

Gossey Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103375
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323809
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	229
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	59
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Bracher
Headteacher	Emma Brown
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gossey Lane Birmingham B33 0DS
Telephone number	01214 642909
Fax number	01214 644801

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Many children have limited skills when they join the Nursery, especially in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. The school operates a breakfast club which a very small number of children from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) attend. The school has undergone a high turnover of staff especially of senior leaders. The recently appointed senior leadership team has only been together for a very short time. In 2007, the school was awarded Healthy Schools and the Active Mark and in 2008 it received The Litter Charter and 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

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Its vision for the school is to be at the heart of a community where tolerance and respect of every individual are central. The success of this vision is reflected in pupils' good attitudes, relationships and behaviour, and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6. Standards are average, but there is still room for improvement in raising standards in writing through more focused use of assessment. In the EYFS, children make rapid progress in personal, social and emotional development and sound progress in all other areas of learning. However, more capable children could achieve more in communication, language and literacy, and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. There are too few opportunities for them to develop their skills in correct letter and number formation. Not enough use is made of information on what children already know or can do to support the next steps in their learning.

Due to secure and accurate self-evaluation, the school is able to identify areas for development and take effective action. The 2008 national test results show that standards in science have risen and reading has improved. Inspection findings show that pupils' achievement in mental mathematics is now good. Teaching and learning are good. Several examples of outstanding practice were seen in mathematics lessons where higher attaining pupils were challenged to excel in using their knowledge of multiplication tables and interpreting data. All groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of a well-balanced curriculum enriched with plenty of extra activities. This ensures that pupils make healthy lifestyle choices, enjoy learning, know how to stay safe in all situations and have secure basic skills to access the next steps of learning. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher and staff. As one commented, 'You know they care about our children.'

Care, guidance and support are effective and all systems for risk assessment and safeguarding are transparent and fully implemented. The school is totally committed to inclusive practices, which is evident in the way that pupils throughout the school are taught Makaton. However, whilst links with the local community are good, more needs to be done to develop pupils' awareness of the many different communities in Britain.

Leadership and management are good, in spite of many setbacks due to staffing issues. The headteacher and governing body show no complacency and are tenacious in tackling weaknesses. 'We strive to give our children the best start in life and, in spite of the many obstacles we faced, we never lost sight of the need to raise standards', said the chair of the governing body, rightly pleased with the 2008 test results. The leadership team, expertly led by the headteacher, is rapidly improving provision by sharing its expertise across the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good with better achievement for pupils, a rise in standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and much improved attendance. This indicates the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are provided with many exciting learning opportunities and have good opportunities to develop their confidence as they work and play together. Children are well cared for by hard working and dedicated staff who know them well. They make sound progress overall. In personal, social and emotional development, their achievement is good because of secure routines and good relationships. Too few opportunities are provided for more capable children to practise forming letters and numbers correctly and to consolidate their early literacy and numeracy skills in independent activities. Teachers keep good and accurate observations of children's learning but this information is not always translated into planning the next steps of learning.

Children are enabled to learn and develop due to sound teaching. There is a good balance between adult led and child chosen activities. However, adult interventions are not always based on knowledge of children's prior learning. Partnerships with pre-school providers are at the early stages of development, an area recognised by the school that needs addressing. Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory. Safeguarding and welfare arrangements are good and all children learn in a secure learning environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for more capable children in the EYFS to develop their early writing and mathematical skills, and ensure that information on prior attainment is used to help staff intervene in learning.
- Make more focused use of assessment in Years 1 to 6 to improve pupils' writing skills and to raise standards in this area.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to gain awareness of different cultures that make up British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The 2008 national test results show an improving picture in comparison with previous years with underachievement in science being halted. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. Pupils achieve well but make more rapid progress in reading than in writing. The impact of the new senior leadership team is becoming apparent in further improvements in rates of progress since this September. A sharp rise in pupils' achievement in mathematics, reading and ICT has been brought about by the highly focused work of the subject leaders. Progress in ICT, which was a weakness in the previous inspection, is now equally as good as that in other subjects and standards meet national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they enjoy school because staff care about them. 'We get on well with one another and learn because we feel safe as we know any problems will get sorted and quickly,' commented one pupil. The school is a happy and harmonious community. Attendance is in line with national averages due to rigorous procedures implemented by the headteacher and governing body. 'You daren't keep your child off school, you would feel as if you are letting the school down,' said one parent speaking for many. Pupils respect the feelings of others but lack awareness of the richness and diversity of the range of communities living in Britain. Pupils

undertake good quality research in ICT and are confident learners. They take their responsibilities seriously, such as being mediators at break time and ensuring that the school is litter free.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers make learning fun for pupils by choosing topics they find stimulating. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 2, the teacher's enthusiasm for mental mathematics rubbed off as pupils engaged in challenging games to practise their calculation strategies. Pupils took great delight in finding patterns in numbers and made exceptional progress. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils who need extra challenge in their learning or additional support. Teaching is characterised by teachers telling pupils what they are going to learn, why they need to learn it and how they will acquire new skills and knowledge. On occasions, teachers are not specific enough when setting writing tasks in telling pupils what they need to do to achieve higher levels.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' good progress in reading, numeracy and ICT is helped by the many opportunities that they have to practise their basic skills in other subjects. The recent development in computerised learning programmes enables pupils to access a range of activities at home. This is helping pupils develop a love of learning. A more focused and rigorous programme for reading has accelerated pupils' progress. Higher attaining pupils are now doing well in mathematics as a result of carefully planned learning opportunities based upon previous test analysis. However, the systematic development of pupils' writing skills is not yet fully secure and this restricts their progress. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and helps them make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils flourish both socially and academically due to good care, guidance and support. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after in school. Child protection procedures are robust and regular health and safety checks and risk assessments are carried out. Good links are established with the agencies that help to provide effective support for pupils when it is required. Children in EYFS are well cared for in the breakfast club and quickly form friendships with older pupils. The school has effective procedures for promoting regular attendance and these are well known to parents. Pupils know their targets, and teachers' marking is both thorough and informative, helping pupils to understand how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led by a highly dedicated headteacher who will stop at nothing to give pupils a good quality of education. These efforts are recognised in the recent Basic Skills Award. Priorities

for improvement are always the ones that will have the biggest impact on raising standards and these have proved to be effective, as seen in the recent improvements in reading and science. Academic targets set for pupils are ambitious. Checks on teaching clearly identify where improvements can be made and this is helping teachers to improve further their practice. Subject leaders play an increasing role in monitoring provision, although not all are confident in observing teaching and learning. School leaders have been instrumental in developing a harmonious school community.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gossey Lane Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Birmingham, B33 0DS

- Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We thoroughly enjoyed listening to you sing, especially the chorus of 'Where is the love
- ' by Black Eyed Peas. We found it very difficult not to start dancing!

You are right, you have a good school with very caring teachers. You are taught well. Your headteacher is very hard working and wants the very best for all of you. We are pleased that you can go and tell your troubles to her should any arise. You have good attitudes to learning and you behave well. We are delighted with your attendance. Well done, this is now helping you make better progress. You take all your responsibilities very seriously. We were very impressed with those of you who are mediators; you do a fantastic job.

- You all know about healthy eating and how to stay safe, and your good teamwork skills are helping you to develop into good citizens. You do a fantastic job in keeping your school litter free and it is really refreshing to see you all care so passionately about your environment. We have asked your teachers to make your school even better by helping you to get better at writing. We know it is hard work but you have managed to do it in science. Can you please try and improve your written work by asking your teachers how to obtain higher levels
- We think that teachers can help you by showing you what is required. We have suggested that some children in Nursery and Reception could do better in writing and numeracy, particularly if they are quick to learn. We have also asked your teachers to help you develop your knowledge of other cultures, so that you have a good awareness of other people's beliefs, customs and values. After all, you will be the 'change makers' in society.

All the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead inspector