

Sneinton St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122776
Local Authority	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
Inspection number	314395
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs R Meredith
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Windmill Lane Sneinton Nottingham NG2 4QW
Telephone number	0115 9151370
Fax number	0115 9171371

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school serving a culturally diverse population close to Nottingham city centre where many families experience social and economic disadvantage. Almost half of the pupils are from ethnic minority groups, of which the highest proportion is of Pakistani heritage. Nearly one third of pupils have a first language other than English. An above average number of pupils are identified with a learning difficulty or a disability. A high number enter and leave the school other than at the usual times. The school has an Achievement Award, an Investor in People Award, a Healthy Schools Gold Award, an Environmental and Conservation Organisation (ECO) Schools Bronze Award and a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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 providing good value for money. While it is still improving and has some areas for development it also has outstanding features. The school's success is due to the clear vision and direction of the headteacher, supported by able senior teachers and a hardworking staff team who, together with governors, pupils, families and community partners, bring to life their mission statement: 'Together we can achieve'.

Pupils start school with very low standards in all areas of their learning. They settle quickly into the happy and stimulating environment of the Foundation Unit and make good progress. While standards are still below average when they enter Year 1, pupils have developed vital skills to help them get ready to learn. They continue to make good progress through Years 1 and 2. This good achievement is not fully reflected in the results of assessments at the end of Year 2, which show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been below those of most pupils nationally. These results do not wholly demonstrate how successful the school is in helping many pupils to catch up with their peers. For example, the high numbers who are in the early stages of learning English, the high number of pupils who arrive and leave throughout the year and the high proportion who have a learning difficulty or a disability. These pupils are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants to do well. From Years 3 to 6 pupils also make good progress. Standards in English are average, and above average standards have been maintained in mathematics and science in recent years.

Good teaching, based on very positive relationships and a good curriculum, helps to ensure that pupils are extremely happy, interested and make good progress. Pupils leave visitors in no doubt about how much they really do enjoy being at school. The best lessons are characterised by teachers' high levels of energy, enthusiasm and expectations. However, in some, the pace of learning is slower because they lack the appropriate structure, pace, level of interest and challenge. Good care and support are provided for pupils. Pastoral care is outstanding because everyone goes the extra mile to make sure each child feels valued, secure, confident and ready to learn. Consequently, pupils make remarkable progress in their personal development from low starting points so that by the time they leave the school it is good. However, leaders recognise the need to develop a consistently applied system of academic guidance to help all pupils to make the best academic progress and which involves them in a meaningful way in assessing their own work.

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders have ensured that everyone is clear about how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to continue to improve. Past successes, along with a determination to do even better, demonstrate that there is good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly because of effective arrangements to help them and their families to make the smooth transition to school. Good support from staff ensures that everyone feels valued, secure and confident. Children enter with skills which are well below what is expected but make good progress and are prepared well for learning by the time they enter Year 1. Individualised learning programmes, based on detailed assessment, are taught well by class teachers and teaching assistants. Work to accelerate the development of early literacy skills is

beginning to pay off. A range of activities with a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated opportunities is offered inside the unit. Children actively enjoy the pleasant outdoor area though leaders recognise that more could be done to maximise learning opportunities outside. Children's health, safety and welfare are successfully promoted through rigorous systems and routines. Staff have done well to establish the unit so successfully in only one year but are not complacent and remain focussed on continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons have the appropriate structure, pace, interest and challenge.
- Ensure a consistently applied system of academic guidance to help all pupils to make the best progress and which involves them in a meaningful way in assessing their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Assessments at the end of the Foundation Stage and Year 2 show that although standards have been below average, they are rising. At the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are being maintained at above average levels and pupils are on course to achieve the expected standards in English. These results demonstrate that the school is successful in tackling the challenges presented by the high numbers who start and leave the school other than at the normal times, and the high number who begin school in the early stages of learning English or who are constrained by a learning difficulty or disability. These pupils are all supported effectively to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The progress pupils make in this area is a real success story. Most of them genuinely and thoroughly enjoy school. This is reflected in attendance levels which are now higher than average. Pupils work hard. They show a good awareness of how to stay safe. Work to achieve the Healthy School Award has resulted in a good theoretical understanding of what is meant by a healthy lifestyle, although some do not always put this fully into practice, for example, as seen in the contents of their lunch boxes. Pupils have very positive attitudes and most behave well, though there is a minority who cannot sustain appropriate behaviour without effective adult support. Pupils take very seriously their responsibilities for helping to develop the kind of school they want. They make an outstanding contribution through the school and ECO councils and through a wide array of everyday duties such as playground leaders and lunchtime helpers. This extends, with excellent effect, to the local community, through their involvement in local projects and charitable work. By Year 6, pupils are thoughtful and well adjusted young people, well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate their high aspirations for pupils. They provide inspirational role models and a high degree of interest and enjoyment which results in positive attitudes to learning. Thus ensuring good behaviour, positive relationships and, importantly,

that pupils gain increasing self-confidence and self-belief. Learning is often lively and active with lessons that are increasingly tailored to appeal to pupils' different learning styles. The system of marking, where it is consistently applied, celebrates success and really helps pupils to improve. Teachers plan conscientiously; however, this does not always result in lessons that sufficiently interest and challenge all pupils. Occasionally, too much teacher talk slows the pace of learning. The skilled teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and outside agencies to ensure that those who need extra help do well, either individually or in groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has an appropriate focus on developing pupils' basic skills. It has been strengthened by increased opportunities for active and practical learning. However, the effectiveness of these developments is more evident in some classes than others because monitoring of the curriculum overall is not yet robust enough to pick up and tackle any inconsistencies. Promotion of the pupils' personal development is a consistently strong feature of the curriculum. Whole school cross-curricular themes such as 'globalization' and regular 'themed weeks', such as Black History week, give added meaning and stimulus to pupils' learning and help to prepare them well for their lives beyond school. A good range of extra-curricular activities are on offer, as well many enrichment opportunities provided by educational visits and visitors to the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures to promote good behaviour, safety and trust are rigorously pursued by all staff. Pastoral care is outstanding: there is an excellent focus on promoting the social and emotional development of pupils throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and pupils for whom English is an additional language, are well supported, including very effective collaboration with an impressive range of external support agencies that are well managed by the school's leaders. Increasingly productive relationships with parents are strengthening all aspects of the school's support for pupils. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils are securely implemented. The school is working hard to find the best system of academic guidance to help pupils do as well as they can and which will involve pupils in a meaningful way in assessing their own work. This has yet to be implemented consistently across school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership, with strong support from senior leaders ensures clear vision, strategic direction and a sharp focus on improvement. Leaders have created a strong school community where all are committed to inclusion. They are particularly proactive in promoting effective partnerships and extended services as a way to successfully drive forward school improvement. Considerable improvements have been made to the school environment. Most parents are supportive of the school's work and feel increasingly included. Leaders know the school well because self-evaluation is accurate and increasingly detailed allowing challenging targets to be set and achieved. There is no complacency, as evidenced in the tenacious work to improve attendance. The headteacher is keen to involve others in leadership in order to drive

school improvement forward more quickly. Some leaders are new and their impact is yet to be felt. The governing body provides a good degree of support and challenge.

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?	1
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	2
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

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	2
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**

19 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sneinton St Stephen's CofE Primary School, Nottingham, NG2 4QW

We were pleased to meet you and all the staff and very much enjoyed the time we spent with you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome, talking to us, and helping us to find out so much about you and your school. We especially enjoyed hearing you sing in assembly, perform in your music lessons and proudly and politely carry out all your important jobs which really help to make your school such a lovely place.

You go to a good school. The headteacher, teachers and all the other grown-ups do their best for you. They look after you and care for you very well. Your teachers make learning interesting and enjoyable and they work hard to help you make good progress in lessons. Your good behaviour in class, around school and in the playground really helps you to learn well. It is clear that you are really happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe.

The school is keen to find ways to help you do as well as you possibly can. Though you already make good progress, we think you could do even better. We have asked that all your teachers always make it clear to you exactly what they want you to learn next and how you will know if you have achieved it. We have asked that they also make sure that you always have work to do which challenges and interests you.

I am sure that Mrs Meredith and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to work hard, behaving well and by coming to school every day.

I would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey Lead inspector