

Nelson Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120946
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327396
Inspection date	30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Tricia Pritchard HMI

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	120
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	Mrs Christine Silvester
Headteacher	Mrs Carole Shildrake
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Northumberland Street Norwich NR2 4DR
Telephone number	01603 620344
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Nelson Infant School became an infant school in September 2007 following the re-organisation of Norwich schools. The majority of pupils live in the immediate vicinity where there are areas of social disadvantage. Higher than average numbers of pupils have additional learning needs. While the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly in line with the national average, the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly higher. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The school achieved a Healthy Schools Award in 2007 and an Active Learning Mark. There is onsite pre-school provision but this is not managed by the governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Nelson Infant school is a good school. Pupils enter the reception classes with weak language and mathematical skills but because of good teaching in every class, they make good progress throughout the school. Raising standards in reading was an issue in the last inspection and this has been addressed successfully. The daily teaching of phonics in small groups has contributed significantly to this improvement and to raising standards in writing. At the end of Year 2, the pupils attain levels in reading, writing and mathematics, which are consistently in line or above the national average; in 2007, they were significantly above. A key factor is the good performance of higher attaining pupils. More Year 2 pupils at Nelson Infant School attain higher results in their end-of-year assessments in comparison with pupils in other schools. However, there are gender differences. Higher attaining girls do better than higher attaining boys in reading and writing.

Pupils with additional learning needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language do considerably better than pupils in other schools. They benefit from good support and guidance in lessons and consequently, they make good progress in relation to their starting points. Staff are well trained by a specialist language consultant to support pupils with English as an additional language. They understand how to support their individual language needs and have high expectations of these pupils. The majority of pupils, therefore, make rapid progress in learning English.

The quality of teaching is good and the curriculum is well balanced. A good start has been made in adopting a more creative approach to planning the curriculum while retaining a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. Pupils are given opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences across the curriculum and this is raising standards in writing.

All staff provide good pastoral support and academic guidance in lessons. Safeguarding requirements are fully met. Teaching assistants are very well deployed to support pupils' learning. Pupils benefit considerably from learning in small groups and small classes. Teachers take care to plan tasks, which are matched well to pupils' abilities and interests, and incorporate a suitable degree of challenge. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and succeed. However, marking, although invariably encouraging and positive, is not always focused sufficiently on giving pupils advice on how to improve. A good start has been made on tracking pupils' progress. Pupils are assessed regularly and the outcomes are used effectively to inform planning and target-setting. The school is rightly seeking a system to present data more clearly, so that it will be easier for staff to see how pupils are making progress from one class to the next.

Behaviour in lessons and in the playground is excellent. Pupils enjoy school, are well motivated to learn and parents confirm this. The words of one parent sum up their views well: 'My child loves coming to school each day; this is very much due to the friendly environment.' The premises and grounds are well kept and pupils respect their surroundings. Children settle in quickly and there are good arrangements with neighbouring junior schools to ensure a smooth transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The lower than average attendance figures reflect the poor attendance of a few pupils, despite the school's best efforts to promote high attendance.

Pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and talk confidently about the benefits of taking part in physical exercise and healthy eating. They all have excellent opportunities to

learn to swim during the school day because there is an indoor pool on site. The emphasis on healthy living in lessons is extended effectively to after-school clubs where pupils have good opportunities to take part in sporting and cultural activities. These clubs are oversubscribed and pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to raise money for charity and because their basic skills are good, they are prepared well for their future economic well-being. Community cohesion is promoted effectively within school and the locality. The school provides good opportunities for parents to be involved in supporting their children's learning, including inviting them to spend the first fifteen minutes of every day with their children in class. Links with the local community are also developing well, especially with the establishment of a new community room and the appointment of a parent support adviser for schools in the area. An area for development lies in developing global and international links.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and governors. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation is accurate. The priorities identified in the school development plan are appropriate and arise directly from the outcomes of self-evaluation. This is a small school where all staff have subject leader responsibilities and know the pupils well. However, there is scope for developing the subject leader role further so that subject leaders play a greater role in monitoring teaching and learning through observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work.

Nelson Infant School is an inclusive school where staff work well together as a team. Pupils make good progress and benefit from being taught in a calm and well-ordered learning environment. With clear leadership and good teaching, the school demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the reception classes from low starting points. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the majority reach age-related expectations in most areas of learning. The exception is in communication and language where some children find it more difficult to express themselves. The school is taking steps to address this through a whole school approach to social development and extending pupils' vocabulary. This is a good initiative.

Children enjoy school and behave well. Children from different cultures play well together. Classrooms are bright and welcoming with suitable role play areas. However, not enough use is made of the excellent covered outdoor area for outdoor learning and outdoor play. Teachers plan indoor tasks, which are well matched to the children's stages of development. The adult/child ratio is very good. Children make such good progress because they are taught in small groups by trained staff who understand their needs. They are well cared for.

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Comprehensive records of children's progress are maintained. The reception class teachers work well as a team and their planning reflects a secure knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals

What the school should do to improve further

- Narrow the gap between the performance of higher attaining boys in reading and writing and the performance of higher attaining girls.
- Plan more outdoor learning activities in the EYFS.
- Develop the subject leader role further to include more opportunities to monitor teaching and learning.
- Continue to promote higher attendance.

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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	4
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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**

1 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nelson Infant School, Norwich, NR2 4DR

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school when I visited on the 30 September. I enjoyed meeting you all and meeting the school council at lunchtime.

Your school is a good school. Your teachers plan lessons which are interesting and because the classes are small, you get lots of individual attention. A particular 'Well done!' to those of you who start school not speaking much English but who rapidly learn, and to those of you who find aspects of learning difficult, because you try hard and make good progress.

I saw several mathematics lessons on shape and it was good to see you learning the names of different shapes and understanding their properties. I also discussed your progress with Mrs Shildrake. We agreed that most of you are making good progress in all subjects but we thought that some boys could do a little better in reading and writing. We talked about how all teachers, with responsibilities for different subjects, could spend time looking at your work and observing how well you learn in class.

The staff care for you well and you care for each other. Your behaviour in lessons and in the playground is excellent. Keep it up! You obviously enjoy school and your parents say that this is true. Your school grounds are so spacious and well kept. Those of you in the reception class have a lovely covered area and so I have suggested to your teachers that they use it more for outdoor learning, even when the weather is not so good.

Mrs Shildrake, Ms Sutcliff and the governors lead the school well. They have lots of ideas for the future. All the staff want you to enjoy school and succeed and, like them, I want to encourage all of you to attend regularly. Most of you live near to the school and it is good that the school now has a community room so that your parents and others can meet there.

I hope the rest of the term goes well.

With best wishes,

Tricia Pritchard

Her Majesty's Inspector