

Trent Vale Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122541
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327753
Inspection date	10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	140
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 Barrie Oxley
Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Moss
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	Trent Road Beeston Rylands Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG9 1LP
Telephone number	01159179224
Fax number	01159179264

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	10 December 2008
Inspection number	327753

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: children's achievement and standards, with a focus on boys' achievement, the curriculum, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from observing work in classrooms, scrutinising school documentation and pupils' work, and discussions with governors, staff at the school and pupils. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school. A below average proportion of the pupils is entitled to free school meals. Most children are from White British backgrounds. The number from minority ethnic backgrounds is close to the national average, but slightly fewer than average speak English as their second language. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is in three classes, one part-time Nursery class, one Reception class and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. However, not all the children start in the Nursery. Small numbers join in Reception, and more join throughout Key Stage 1. The attainment of children when they start school varies widely, but is often below that expected in the crucial aspects of language development and mathematical development.

There is onsite childcare provision in the form of an out of school club that 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

This is a good school, a fact that is wholeheartedly endorsed by the parents. One wrote, 'All staff are particularly positive and helpful. The children develop a strong bond with their teachers, and there is good evidence of the vision of the headteacher.' The result of this effective approach is that children enjoy learning, work hard and behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They have good attitudes towards learning because of the staff's very good relationships with them. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Children's achievement overall is good because good teaching enables most children to make good progress.

The staff have developed a very comprehensive and thorough system to track the progress of the children and they use this effectively to plan each step in their development. However, staff are concerned by the significant gap in the attainment of boys compared to that of the girls. The girls tend to do very well, but some of the boys are underachieving in comparison to them. This was especially marked in last year's end of Key Stage 1 national assessments. The tracking system shows that the boys often start with lower levels of attainment and do not always make as much progress as the girls. Staff have begun to address this issue in a number of ways. It is too early to say that they have solved the problem, but the progress of boys currently in the school is beginning to look more promising. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress relative to their starting points. This is because of the very effective partnerships between the teachers and the teaching assistants who are very skilful at addressing their particular needs. The small, but increasing numbers of children who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. The staff quickly and wisely sought external advice and help when the numbers started to increase. Their hard work, enthusiasm and commitment to doing their best for every child is already paying dividends with these children.

One way in which the staff are addressing the boys' underachievement is by re-evaluating their approach to teaching. Parents are very positive about the change, one commenting that, 'staff use a number of interesting ways of teaching'. Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed the effectiveness of this re-thinking of teaching. In the best lessons, there is a brisk pace to the children's learning and the thoughtful targeting of work to the needs of groups and individuals. Staff have also begun to re-evaluate their approach to the curriculum. There is still a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and they have retained a good breadth and balance to the curriculum. However, they are now combining other subjects in to themes and topics in ways which the children say they really enjoy because learning is more exciting. Staff have also introduced more visits and hands on experience for the children, recognising that this is something the boys are really keen on. Information and communication technology (ICT), an underdeveloped area at the time of the last inspection has clearly improved. Teachers are now much more confident in the subject and make good use of the interactive whiteboards in their teaching. Children's skills in this subject have also measurably improved, and are now good. Nevertheless, the potential to make even more use of ICT as a link between subject areas is not fully exploited as a further means of engaging all learners' interests.

The pastoral care of the children is very good. They say that they feel safe and well looked after in school. All statutory requirements to ensure the safeguarding of the children are fully met. The school has a calm purposeful feel to it and the children clearly feel their views are valued. They readily point out their involvement in making choices about the playground

materials and equipment, and talk enthusiastically about the money raising events they have engaged in both for the school and for a range of charities. The school has good systems for checking how well children are doing, and both children and parents report that they know their targets. The children also say that teachers tell them what is good about their work and what they need to do to make it better. The children's work is conscientiously marked with lots of positive comments, but teachers acknowledge that this aspect of assessing children's progress is an area for continued development.

The staff's strong focus on making learning enjoyable and on developing the whole child has led to children's good personal development. Their social and moral development are particularly good so that they get on very well with each other at work and at play and there is very little behaviour that the children consider to be bullying. Children say they sometimes fall out, but that if they have worries they can ask an adult for help in resolving the problem. They say that the vast majority of children behave well all the time. Their spiritual and cultural development is also good. Children have good opportunities to take on responsibilities through membership of the school council and the ECO committee, the latter being something they are especially keen to do. They are well prepared for the next stage of their schooling by gaining good skills in English and mathematics and developing very good social and interpersonal skills. Children say they thoroughly enjoy school and this is confirmed by their good level of attendance. They not only understand about living healthy lives, but try hard to put this in to practice by for instance, eating healthy snacks of fruit and vegetables.

Leadership and management are now good. The headteacher has worked successfully to establish a warm and caring ethos in the school where everyone feels welcomed and valued and children enjoy learning. She and the governors show a strong commitment and determination to continuous school improvement. The governors have recently reorganised their system for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This looks to have much potential. It includes good guidance for all governors, incorporates better feedback to staff and has a clear focus on ensuring that every child is seen to matter in this school. This is a school where everyone's views count. One parent wrote, 'The headteacher goes the extra mile to make sure that all parents feel involved, supported and satisfied with their child's experience of school.' Another commented that, 'the extra-curricular activities are brilliant'; these were improved because parents felt that their children had too narrow a range of opportunities. The high quality of the partnerships across many areas of the local and wider community typifies the staff's commitment to be as inclusive as possible. This positive approach, along with the commitment to development means that the school is well placed to continue to succeed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS enjoy an appropriate range of activities matched to their ages and abilities. They have a good balance between activities they choose themselves and those to which adults direct them. The school provides a good range of appropriate resources to encourage children to investigate and explore independently with adult support both indoors and out. Much time and effort has been put into extending and improving the outdoor environment. There is now good outdoor provision for the Nursery children, and satisfactory provision for the Reception children, but this is currently being improved. The strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development means that they settle quickly into the routines in the EYFS. Children make good progress in their learning throughout the EYFS so that they enter Year 1 with the skills and knowledge which are at least that expected of their age, and in some respects

above, especially their personal, social and emotional development. The school has good systems for checking and recording what children know and can do. These are used effectively by all staff to offer appropriate choices for the children. The knowledgeable EYFS leader is strongly committed to the continued development of this area and is passionate about extending and improving the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop and build on the changes to teaching and the curriculum to engage the boys more effectively in their learning.
- Ensure the greater use of ICT across all subjects of the curriculum.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

11 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Trent Vale Infant School, Nottingham, NG9 1LP

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited you. I would like to explain what we found out when we spent time in your lessons and talked with you and your teachers.

We really enjoyed our time in your school. We were very impressed with how well you behave. We could see how the staff know you all very well and help you to make good progress in your learning. We were especially delighted to hear how much you enjoy coming to school.

We think that you go to a good school. It is clearly working well and many of your parents wrote to us to tell us this too. It was very clear to us they are very enthusiastic about the way the staff care for you and help you to learn. A number of things really pleased us. One was the way in which your teachers are thinking hard about the ways they work with you and changing the way they teach to exactly match your needs. Another is the way all the adults in your school get on so well with you, we could see why you like them and trust them.

Whilst we could see that your teachers and teaching assistants work really hard to help you to learn and that they have some great ideas to support you we would still like them to do more to help the boys to make better progress. They are doing a good job of making your learning more interesting, but we also want them to think about how they can make even more use of ICT in all the subjects to make it more interesting still.

Thank you once again for your warm welcome, and all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Roger Brown

Lead inspector