

Nightingale Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112725
Local Authority	Derby City
Inspection number	337999
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Wendy Stevenson
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Toombs
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons and eight teachers. They considered the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: teachers' planning; the school improvement plan; assessment, monitoring and evaluation information; records of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities; safeguarding procedures. They held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and parents. The responses from the 25 parents' and carers' questionnaires were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- children's current progress to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging for all groups
- how well reading, writing, mathematical and information and communication technology skills are promoted in all subjects and aspects of the school's work
- whether checks made by leaders and managers are improving teaching and learning and accelerating childrens' progress
- the effect of measures taken to improve attendance.

Information about the school

This average sized school of its type shares its site with the adjacent junior school. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage consisting of Nursery and Reception aged children. The Nursery children attend part-time. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is high and the percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The needs are mostly moderate learning and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, while a small number of children have physical disabilities. The percentage of children with minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average and includes travellers of Irish heritage. For many, English is not their first language. Between them, the children speak twenty different languages. The school runs a breakfast facility where parents and carers and their children can have breakfast together before school. The school has a Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school operates in very challenging circumstances and it successfully ensures that children are safe, well cared for, and given a sound start in their education. Children say they 'love the teachers' and younger children say they 'like learning outside most'. Improvements in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure good progress in that age group and, in 2009, children started Year 1 closer to the national average than in previous years. Attainment is starting to rise and progress is accelerating in Year 1 as teachers build on improved Reception outcomes. From the low starting points of most children, they make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 2, although attainment is still low in that year group. Children with minority ethnic backgrounds achieve in line with other learners. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Learners whose first language is not English make good progress in speaking it because of the effective support they receive.

Additional members of the management team and training for leaders and managers have led to the greater involvement of senior staff in managing aspects of the school's work. Better leadership has contributed effectively to the improvements seen in children's work in the past year, particularly in the last term. It has also led a review of the curriculum, which is now well planned, but not yet properly understood or fully implemented in all classes. Middle leaders and managers are less secure in their areas of responsibility. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, and the analysis of issues arising from the regular checks made on teaching and learning is perceptive. However, the areas for development are not broken down enough into specific, practical steps for improvement, for example, in the 'raising attainment plan'. Given the steady advance in its track record of progress and attainment, better direction by senior leaders, and children's positive attitudes to learning, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Behaviour is satisfactory and children have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Attendance is well below average because, despite the school's best efforts, a small but significant minority of parents and carers do not ensure their children come to school regularly or on time. Consequently, these children miss vital learning at the start of the day, which adversely affects their progress.

Teaching, while generally satisfactory, is less effective than it could be in meeting individual children's learning needs. Insufficient use is made of assessment information in planning lessons, and children, particularly the more able, are not always challenged by their work. Several children said their work was 'too easy', and there was 'too much cutting and sticking' - and they are right. Learners have too few opportunities to practise writing, form numbers or take their learning forward by themselves.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate children's progress and raise their attainment by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what children can do
 - making better use of assessment information in planning and in class, to give children, especially the more able, more demanding work to do
 - increasing opportunities for children to write in literacy lessons, to record their learning in mathematics, and to use their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
 - Introduce much greater rigour into the checks made on teaching and learning by:
 - following up all identified areas for improvement more robustly with practical steps to ensure they are being addressed effectively
 - ensuring all leaders and managers understand their roles in, and responsibility for, school improvement, and carry them out effectively.
 - Do everything possible to impress on the parents and carers concerned, the effect of erratic attendance and punctuality on their children's learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

A good proportion of children in Year 1 are working at levels closer to those expected for their age than last year, and there is evidence of individuals making good progress in this year group. While children's progress has improved in Year 2 recently and is satisfactory, their attainment remains low. They are getting better at talking about their work and listening to their teachers and each other. They readily seize the opportunities teachers give them to do this. They make slightly better progress in writing than in reading or mathematics, although by Year 2, letters and numbers are not always formed correctly, and spelling and punctuation are weak.

Children understand risks and how to avoid them. They say they feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree. Children know it is important to tell a member of staff if they have a problem, and they say they always get help. They take part in a wide range of physical activity and have responded well to the school's many health-promoting strategies, which led to its achieving a Healthy Schools Award. School councillors take their responsibilities seriously. They hold clear views about how the school might improve, but their contributions are limited because they lack the skills to be able to do more things by themselves. A proper balance has not yet been struck between teacher-input and opportunities for children's independent learning. Occasionally, staff do too much for the children and do not encourage them to take enough responsibility for their own learning and development. Children regularly raise money for a range of

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charities and make a sound contribution to the school and local community. Given their low starting points, children effectively develop personal skills, which, alongside their improving basic skills, ensure they leave the school adequately prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Staff manage children's behaviour well. They form good relationships, build up trust and support children well with good pastoral care. A climate is created in which children are ready to learn and to be challenged to do better, but the activities they are given in lessons do not consistently contain the right levels of challenge for different abilities, particularly the more able. Teaching ranged from good to inadequate during the inspection. In the best lessons, teachers probe children's thinking and adjust learning to match. In other lessons, the overuse of low-level activities, such as the mechanical completion of worksheets, cutting and sticking, colouring and adding captions, wastes valuable learning time and restricts opportunities for children to read, write or extend their mathematical skills. Recent improvements in assessment procedures enable teachers to have more accurate information about how well children are learning. These

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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improvements, together with regular progress meetings, have resulted in better, but not yet consistent, use of assessment information to improve learning. Marking supports children's learning satisfactorily although it does not always show them how to improve their work, and children are not all sure what their targets are.

The new 'key skills' approach to the curriculum stresses the importance of life-long learning, covers an exciting range of topics, and allows for teaching to make valuable cross-curricular links. Not all teachers fully understand how to apply the new approach to classroom practice. Opportunities are missed to promote basic skills in different subjects and to help more-able children make faster progress. Transition from Reception to Year 1 is smooth. Good links with the junior school ensure children move confidently from Year 2 to Year 3. Arrangements include a comprehensive transfer system for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with behavioural difficulties. A good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities takes place at lunchtimes and contributes successfully to children's overall learning and personal development.

Good inter-agency work ensures children's health, safety and welfare, and the school reaches out to parents and carers to help them support their children's learning. For example, it offers a daily breakfast facility and a weekly family meal for parents and carers to illustrate healthy eating, and it encourages them to become involved in reading bedtime stories through the 'story-sack' approach. The sacks include stories written in different languages to support parents and carers and children whose first language is not English. The quality of information given to parents and carers is good and the school supports them well. These initiatives are helpful, but do not yet ensure all pupils make good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's good use of external advice has led to a clear vision for improvement that is shared by staff and the governing body. Senior leaders and managers are embedding ambition in the staff through setting challenging targets, tracking children's learning, and making staff more accountable for children's progress. They are driving improvement with better monitoring and evaluation, but they are not always translating their findings into clear action points and following them up. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It works hard to break down stereotypes and tackle

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all forms of discrimination, enabling children to work and play in a supportive learning environment, free from harassment of any sort. The school's involvement in an 'intensive support programme' is helping identified children in the middle-ability range to make better progress, but insufficient attention is paid to the additional needs of the more-able. Good partnerships with parents and carers and external agencies benefit children's learning and well-being.

The school is vigilant in ensuring that safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are effective. Children who are vulnerable are quickly identified and effective strategies put in place to address their needs. However, the reviews of the strategies are not always as clear as they could about what stage individual cases have reached. The school has an excellent understanding of its own context and it reaches out to its local community. National and international links remain underdeveloped. The governing body has audited provision for community cohesion, and it has a policy and action plan to improve it, although these have yet to be fully implemented. The governing body supports the school well but it does not hold it to account sufficiently for its outcomes.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management have successfully improved provision. Staff have confident, up-to-date knowledge of the age group. They care for and teach the children well and regular meetings ensure consistency across the different classes. Consequently, children learn and develop well. They become increasingly confident and articulate, although they are still reluctant to speak to visitors and, where conversation does occur,

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it tends to be limited. A good range of exciting activities stimulate children's interest and curiosity, develop their social skills and their early reading, writing and number skills. Staff provide many opportunities for children to engage in conversation, cooperate with each other and become increasingly independent in their learning. As a result, children successfully learn to share, take turns and listen to each other and adults. There is a good balance of adult-directed activities and activities children can select for themselves. Children's learning is constantly assessed and tracked, although their 'learning journey' booklets are not used fully to encourage effective home-school communication. Links with parents and carers are good and the well-developed, secure learning environment allows children to have fun while they explore the world around them and develop their self-esteem. The large, well-equipped outdoor area is used effectively to reflect the indoor curriculum and extend children's learning. However, there is not enough difference between the outside activities for Nursery and Reception children to reflect the older children's more advanced skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly pleased with what the school does for their children. There were very few written comments, but a telling one that 'teachers are always advising me of where I can help my child next' was echoed by parents and carers spoken to as they brought their children into school. These parents and carers also praised the school for the pastoral care and guidance it provides for them and their children. A concern was raised about the frequency with which children were heard to read individually. Inspectors found children were heard to read at least once each week and that reading occurs in many different contexts so that children's skills and understanding are built up progressively. Progress in reading is satisfactory. In the questionnaire responses, a small number of parents felt the school did not deal well with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found this was not the case, and all staff managed children's behaviour well, including that of children with specific behavioural difficulties.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nightingale Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 242 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	72	6	24	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	68	6	24	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	68	6	24	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	80	4	16	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	60	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	56	9	36	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	68	7	28	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	56	7	28	3	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	56	9	36	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	60	9	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Thursday 25 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Nightingale Infant School, Derby, DE24 8FT

I want to say a big thank you for the very warm welcome you gave all of us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing what you do there. Here are some of the things we found:

The adults in your school take good care of you and you know you can trust them to help you when you are worried about anything.

You told us your school helps you to know how to keep yourselves safe.

You make good progress in Nursery and Reception, and that is helping you to make better progress in Year 1 as well.

You have a good understanding of why it is important to eat healthily and you clearly enjoy the many exercise activities the school puts on for you.

You told us that your work is sometimes too easy and we agree with you. Therefore we have asked the school to:

- make sure your teachers give all of you the right level of work to do at all times, including harder work for those of you who learn quickly, so you all make faster progress
- give you more opportunities to write things down in literacy and numeracy lessons and to use your writing and number skills in different subjects
- make sure those who lead and manage all the different parts of the school's work help your teachers to teach you even better, so that you can make much faster progress than you do at present.
- help those of you who do not attend regularly to do so.

You can help by continuing to listen carefully, trying hard to improve your work, and doing your very best to come to school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead Inspector

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