They look

after one another at lunchtime and older pupils enjoy being 'big buddies' in the playground. Pupils and their families support a good range of charities. Pupils have a limited knowledge of the multicultural society in which they live. Based on their satisfactory achievement and good social skills they are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage gives children a good start to learning by instilling good work habits and an enthusiasm for learning. There is a significant number of temporary staff in Key Stage 1 who have only recently joined the school and are still getting used to the pupils and school routines. Nevertheless, most teachers engage pupils' attention well and classroom relationships are good. Many teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively. A talented team of teaching assistants provides valuable support to staff and pupils. Teachers are well versed in the teaching of phonics and, although it is early days, this is beginning to have a good impact on pupils' reading and writing skills. There has been good improvement in the quality of assessment to determine how well pupils are doing. However, teachers are not always accurate in using assessment information to plan work to match pupils' various capabilities. This is especially true in the case of more able pupils who are not challenged sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum covers all subjects and is effective in helping pupils to enjoy school. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy and on encouraging all pupils to communicate. Curriculum planning does not pay sufficient attention to meeting the needs of boys and the more able. Opportunities for pupils to consolidate their ICT skills across the curriculum are not sufficiently frequent and this does not promote good progress. The satisfactory range of activities outside normal lessons, including sports clubs and visits, contributes to pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and the school has robust systems in place to improve attendance. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They say they like their teachers and the teaching assistants and know they will always help them with their work or with any other problems. Pupils with behaviour difficulties are supported effectively in the Blossom nurture group where they are sensitively helped to integrate successfully into their mainstream classes. Key Stage 1 pupils' involvement in their learning is at an early stage and few pupils have a good understanding of their targets for improvement. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and consistently with supportive comments but do not tell the pupils how they might improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The procedures for self-evaluation are satisfactory. Through the introduction of improved tracking procedures, senior leaders are starting to carefully analyse pupils' performance and to identify where there is potential underachievement. Teaching and learning are beginning to be monitored regularly and the headteacher has a clear understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Rapid school improvement has been somewhat hampered recently by staff absence. The leadership team recognises that it needs to be more effective in raising the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 in order to accelerate pupils' progress and boost their achievement. For instance, the current school improvement plan is not sufficiently focused on raising pupils' achievement. Governors are supportive and increasingly effective in evaluating the school's work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	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	3
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	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

21 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Imperial Avenue Infant School, Leicester, LE3 1AH

We enjoyed our visit to your school. You were friendly and you made us feel very welcome. We decided Imperial Avenue Infant School is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour is good.
- Teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- Those of you who speak more than one language quickly learn to speak English.
- You go to a caring school. Everyone has your best interests at heart and wants you to be safe and happy and to do as well as you can.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make sure the school gets even better.

We have asked the school to do three main things to help it improve further.

- Make sure all of you, but especially boys and those of you who learn quickly, do as well as you possibly can in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Help teachers to plan work that is just right for you all and is not too easy or too hard.
- Improve teaching so that it is good in all lessons and you all do well and reach even higher standards in your work.

You can help your teachers by always working hard and behaving well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox Lead inspector