

Knighton Fields Primary School and Community Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120066
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	322283
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Clarke
Headteacher	Pete Wood
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2006
School address	Knighton Fields Road West Leicester LE2 7NP
Telephone number	0116 2330666
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Knighton Fields is an average size school serving an area of social disadvantage close to the city centre of Leicester. At its previous inspection in November 2006, it was judged to require special measures. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The majority of pupils come from a White British background, although around a third are from minority ethnic groups. A higher than average percentage is in the early stages of speaking English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. Considerably higher numbers of pupils than usual join or leave the school other than the usual designated starting points than is found nationally. The school has received national awards for Healthy School, Activemark and ICT Mark in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. This is a school now living up to its motto by 'Laying foundations for the future'. The school has made some important improvements in its provision since November 2006 and its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. It has some good features. Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below the expectations for their ages. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, so that by the end of Year 2, standards are now close to the national average. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The legacy of poor provision and previously inadequate progress means that, in many cases, the standards of pupils' work are well below the levels expected in Years 4 to 6. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils have the essential skills that will equip them more fully for the next stage in their education and for later life. Throughout the school, work is not always challenging enough for the more able pupils.

The quality of teaching is now rigorously monitored and has improved. Although there has been an increase in the proportion of good teaching, this is not consistently high enough. The best lessons challenge all pupils and require them to think about and discuss their learning, but this is not a strong enough feature across the school. The discernible improvements in the school and the strong quality of care, guidance and support have led to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Staff work hard and are caring towards the pupils. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school. They trust staff, generally enjoy their lessons, and feel safe. Many said that 'school is fun' and 'it is friendly' and they valued the support offered to them by all staff. This attitude is reflected in their attendance, which has steadily improved as a result of the good partnership work with the education welfare officer (EWO) and effective links with parents. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to school activities and increasingly take on responsibilities. There is an exceptionally strong ethos of care in the school and relationships are good. Pupils are offered good academic guidance. Their work is regularly marked and assessed. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good features. In addition to the basic curriculum, pupils are offered a good range of additional enrichment activities through a wide variety of trips and events.

The above improvements have arisen because of good leadership and management. The headteacher provides strong and tenacious leadership. He and the senior leadership team work well together and have a good combination of skills and experiences. There are now effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and these are shared by key staff and governors. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is good. They have ensured that weaknesses in the teaching have been tackled. Action to improve this, and other provision in the school, has been taken against a background of maintaining high staff morale and good team work. Staff have risen well to the challenges presented and there is a collective and determined will to succeed. Such actions show that the school has a good capacity to improve even further. Whilst the senior leaders have directed the work of the school well, the role of the subject leaders is not sufficiently well developed. The governing body has strengthened its roles and responsibilities considerably since November 2006. Governors work hard and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They readily challenge the school about its provision and hold it more to account than previously.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle well and get off to a secure start with their learning. Better teaching and an improved range of activities are now beginning to increase children's achievements in this class. This was evident as children took on roles as builders to construct homes of straw, sticks and bricks to support their work on 'The Three Little Pigs'. Progress accelerates for children of Reception age in Foundation 2 where children achieve well. This is because the energetic teacher provides very carefully planned activities to make sure they learn in an interesting and stimulating way. A rigorous system of teaching the links between letters and sounds gives a good foundation for developing early writing and speaking and listening skills. Adults make careful assessments of children's achievements and plan work that meets the differing needs of children successfully. Children achieve well in all areas of learning, but not all attain the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year, particularly in reading and calculations. A good foundation is given to their personal and social development. All children enjoy coming to school and are especially good at caring for each other. They understand the need to share and cooperate with others. This is helped by the strong relationships children have with the adults working with them. The Foundation Stage leader provides good direction. The outdoor play and learning environment requires further development and improvement to extend experiences and enrich children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and progress particularly at Key Stage 2 by increasing the proportion of teaching and learning which is good or better.
- Improve rates of progress for the higher attaining pupils throughout the school by challenging and expecting more of them in lessons.
- Develop the role of all subject leaders so that they have a good understanding of provision in their areas of responsibility and help improve achievement.

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

Achievement has improved since the last inspection due to increasingly accurate assessment and better planning leading to improved teaching and learning. Despite this, too few reach the higher levels in all subjects because work is not always challenging enough. Pupils generally enter Year 1 with standards that are below expectations. They are now making good progress in Key Stage 1. Results of the most recent end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments in 2008, which have yet to be published formally, indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are now close to the national average. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. The school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 is improving steadily and is closer to national averages. However, standards in mathematics were exceptionally low in 2007. Standards by Year 6 remain below average. There are more gaps to fill following the legacy of underachievement brought about by frequent staffing changes and too much inadequate teaching in the past. In addition, high proportions of pupils join or leave the school, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This interrupts the continuity of their

learning and slows progress. Pupils are set challenging targets and most achieve them. Pupils with learning difficulties, together with those at early stages of learning English, are supported particularly well and results in them making good progress. Some pupils do not take sufficient pride or care with their handwriting and presentation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils say bullying is rare and that adults deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly and fairly. As one pupil stated, 'We all have plenty of friends at this school.' Concerted efforts by the school through initiatives, such as 'Cool Cats' and working with parents to reduce holidays taken during term time, have improved attendance, which is now average. Satisfactory gains in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enable pupils to appreciate the needs and achievements of others and to show care and consideration. Pupils contribute well to the school and local communities. They take responsibility seriously, for example when acting as 'Young Leaders' on the playground or as junior road safety officers. The school council makes an effective contribution to school life and, together with circle time, ensures pupils' views are well represented. The process of election of the school council, together with that of the Year 6 chairman, gives a valuable introduction to democratic processes. Raising money for charities gives pupils a valuable understanding of wider social and economic issues. As one pupil remarked, 'It helps us remember how much we have compared to others.' However, despite opportunities to work in pairs and groups, preparation for their next stage of learning together with the future world of work is only satisfactory because of pupil performance in basic skills at the time pupils leave Year 6. Work related to gaining Activemark and Healthy School status gives pupils a good understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy eating.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have improved. All teaching is now satisfactory and a greater proportion is good than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers manage their classes well, establishing good working relationships. Lesson planning is good and pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. As one pupil enthusiastically reported, 'We are taught really well. Teachers make learning fun!' Where teaching is good or better, the pace of the lesson is brisk, work is challenging, pupils are encouraged to think and to discuss their ideas. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. However, where teaching and learning are satisfactory, work is not always carefully matched to pupils' needs. There are limited opportunities for pupils to think independently and develop their own ideas through discussion. The work for the more able pupils does not always have sufficient demand to help them progress beyond the expected level for their age. Pupils report that at times their lessons are too easy. Provision for learners identified as gifted and talented, although satisfactory, is not developed fully. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards by teachers to support learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has improved because more time is devoted to teaching the core subjects of English and mathematics. The school has quite rightly focused its attention on getting English and mathematics right. More work is now required to increase skills in other subjects. Although there are some purposeful links between subjects which enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning, these are inconsistent and irregular. Increasing opportunities are being provided to apply the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects. For example, good use of writing skills is evident in science when pupils in Year 6 write accounts and findings of their investigations. The enthusiasm with which pupils speak about information and communication technology (ICT) and sporting activities reflects the success the school has had in gaining national awards in these areas of provision. A powerful example of pupils' use of computer skills is seen when pupils in Year 4 use their understanding of multimedia presentations to produce interactive stories. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits and a satisfactory range of after school activities. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education, supported by residential trips, gives pupils a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles. The school has recently introduced activities to support and develop pupils' social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL).

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils exceptionally well. Parents expressed their appreciation for the care the school gives their children. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will respond quickly to any problems. Child protection and other arrangements to safeguard learners, such as risk assessments, vetting of staff and responsible Internet use, are robust. Such provision is a marked improvement on that reported at the last inspection. Effective procedures help pupils settle quickly whenever they join school and help those in Year 6 prepare well for their next stage of education. A well attended breakfast club is a further way in which the school supports the needs of pupils. Academic guidance is good. Effective use is made of information from regular assessments in English, mathematics and, more recently, science to monitor and track pupils' performance and to help plan future learning. Most pupils know and value having targets for learning. They say it helps them know how well they are doing and how to improve. Some, however are unsure precisely what their targets are and what they need to do to achieve them. Pupils' learning is supported further by their increasing involvement in evaluating their own performance and by teachers' effective marking which gives good guidance on how to improve. It is better when pupils are given time to respond to teachers' comments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is emerging from a difficult period. Leaders have focused precisely on the areas that need improving and have introduced effective strategies to make it happen. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and he is well supported by an enthusiastic and committed senior leadership team. Together, they set a very clear vision for the school and have high, but appropriate, expectations of staff and pupils. There is a proper focus on the key priorities for further development, such as to improve teaching and learning.

There are thorough systems for monitoring the work of the school. Outcomes are evaluated and used effectively to inform planning so that areas of weakness are addressed. The united staff team are keen to bring about change and to do their best for the pupils. Training is improving teachers' skills effectively. The work of subject leaders has been less effective because of frequent changes due to long term absence or resignations. Despite this, senior leaders have successfully managed to sustain improvements. Recent appointments mean that responsibilities are now delegated appropriately, but work in providing direction and support for other teachers is at an early stage. Staff are suitably qualified and efficiently allocated. Governors are supportive and committed to the school. They now fully understand their role in holding the school to account and have revised their organisation and systems to ensure that they gather the information necessary to make these judgements. Given the school leaders' success in raising standards and improving the school, there is good capacity to improve.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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?	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?	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	3
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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knighton Fields Primary School and Community Centre, Leicester LE2 7NP

As you know, I recently visited your school with Mr Thelwell. This letter is to tell you what we found. First, I would like to thank you for your help during our visit. We enjoyed talking to some of you at lunchtime and in lessons. Your views of the school were very helpful. We were very impressed by the friendly and confident way you spoke to us.

Your school has improved a lot in the last eighteen months and we have taken it out of the group of schools which we have to visit every term. This means that the school now gives you a satisfactory education. Most of you behave well in school and you say you enjoy coming to school. You told us that you feel safe and that there is very little bullying. You now make progress in your lessons and most of you know your targets and reach them. You pay attention in lessons and are enthusiastic in answering questions. Your teachers mark your work carefully and give you a clear idea of the next steps you need to take. You enjoy the broad range of activities and trips that the school provides. The school council is putting your ideas into practice around the school. The staff look after you well and help you to learn.

We suggested some areas of the school's work that need to be even better. You still need to work even harder to get better results by the end of Year 6. To help you, we want even more of your lessons to be good. We have also asked staff to check carefully and regularly how well you are doing.

I am confident that your school can improve further. I wish you good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston Her Majesty's Inspector

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Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector