

Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122733
Local Authority	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
Inspection number	314379
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Christine Batchelor
Headteacher	Ms Sue Hoyland
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Bradgate Road Forest Fields Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG7 6HJ
Telephone number	0115 9156872
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school with a 50 place Nursery. The vast majority of pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest being Pakistani. Most of these pupils are new to speaking English. Around 7% of pupils are of White British origin. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high but a very small proportion has a statement of special educational need. A high number of pupils enter the school after Year 2, and some of these pupils have had no previous schooling. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are exceptionally low for their age and most do not speak English.

The school has faced many staffing changes since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. There is a strong sense of community and harmony amongst the school's culturally diverse population. This welcoming atmosphere helps pupils feel cared for and valued. They trust the adults who work with them; form good relationships; behave well; work hard and are kind to others. Parents are very positive about the school and all that it does to help pupils and their families. Most pupils attend regularly because they say they love school but despite the school's efforts, the attendance of some pupils remains poor.

Some of this is due to families moving in and out of the area but parents taking children on extended holidays during term time also adversely affect it.

Good teaching, a well-planned curriculum and regular checks on pupils' progress ensure all pupils achieve well. Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery. They enjoy school and through good teaching, they achieve well. Standards are well below the expected levels at the end of the Foundation Stage, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Standards remain at these levels at the end of Year 2. In Years 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory but less rapid because pupils lack the confidence to apply what they know to new situations. Good bilingual teaching helps pupils understand new information but pupils have insufficient opportunities to speak and practise their English. In Years 3 to 6, as pupils gain confidence, they progress well. While pupils in Year 6 pupils are working at well below average standards overall, standards in English are below average. This is an improvement on previous years because developing writing has been a priority. Good support for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities ensures they achieve well. Support for those learning English as an additional language is also good. High emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is helping pupils acquire the skills they need to achieve more in all subjects. Good out of class activities enrich learning effectively. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils understand how to stay safe and have targets that help them improve their work.

Good leadership and management have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' progress is now analysed closely to set challenging targets. Very detailed information regarding pupils' achievement is now gathered but it is not easy to access, so subject leaders are not always able to make best use of it to develop their subject. Standards in English are rising and appropriate action is being taken to raise standards in mathematics. Astute financial management ensures priorities, such as assessment and literacy training, are resourced adequately. Pupils' good achievement reflects good value for money. Governors support the school well but are less involved in checking its performance. The school is accurate in its self-assessment. The quality of care and education is good and standards in Year 6 have improved in the last year. Consequently, the capacity to make further improvements is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching in the Foundation Stage helps children achieve well in all the areas of learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills, and they adopt the routines quickly and settle well. They enjoy learning because the staff plan fun activities that capture their interest.

As the children's skills in literacy and numeracy are particularly low when they start in the nursery, more time is given to these areas. Children learn to become independent as they choose from a wide range of activities inside and out, particularly in the Nursery, where access to the well equipped outdoor area is easier. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Staff check that children explore everything that is planned and intervene effectively, using languages other than English where possible to guide them. Children's individual needs are identified early and the appropriate support is provided to ensure good progress. Children are happy and confident in these secure settings.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to speak, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve provision for mathematics and science in order to raise standards.
- Ensure all subject leaders have the assessment information they need to develop their subjects.
- Improve attendance and ensure parents are aware of its impact on their child's progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps the children to make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, standards are well below average. Standards in writing are higher than in reading because pupils have many opportunities to practise writing. When reading, pupils' limited range of vocabulary hinders their understanding and they have too few opportunities to talk and explain their ideas. In Years 3 to 6, pupils progress well. Occasionally, pupils who join the school later than Year 2, often with little or no English, make lesser gains despite the school's good efforts to support them. In Year 6, standards in English have improved and this is enabling pupils to make good progress in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good additional support they receive. This is also true for pupils learning English as an additional language, where bilingual support is an asset.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is good at all times and they form good relationships with everyone. They respond enthusiastically in lessons, are quick to help others and love doing jobs around the school. School council members organise playground equipment and 'playground buddies' to check that pupils play safely and happily. Pupils are keen to discuss the traditions and customs of their families and learn to respect the racial and cultural diversity in the community. Pupils support many charities by raising funds and filling 'present boxes' to distribute to those in need in their communities here and abroad. They choose healthy options at lunchtimes and know what they should do to stay fit and well. Many attend the sports clubs on offer but the poor playground space limits the opportunities for pupils to undertake vigorous exercise at break-times. They know how to stay safe, understand the dangers of drugs and whom to go to if they feel threatened.

While most pupils attend regularly, a number are regularly absent, often through being taken on extended holidays. While pupils' personal skills are good, their well below average basic skills mean their preparation for the next stage of their education is only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lively lessons and pose challenging questions that encourage pupils to think about their work and discuss their ideas. Work is generally matched well to pupils' needs and support staff are used effectively to prompt and encourage them to offer answers. Pupils are better at doing this in Key Stage 2 where they are more confident in their speaking skills. Where teachers make learning more visual, for example through drama or using interactive whiteboards, pupils find it easier to understand what they are learning. Tasks take good account of the fact that pupils' vocabulary may be limited and staff provide translations or simplified explanations to help pupils. Regular assessment and tracking procedures help identify pupils who need additional support so that teachers can consider how best to help them. Setting individual targets is proving effective in helping pupils understand what they are aiming for and thus achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well structured to help pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress. Because the acquisition of English is a high priority for most pupils, a good emphasis is given to develop basic skills, particularly subject-specific vocabulary to support understanding. Specialist staff organise individual and group activities to help pupils learn English as quickly as they can so they can participate fully. Teachers are beginning to link work across subjects to help pupils make better sense of their learning but this practice is not yet fully developed. In order to raise standards, more time is being devoted to develop pupils' enquiry skills in mathematics and science. There is scope to increase the opportunities for pupils to apply their computer skills in classrooms. Enrichment activities are good. Themed events such as history and cultural weeks, Spanish teaching, many visits and visitors all contribute well to pupils' experiences of the world of work and leisure. A good programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The arrangements for pastoral care are good. Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Pupils feel they are listened to and that staff will help if they are worried or upset. Pupils who have specific social, emotional or educational needs are supported very sensitively by learning mentors and other staff. External agencies are consulted where necessary. Pupils particularly benefit from individual support in the 'calm room'. Pupils are supported sensitively when they first start school and prepared well for secondary school.

Pupils' progress is now being assessed thoroughly, particularly in English and mathematics, to set accurate targets and identify those who may be falling behind or need specific help. Extra support is also provided for those children taken on extended holidays. The setting of challenging individual targets is providing pupils with the encouragement and motivation they need to improve their work. Marking is generally good in literacy with detailed guidance as to what pupils have done well or what they need to do next, but the practice is not as good elsewhere.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher knows what needs to be done to make the improvements necessary to raise standards and in the two years she has been head, standards have improved. Following many staff changes, she now has a strong senior leadership team well capable of helping her take the school forward. The right priorities have been identified and appropriate action taken to realise higher standards. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, good support and guidance for staff and more regular checks on pupils' achievements, have resulted in teaching now being good and pupils making good progress. The new systems to track pupils' progress are good and provide the school with useful information as to where to target additional support so that every pupil achieves well. However, the information is not organised as effectively as it could be to help subject leaders identify what they need to do to improve provision in their subjects.

Governors visit the school regularly, are well informed and carry out their duties satisfactorily. They see the school as a vital part of the local community. They need to do more in checking the school's performance and ensuring regular attendance from all pupils. Links with the local authority, other schools, agencies and the community are good.

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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?	2
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	2
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?	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

7 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School, Forest Fields, Nottingham, NG7 6HJ

I am writing to tell you what we found out when we came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was good to meet you. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so friendly and polite. We enjoyed talking to you about school, the good friends you make and all the exciting trips you go on. We particularly liked the way you all get on well with each other and help around the school. Please thank your parents for filling in questionnaires where they told us how pleased they are with the school.

Your school is good in every aspect. These are the things we particularly liked:

- You all try hard with your school work and make good progress. The results in English are much better than they used to be so things are improving.
- Your lessons are good because teachers make them interesting and fun and staff give you extra help if you need it.
- The activities teachers plan, including the many trips and clubs you can join, are good.
- You behave well and enjoy learning. You know about staying fit and healthy.
- You know whom to go to in the school if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff take very good care of you.

These are things we have asked the teachers to do to make the school even better:

- Give you more time to talk, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the work you do in mathematics and science so you achieve higher results at the end of Year 6.
- Make sure teachers have the information they need to improve all the subjects.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, by asking your parents to make sure you come to school as regularly as you can to enjoy all of the exciting things going on.

I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead Inspector