

Yorkmead Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103284
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	334164
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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)	474
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	Barbara Marsh
Headteacher	Helen Dunnico
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	York Road Birmingham B28 8BB
Telephone number	0121 4644215
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors. When the school was inspected in January 2008 it was judged to require special measures because it failed to give pupils an acceptable standard of education. Since January 2008, HMI and local authority inspectors have separately visited the school each term to judge the progress made in addressing the areas for improvement.

Description of the school

This is a large school. Children attend the nursery part-time. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. Two thirds of pupils are of Asian origin, mainly from Pakistani backgrounds. The rest are White British or of Black or mixed heritage. The number claiming free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including a statement of special educational needs, is slightly below average. Following the previous inspection the headteacher resigned and the deputy headteacher was appointed acting headteacher. In May 2009 the acting headteacher became the substantive headteacher. The former vice chair of governors was elected chair of governors in September 2008. Two National Leaders in Education have been supporting the school 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 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The quality of education is satisfactory and improving. The school has a sound capacity to improve further. More effective teaching, an improved curriculum and better leadership has brought about rising standards and an acceleration in pupils' progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is doing a good job. She has a steely determination to improve provision and effectively address the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. She is ably supported by the assistant headteachers, the chair of governors and the very effective National Leaders in Education who have made good use of advanced skills teachers from their own schools to improve provision. Sound self-evaluation has resulted in senior leaders having a secure understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Oversight of the quality of education provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is not yet robust enough.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and most pupils have made at least satisfactory progress this academic year. Inadequate teaching has been successfully eliminated. The proportion of good teaching is much higher than a year ago. While teaching is improving it remains inconsistent. Consequently, pupils' progress is uneven within subjects and across years. Lesson planning is much improved and teachers are aware that they must plan work for differing abilities. However, they do not always match work carefully enough to some group and individual needs. Teachers do encourage pupils to communicate in class but they do not do enough modelling of language to improve pupils' vocabulary and grammatical skills. Marking is improving but it is too variable. Messy presentation is too readily accepted and what must be improved is not always made explicit.

Pupils' current attainment in Year 6 is average in reading but significantly below average in mathematics and writing. Standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Attainment in both years is higher than in 2008. Data for 2009 shows that there is a rise in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in both years. This said, too few pupils reach the expected and higher National Curriculum levels in core subjects. Leaders recognise that there is much catching up to do because past inadequacies in provision have resulted in pupils not reaching the standards of which they are capable. Pupils' speaking, writing and numeracy skills are insufficiently developed and this is hindering their ability to communicate and calculate effectively and succeed in national assessments.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills, a necessary feature in ensuring that standards rise quickly. Whilst outdoor provision for the youngest children has improved recently it is not as good as it should be. Some child-initiated activities lack challenge and the planning and resourcing of learning outdoors are not sharp enough. Nursery accommodation is not good enough. It hinders learning and limits opportunities for children to work independently.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have positive attitudes to learning, and behave well. Most attend regularly but there are a minority who are persistently absent and too many do not arrive on time. This is a caring school where pupils feel valued and safe. Pastoral support is good and academic guidance is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory. On entry, children's basic skills are below those expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress given their starting points. On entering Year 1 they are working within the expected levels in their physical, creative and personal development. However, many are working below the expected level in calculation and aspects of communication. Children settle quickly because induction procedures are good. Children are happy and enjoy school. The structured teaching of letters and sounds is satisfactory and is helping to improve children's reading and writing skills. However, children's speaking skills are limited and there is not enough modelling of language in English or their home language. Learning activities sometimes lack challenge and are too often over directed by adults, thereby restricting opportunities for children to find things out for themselves. Nursery teaching assistants are not always effectively deployed and their work is not always well focused. Outdoor provision is not as stimulating as it should be. Nursery accommodation is cramped and the layout of rooms makes it difficult for the Nursery teacher to oversee the quality of teaching and its impact. This phase is satisfactorily led and managed. The assessment of children's learning is sound and judgements made about attainment are secure. However, top management does not yet have a good enough overview of provision and its impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and science and increase the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher National Curriculum levels in both subjects.
- Improve pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills, particularly their spelling, punctuation and handwriting, and ensure staff effectively model language structures to improve pupils' vocabulary and grammar skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and all pupils are appropriately challenged and ensure marking is regular and identifies what must be improved.
- Improve Nursery accommodation and the quality of teaching and learning indoors and outside in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and ensure there is better oversight of the education provided in this phase.

A small proportion of 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. Better teaching, an improved curriculum and more effective subject leadership have helped accelerate pupils' progress since September 2008. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement remains inconsistent. For example, in mathematics nearly all Year 3 pupils have made good progress since September 2008. However, in Year 5 over a third have made good progress, and a significant minority have made slow progress in the subject over the same period. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been low for the past three years. In 2008, Year 6 standards fell sharply to become extremely low. Standards have risen in both years and in other years too. The oldest pupils' attainment is average in reading but significantly below average in mathematics and writing. Year 2 standards are average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing. Overall, too few pupils reach the expected and higher National Curriculum

levels in core subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are now making the expected progress. An increasing proportion is making good progress. Beginners in English are making good progress in writing and mathematics. The whole school targets set for 2009 are realistic and appropriately challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite, friendly and are considerate to adults, each other and school property. Pupils from different backgrounds mix well together and are very tolerant of each others' differences. They have a good awareness of religious and cultural diversity. Pupils are adopting a healthy lifestyle with increasing numbers choosing healthy food at lunchtime and many attend sporting clubs after school to keep fit. Pupils' views are heard and acted upon. For example, their suggestions have improved the school menu and pupils have participated in decisions about which charities will benefit from their fund raising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. However, pupils' progress is inconsistent because teaching quality varies between years and within subjects. Some teachers deliver consistently good lessons and consequently pupils make good gains in their learning. However, some teachers are able to teach some subjects well and others adequately. Leaders understand that further professional development is required to improve individual teachers' subject knowledge in specific areas to raise standards further. Better use is now made of assessment information to plan work for differing abilities. However, work is not always properly matched to pupils' differing capabilities. Insufficient support is being provided to develop pupils' speaking, spelling and handwriting skills.

Where teaching is good it is because expectations are high and work is demanding for all ability groups. A range of interesting and varied activities are planned and there is plenty of opportunity for pupils to find things out for themselves. Where teaching is satisfactory it is mainly because the pitch of work is not quite right for individuals or groups. On occasions, teachers talk too much and pupils are not effectively engaged in their learning. At times the work of teaching assistants is not well focused and their time is not used wisely.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum planning has improved to ensure better progression in learning as pupils move through the school. Schemes of work are based on national programmes of study and provide teachers with a suitable structure from which to plan lessons. Better approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and calculation are being adopted with positive results. For example, the introduction of guided reading has improved pupils' reading and comprehension skills. There are now more opportunities for investigative work in science and the school's investment in new computers is paying dividends. It is common to see teachers using interactive technology to introduce topics and motivate pupils to learn. The new laptops and information and communication technology (ICT) suite are well used and provision is improving pupils' ICT skills.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and a growing range of after school clubs which pupils enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The child protection policy is satisfactory and all staff have been appropriately trained to fulfil their child protection duties. Staff vetting and recruitment procedures are robust. The school has worked closely with its education welfare officer to target parents whose children are persistently absent. The 'Spotlight' initiative has been a success with the rate of persistent absence falling during the summer term 2009. Effective strategies are in place to promote pupils' personal, social and emotional development. However, not enough is being done to improve pupils' oral skills and presentation of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A satisfactory action plan was produced following the previous inspection. Actions taken are well focused and the right priorities have been addressed. Good use has been made of external expertise, particularly advanced skills teachers, to improve provision and accelerate pupils' progress. Robust systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning, including the coaching and training for all teachers, is improving the quality of their work at a good rate. The reorganisation of the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders has been effective. For example, assistant headteachers are now teaching alongside staff with good results. Clearer lines of responsibility have been established which has improved communication and raised staff morale. There has been a concerted effort by English and mathematics leaders to remedy weaknesses in provision. For example, they are introducing better ways to teach letters and sounds and grouping pupils by ability in mathematics to ensure work is better matched to pupils' needs.

Good work has been done to ensure teachers have a secure understanding of the standards achieved in order that a secure baseline is established from which to judge pupils' progress. The school is tracking pupils' attainment and progress and using information to inform intervention. A range of effective strategies have been employed to remedy weaknesses in teaching with good results. Individual teachers who previously taught some unsatisfactory lessons no longer do so as a result of the effective support that they have received.

The role of governors in holding the school to account is much improved. For example, at governors meetings they have suitably monitored progress towards the targets set in the school action plan. Apart from the chair of governors, few visit the school to find things out for themselves or to evaluate the school's work first hand. This means they are overly reliant on the headteacher and others to provide information about the school's work.

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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	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?	3
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 ¹ 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

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?	3

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	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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Yorkmead Junior and Infant School, Birmingham B28 8BB

I am the inspector that has been visiting your school each term to find out how well your school is improving and how well you are performing. I have enjoyed coming and have always been made to feel very welcome. Thank you for being so friendly, open and honest when answering my questions. As you know, I visited the school recently and I am writing this letter to tell you what inspectors found out. Inspectors judge that your school is satisfactory and improving.

- Inspectors like these things about your school
- You enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. However, some of you could attend more regularly and arrive on time.
- You are making at least satisfactory progress and standards are starting to rise.
- Teaching is satisfactory or better. There is much more good teaching than a year ago.
- The curriculum is much improved. You enjoy the wide range of visits and participating in the growing range of after school clubs.
- You are well cared for and say you feel safe and secure. Pupils from different backgrounds mix well together and there is a real sense of racial harmony.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors are setting a clear educational direction for the school.

- The school must do four things to improve further.
- Accelerate your progress in mathematics and science and increase the number of you that reach the expected and higher National Curriculum levels.
- Improve your speaking, reading and writing skills, particularly your spelling, punctuation and handwriting. I want your teachers to show you how to speak properly and for you to copy what they say. When you speak try and talk in sentences.
- Ensure you are always taught well and that work is always properly matched to your ability and when work is marked you are told what must be improved.
- Nursery accommodation must be improved along with the activities and resources provided for the youngest children.

I will not be visiting you again. I am sure the teachers will be relieved as I know my visits do create pressure for staff and also for you. Continue to work hard and give of your best and you will succeed in life.

Best wishes. Yours faithfully

David Rzeznik Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools