

Bentinck Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122407
Local Authority	City of Nottingham
Inspection number	327720
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Pat Walsh 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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	262
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	Mr Zaib Hussain
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Nunez
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Alfreton Road Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG7 4AA

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, which is slightly larger than average, is situated in a socially and economically disadvantaged area of the city. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very high, as is that of pupils whose first language is not English. Other than English, Punjabi is the main home language. The number of children from the families of refugees or asylum seekers has increased recently. A well above average number of pupils either join or leave school other than at the usual time. Of the 28 admissions to the school from abroad in 2008, 27 children had little or no English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high and about half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has a Nursery and Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The attainment of children entering the Nursery is very low and, in general, attainment on entry to school is well below average. The school has extended provision including after-school and holiday provision off site and a breakfast club managed by the governors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. It provides a calm and safe environment that is appreciated by pupils and parents. Positive relationships between the staff and pupils are a strong feature of the school and this supports the pupils' learning well. Pupils' views are valued and respected by staff. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Even though many families take extended holidays, pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their average attendance. Their personal development is good. They show a good awareness of issues related to healthy lifestyles and enjoy their involvement in sports activities. They feel safe in school and report there is little bullying. There are high levels of care and support. The many vulnerable pupils, including the significant number who are new to the school and speak little or no English, have their needs identified quickly. There are many effective support programmes in place to enable them to gain confidence both in their personal and academic development.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and all groups make satisfactory progress from their very low starting points. Progress varies between classes because, although some lessons are good and occasionally outstanding, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In some lessons pupils' capabilities are not always assessed accurately and, as a result, the work is insufficiently challenging. The school has identified writing as a weakness and is beginning to successfully tackle pupils' underachievement in this subject. However, standards in English, mathematics and science, although beginning to rise, remain stubbornly low. Furthermore, the satisfactory curriculum does not yet provide sufficient interest to engage all pupils in their learning.

The headteacher has successfully led the school through unsettled times, characterised by changes to staffing and the establishment of a new and effective senior leadership team. Her clear direction and commitment to improving the life chances of the pupils are shared by the whole team and are beginning to show in the improvements seen. The school's good capacity for further improvement is demonstrated by the early success of the measures recently introduced that have resulted in the improved achievement of pupils in all year groups. The school knows what needs to be done to improve pupils' learning and the strategic planning is effective. However, some of the systems, such as whole-school tracking and target setting, have not been in place long enough to improve pupils' achievement consistently. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress from their very low starting points throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is satisfactory in the Nursery and good in the Reception class. There is a strong focus on developing the children's social, communication and language skills. The recent emphasis on linking sounds and letters has boosted children's skills in literacy. Good leadership ensures there is a common sense of purpose amongst the cohesive team. Their planning is well informed by accurate observation and assessments and effective self-evaluation. The staff have a clear understanding of how young children learn and this expertise is used to provide activities that are generally well matched to the wide range of children's needs. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating and the outside learning area provides a satisfactory range of activities. Children's personal development and welfare are good, which enables them to be active learners and to play with children from different cultures in harmony.

The school has good links with parents, and staff emphasise the importance of the children attending the Nursery regularly. Parents are secure in the knowledge that their children's welfare is given a high priority and is of good quality.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science by:
- improving assessment in lessons to ensure that all pupils have challenging work
- developing a curriculum that meets the needs and engages the interest of all pupils.

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

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their knowledge and skill levels are very low compared with those expected for their age. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are low overall. Given the very low starting points of many pupils, this represents satisfactory progress. Standards are highest in mathematics and science. A robust system for tracking pupils' progress in all classes has already improved achievement but there is still some work to do. The school's most recent assessment data indicates that pupils are making accelerated progress in all year groups because the more stable staffing has led to consistently high expectations. The support for pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective and as a result, these pupils make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they like coming to school because they feel safe and they enjoy being with their friends. One pupil commented, 'Children are really friendly and if anything happened we would protect them.' Pupils are polite and have positive attitudes to their learning. A striking feature is the harmonious relationships among pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils behave well in lessons; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. The school council provides pupils with good opportunities to represent the views of others and helps the school make decisions, for example, planning improvements to the building. Pupils also contribute to the wider community through raising funds for the local and national charities they have chosen. Older pupils are keen to carry out duties and are helpful towards the younger pupils during break times. Pupils' growing confidence and their improving literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some lessons that are good and occasionally outstanding. The school is determined to overcome inconsistencies in teaching and ensure that pupils make good progress in all lessons. In the less effective, although satisfactory, lessons,

teachers do not always gauge how well pupils have understood their work and there is some variability in the way teachers use assessment to plan work for different abilities to promote learning. In lessons, the good relationships and well managed behaviour result in a calm and positive learning environment. Interactive whiteboards are used well to support and enliven learning. The marking of pupils' work is regular and most provides helpful comments so that pupils know what to do to improve. Teaching assistants and support staff contribute effectively to pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils from minority ethnic groups who are at the early stages of English language acquisition.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a satisfactory balance between subjects. Its focus on literacy and numeracy skills reflects the school's priorities. Recently introduced French lessons are popular and enjoyed by the pupils. However, there are too few opportunities for teachers to plan tasks and activities that appeal to the wide range of needs and interests of the pupils. The staff are keen to introduce more themed planning to develop pupils' learning across the subjects. ICT is used effectively to support learning across the curriculum. The recent focus on improving pupils' personal, social and health education has resulted in improved behaviour. The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' experiences and extend their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The caring ethos provides a strong foundation for the school's work and gives rise to good relationships between pupils and staff, and amongst the pupils. Arrangements to safeguard and protect pupils meet government requirements. Individual counselling makes an important contribution to the pupils' well-being. Induction arrangements are successful in settling pupils happily into school, including those who are admitted from abroad. With the help of staff and outside agencies, who liaise between school and families, the school has been resolute in introducing different strategies to raise attendance. This includes certificates and awards for good attendance. Staff know the pupils well and the satisfactory academic guidance is much improved through the effective tracking system and pupil target setting. Assessment procedures provide the school with detailed information on each pupil's stage of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's good leadership skills, ably supported by the recently formed leadership team, are leading to improving achievement and to pupils' good personal development. Leaders have established a shared sense of purpose and direction for the school and all staff understand the part they need to play. Accurate evaluation of the school's weaknesses by the headteacher and the leadership team, and the action they have taken have led to a gradual upward trend. Almost all the subject leaders are new to their post since September 2008. They have clear plans for improvement and are beginning to monitor systematically in their subject areas. The systematic checks made to improve teaching and learning and the rigorous use of data to monitor pupils' progress are having a positive effect on their achievement. The chair of governors has worked successfully to ensure that all governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and

weaknesses and provide satisfactory support and challenge. The school is responsive to the needs of the extremely diverse local community and has forged good links with the many minority ethnic groups. This has aided satisfactory community cohesion. There is a recognition that the school now needs to build on its links with schools abroad in order to strengthen pupils' global awareness.

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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 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?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Bentinck Primary and Nursery School, Nottingham, NG7 4AA

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school, thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you. Importantly, yours is a satisfactory school, where staff are really working hard to make it better. We were pleased to hear that you like your school. Almost all of your parents are happy with the school too. You behave well and get on with each other. Here are some important things we found out.

- You make satisfactory progress.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and you feel safe and secure in school.
- Your headteacher, the teachers and the support assistants are continuing to make improvements and these are helping you to make faster progress.
- All staff take good care of you and are good at welcoming pupils from many countries.

This is what we have asked your school to do to make things even better and help you to make better progress and improve your work in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science:

- make sure that teachers check what you can do and give you challenging work in lessons so that you always make at least good progress
- plan exciting and interesting work in all subjects.

You can help by continuing to work hard in lessons and always doing your best. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Walsh

Her Majesty's Inspector