

# Avenue Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131002
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	328545
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Chris Kessell

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.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	471
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cathy Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephanie Tate
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 November 2007
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Avenue Road Extension Leicester LE2 3EJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2708326
<b>Fax number</b>	0116 2708326

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	328545

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Avenue is larger than most other primary schools. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. There is a diverse range of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. A very small minority of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery offering part-time provision and two Reception classes. A privately operated breakfast club is available for pupils. When the school was last inspected in November 2007, it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, use of assessment information and monitoring the work and performance of the school. The school was given a Notice to Improve.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Avenue is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. A number of parents commented positively on how the school had improved recently and pupils identified that behaviour, for example, was much better now than last year. 'A happy environment and pleasant atmosphere for our children,' is a typical comment from parents, who are generally supportive of the school.

Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory because the quality of teaching has steadily improved and better attention is being paid through rigorous tracking to the progress that pupils make especially in their reading, writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, they reach average standards. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and the proportion of good teaching is steadily improving. However, there is still not enough good teaching to ensure that all pupils make good progress. When teaching is less effective, insufficient attention is paid to the needs of all abilities and teachers' expectations of their pupils are not high enough. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make sound progress. The number of pupils at the early stages of learning English is increasing. At times, these pupils do not always make the same progress as their classmates. The school's current systems are not robust enough to deal with this new challenge.

Parents and pupils agree that the school is safe and provides a caring environment. Pupils feel well supported and confident that they can go to an adult if they have a problem. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are really good at that.' Pupils are given targets for learning, particularly in English and mathematics, but the process is far better organised and more effective in Key Stage 1. Older pupils are not always clear about their targets or the benefits these bring to their learning. Teachers' marking is improving but it does not always provide sufficient information for pupils on how to improve their work.

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. Planning for lessons has improved, although there are a few teachers who still do not plan specifically for the needs of the pupils they are teaching. This can affect the progress made by individuals, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and higher attainers. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to take exercise and learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Although pupils talk confidently about the importance, for example, of a healthy diet, this good knowledge is not always reflected in their lunch choices or snacks. Pupils are friendly and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They clearly enjoy school and pupils from different backgrounds get on extremely well with each other. The pupils' personal development and well-being are now good, which is an improvement on when the school was last inspected.

The improvement that the school has made since it was last inspected is the result of the effective leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by the senior leadership team. Their successful drive to improve the monitoring of pupils' performance using the school's tracking information has contributed well to improvements in pupils' achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall as these skills are still being developed amongst other staff throughout the school. A significant proportion of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire considered that the school does not seek their views or take account of their suggestions and concerns sufficiently. This issue is being addressed appropriately by staff and

governors, who have started work towards seeking a nationally recognised award that develops partnerships with parents.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children start school with a wide range of knowledge and skills but, overall, they are broadly at the levels expected for their age. Parents are pleased with how quickly and happily their children settle into the Nursery and Reception classes. 'They encourage children to socialise,' commented one parent. This is reflected in the good progress children make in their personal development. By the time they reach Year 1, children reach average standards having made satisfactory progress overall. The children feel secure and develop positive relationships with each other and with the adults who look after them. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is managed satisfactorily. Recent improvements have been made in planning. In addition, assessment information is used more effectively to track children's progress and ensure that they are challenged or offered additional support. Staff have recognised that there are some variations in the rates of children's progress. For example, boys are not doing as well as the girls in developing their communication, language and literacy skills. Appropriate strategies have been put in place to address this issue, although it is too early to judge their impact. Children are offered a reasonable balance of imaginative activities that are either directed by staff or allow children to work independently, both inside and out. However, although there have been recent improvements in outdoor provision, this remains an area of development.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- In all classes, ensure that the work matches pupils' needs more closely and raise teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- Provide more effective individual learning targets for pupils in Key Stage 2 and ensure they are given good guidance on how to reach them.
- Strengthen provision for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English, so that they make at least the same progress as their classmates.

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**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The underachievement identified at the last inspection has been eradicated, although there is still some way to go before all pupils make good progress. When teaching is strong, as for example in Year 6, pupils learn at a much better rate. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 as they are for reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. There is still some 'catching up' for pupils to complete as a result of their slower progress previously, particularly in the older classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make satisfactory progress in relation to their lower starting points. However, their progress becomes more uneven in a few classes where insufficient attention is paid to their needs. Not all pupils at the early stages of learning English are making enough progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' moral and social development is good. It is reflected in their good behaviour, concern for others and the way in which they work well together in groups and pairs. Pupils in Year 4, for example, undertook some very successful paired work as they shared their planning for fantasy stories. Pupils show respect for different religious traditions and beliefs. They talk positively about the cultural diversity of Leicester but at a very superficial level. Pupils recognise that the school is a safe place to be and have a good understanding of how to adopt safe practices through activities such as visiting the 'Warning Zone'. By the time pupils leave to go to secondary school, they display good personal and social skills but their academic skills are not as strong. They are prepared satisfactorily for the next stages of their education and the world of work. Levels of attendance are average. The school has been successful in reducing persistent absence. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community through school council decision making and to the wider community through activities such as supporting charitable events.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn, although too much time can be spent on this at the beginning of lessons. Pupils behave well and listen attentively in lessons. There is a wide range of abilities in all classes and, in a small minority of lessons, this is not taken into account sufficiently in teachers' planning and organisation. Consequently, insufficient attention is paid to what individual pupils already know and can do. This adversely affects progress for all groups of learners. In the best lessons, planning is good and teachers have high expectations of all abilities so that they make good progress. Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils when they are directed well by class teachers. However, there are occasions when they are too passive in lessons, particularly during introductions to activities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils speak enthusiastically about the good range of extra clubs and activities provided by the school. These are well attended. The school is developing a creative curriculum with stronger links between subjects so that pupils find learning more relevant and become more engaged. Although at an early stage in these developments, pupils' attitudes and behaviour have already improved. Art and music are strong features of the school's curriculum. Colourful displays of pupils' art work liven up corridors and classrooms and the school choir performed well during the inspection. Weaknesses in curriculum planning remain as a few staff are too reliant on commercially generated material that does not reflect the specific needs and experience of individuals or groups of pupils. The provision for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English is not organised well enough to ensure that they are given work and support appropriate to their needs.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral care so that pupils feel secure and happy in their relationships with staff. Procedures for safeguarding fulfil requirements. The vast majority of pupils now have their progress tracked effectively. As a result, the school is able to ensure that pupils do not underachieve. Actions taken to support those who fall behind, for example with booster classes or small group work, enable them to get back on course. Setting targets for improvement works well at Key Stage 1, but this has still not been developed rigorously enough with the older pupils to have an impact on their learning. Teachers mark work regularly but the quality of the comments and advice in pupils' books varies in quality. Comments are supportive and good attention is paid to whether pupils achieve the learning intentions of the work undertaken. However, guidance on how to improve work or how to move to the next stages of learning is not always provided.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

There are emerging strengths within the senior leadership team. They are developing common goals for improvement and starting to ensure that there is greater consistency in practice across the school. There is still a way to go, but they are driven in their approach and prepared to make difficult decisions that ensure improvement for the pupils. Leadership and management are not strong at all levels and the school is still receiving external support to develop further the skills and understanding of some staff. Staff have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school has improved since it was last inspected and addressed satisfactorily the key areas for improvement. This indicates that the school has the capacity to improve further. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and are in a better position than previously to monitor the work and performance of the school. They have closer links with subject coordinators and staff who have responsibilities for other aspects of the school. However, governors do not evaluate rigorously the impact of initiatives, and policies and procedures to promote community cohesion are at an early stage of development.

**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](http://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?	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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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**

5 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Avenue Primary School, Leicester LE2 3EJ

Recently, I visited your school for two days with two other inspectors. It was very cold and many of you were excited about the snow that had arrived. We met many of you and watched you learning in your lessons. Thank you for being so welcoming, friendly and well behaved. You go to a satisfactory school which means that there are things that are good and areas that need to improve.

By the time you leave in Year 6, most of you reach standards similar to those found in most other schools. You make satisfactory progress. There are classes where you make good progress but this is not yet consistent across the whole of the school. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to look at this and improve those lessons where some of you find your work too easy and others find it too hard. It was good to talk with the Key Stage 1 pupils about the targets inside their literacy and numeracy books. These targets make it very easy to see how well you are doing. For those of you in Key Stage 2, target setting is not so good. This is something else that we have asked staff to improve, along with teachers' marking so you are better informed about what is needed to reach your targets.

Many of you told us that you feel safe and well cared for at school. We agree with you. You also know how to stay safe and are sensible in class and when you walk around the school. Many of you know how to be healthy and enjoy the clubs that provide you with good levels of exercise. You know the importance of eating healthily as well, although not all of you follow this understanding when choosing snacks and lunches. There are children from many different backgrounds at the school and you all get on well together. Those pupils who are still learning English do not always get the support they need so this is another area that we have asked the school to improve.

The staff and governors are working hard to improve the school even further. You can help by continuing to behave well, coming to school regularly and remaining enthusiastic about your learning.

Best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell

Additional Inspector