

Nelson Mandela School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103384
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323812
Inspection date	10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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)	496
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shasina kahan
Headteacher	Frieda Billingham
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Colville Road Sparkbrook Birmingham B12 8EH
Telephone number	01217 723055
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the achievement of pupils in writing

the support given to new and inexperienced teachers

reasons for the large budget underspend.

The inspectors gathered evidence from observations of lessons, discussions with pupils, governors and staff, tracking pupils' progress, analysis of attendance and gaining the views of parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large school with a high proportion of pupils from Asian or Asian-British backgrounds and a growing number who are of Somali origin. Nearly all pupils speak English as an additional language and over a third are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The school has provision for up to six pupils with mobility difficulties. The attainment of children on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) is very low compared to most other schools. The long-standing headteacher is in the second year of a phased retirement scheme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. High quality teaching and inspirational leadership and management enable pupils to make excellent progress and be well prepared for the future. The headteacher leads with a relentless focus upon maintaining high standards and has very high expectations of all members of the school community. The headteacher juggles the responsibilities of teaching, leadership and management expertly and sets the standard for all staff. Other leaders support the headteacher very well and share her vision for the school and aspirations for the pupils. The leaders support new and inexperienced staff well. These teachers are quick to say how this enables them to settle quickly and become part of a very effective team. The well informed governing body works closely with the leaders to evaluate the provision rigorously and constantly seek innovative ways to improve it still further. However, while the improvement plan has clear priorities, it lacks any ways of measuring its impact on pupils' standards or personal development. The school manages its finances extremely well, and has saved the significant amount of money required to repair the deteriorating roof.

Pupils love their 'brilliant' school and are rightly proud of their exceptional achievements. They build very well on their flying start in the EYFS and, by Year 2, attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Rapid progress is maintained in Key Stage 2, where standards by Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This has been the case for some years, and the school is consistently in the top 10% of all schools in terms of pupils' progress. Reading is a real strength. Pupils develop a love of books and teachers are very good at giving them the skills and confidence to tackle unfamiliar words. Standards in writing are not quite as high, but they are improving as teachers raise their expectations of the quality of written work in all subjects. For example, imaginative work on 'Amazing Egypt', the Gunpowder Plot and 'Save the Planet' helped pupils think carefully about the best words to use to make the topic come to life.

Teachers do everything to make lessons enjoyable and challenging, and this gives pupils a thirst for learning. Lessons are always a buzz of activity as pupils compete enthusiastically to answer questions and beam with delight when they get the answer right. Pupils appreciate the way that teachers know immediately when they are not clear about something. As one said, 'It's great, because they keep explaining things until you get it.' From the Nursery onwards, teachers make sure all pupils know right from wrong, and they behave impeccably. Teaching assistants play an important part in lessons in the way that they work effectively with small groups and support individual pupils who need extra help. The very good assessment systems mean that teachers provide tasks that are always challenging, but achievable. Teachers have designed a curriculum with excellent provision for literacy and numeracy. Pupils also have many opportunities to develop their skills in creative subjects, such as art and design, and music. Pupils' painting on large canvases, for example, is stunning. The curriculum does much to teach pupils how to stay safe and live healthy lives. As a result, they speak very knowledgeably about the best foods to eat and the dangers of drugs and alcohol. An extensive range of visits and visitors and close links with other, contrasting, schools, enrich the curriculum and give pupils a deep understanding of the lives of people from different faiths, cultures and social backgrounds. They also account for the high degree of racial harmony in school. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities given them to take responsibility for their community. They are passionate about issues such as sustainability and energy conservation, and learn much in relation to these areas from growing vegetables in their allotment.

Parents think the world of the school and, as one put it, the 'excellent start it gives the children'. They appreciate the very high quality of the care, support and guidance offered to their children that makes them feel safe and valued. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and reviewed regularly. The staff track pupils' progress very carefully, and take swift action if any are falling behind. The school has worked successfully with parents to reduce unnecessary absences. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection to be in line with levels found nationally.

These many strengths explain how the school has improved on the high standards of provision commended in the last inspection, and show why it is well set to do even better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Good induction procedures, excellent partnerships with parents and rigorous attention to children's welfare mean that children settle quickly to school routines, feel very safe and are ready to learn. As a result, they make exceptional progress. They make a fast start in the Nursery, where their use and understanding of English, in particular, comes on leaps and bounds. This progress is maintained in the Reception classes, and nearly all children attain the expected standards in all areas by the end of the year. The very high quality of the teaching, with its strong emphasis on language, writing, numeracy and social skills, ensures that all groups of children achieve exceptionally well. The classrooms are a sea of vivid colours to stimulate children, and covered with examples of their work to consolidate and celebrate their learning. Extensive resources, both inside and out, are organised carefully to support different areas of learning. Children develop their independence very well, and choose happily from the exciting range of activities on offer. They enjoy learning about shape and colour in mathematics, acting as polar bears in the role-play area and writing about the exploits of Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer. The adults observe children's learning and development carefully, and use the information well to plan future work.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. Although some lack confidence, the sensitive encouragement and guidance they receive help them to become happy and independent learners in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children behave extremely well and learn to play with and help each other. The provision is led and managed to a high standard, and staff have a clear understanding of how to improve it still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school development plan has clear ways of measuring its effectiveness.

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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?	1
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

11 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nelson Mandela School, Birmingham, B12 8EH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. A highlight for me was watching you practise so hard with your dance routine. Chubby Checker would have been proud of you because you did 'The Twist' really well by the end. Those of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. You are right to be, because it is an outstanding school.

What we found out about your school

- You work very hard and make excellent progress.
- Your behaviour is absolutely brilliant, both in class and out in the playground.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- You do a lot to help people who are not as lucky as you.
- The leaders are excellent and know how to improve things.
- You love the many clubs at lunchtime and after school that teach you important skills in things like design and technology, music and sport.
- Your teachers are doing a great job. They work very hard to plan interesting work and make your lessons fun.
- All staff at the school take really good care of you and keep you safe.

There is one thing that we would like the school to do now.

- Make sure the leaders can check that the improvements they plan really help you do even better.

Good luck for the future!

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston Lead inspector