

Slater Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120101
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	339598
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Gillespie
Headteacher	Robert Wilford
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited eight lessons and held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and information about the pupils' attainment and progress. They scrutinised the school's policies, planning and documentation concerned with safeguarding. They also considered the responses contained in 16 parental questionnaires.

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

- whether standards are high enough and if pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds make the progress that they should
- the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and achievement
- whether the school has taken the necessary steps to promote regular and punctual attendance
- the effectiveness of leadership in embedding ambition and driving improvement and whether the governing body discharges its duties adequately
- the extent to which current arrangements for monitoring and for school self-evaluation are rigorous enough to give the school the capacity to improve further in the immediate future.

Information about the school

This small primary school serves a socially and ethnically diverse community close to the centre of Leicester. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. About half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost a third speak English as an additional language; these are higher proportions than those found in most schools nationally. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those that speak English as an additional language often join the school at times other than at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award.

The school is in the midst of a turbulent phase in its development. The headteacher is currently absent. In the immediate future, the school is to be run by an interim headteacher, with the support of an executive headteacher from a local school, along with his deputy.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is low. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has fallen. In national tests, overall pupils' attainment has been significantly below the national average in three out of the last four years, with the most pronounced dip coming in the last school year. Less than half of the pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain the expected standard for their age by the end of the school year. Children generally get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage but, over time, too many pupils do not do as well as they should. The pupils' progress has declined over the last three years.

Pupils are not doing as well as they should because teaching, learning and the curriculum are inadequate. Expectations are too low and much of the teaching does not demand enough of the pupils to promote their good progress. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their achievements are weak. As a result, teachers are not using assessment information to match work to pupils' immediate learning needs. This means that provision is weak for specific groups, such as the pupils capable of achieving the higher attainment levels, those who find learning difficult or those who speak English as additional language. Consequently, their progress is inadequate.

Too many lessons are uninspiring and fail to bring out the best in pupils. The curriculum is too concerned with content, rather than the practical application and reinforcement of skills through exciting investigative activities that motivate and promote enjoyment in learning. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development satisfactorily. Pupils' behaviour and response in lessons are generally satisfactory, although some become restless when teaching is dull. While many pupils say that they enjoy school, overall attendance levels remain unacceptably low and the school has not been rigorous enough in tackling absence.

The day-to-day care and supervision of pupils is satisfactory but there are serious shortcomings in pastoral care and guidance for the unusually high proportion of pupils who arrive in school at times other than at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Systems for checking on pupils' attainment and the quality of provision and for planning

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for school improvement have lacked rigour. There has been too little urgency in the drive to raise standards and there is no evidence that unsatisfactory practice has been challenged assertively. Governors have presided over decisions that have not been in the school's best interests and, as a result, value for money is unsatisfactory. They have relied too heavily on second-hand information and have not challenged the school sufficiently in the face of declining standards. The school's capacity to bring about sustained improvements is inadequate.

Although they have only been in the school for a very short time, the interim headteacher, the executive headteacher and his deputy are already making their mark. They have made a swift and accurate evaluation of the school and are already making plans to tackle the most important areas of weakness. The executive headteacher has taken steps to ensure that checks on the suitability of adults in school meet government requirements. He has also taken action on premises issues, highlighted in a recent local authority audit, that could have a bearing on pupils' safety and well-being in school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - introducing robust assessment procedures that give teachers the necessary information to ensure that lessons are challenging and matched closely to pupils' prior attainment
 - ensuring that basic skills are reinforced effectively through work in all subjects
 - ensuring that the curriculum is modified effectively to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language
 - planning work that motivates and inspires pupils and promotes enjoyment in learning.
- Improve procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils by:
 - introducing effective induction procedures for the many pupils who join the school throughout any given year
 - taking a more rigorous approach to promoting regular attendance.
- Strengthen arrangements for securing pupils' welfare, health and safety by:
 - taking action, by April 2010, to rectify all health and safety issues identified by the local authority
 - introducing effective systems to identify, support and record the progress of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable in any way.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - embedding ambition throughout the school and introducing rigorous procedures for checking on standards and quality and for planning for school improvement

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- giving all leaders the training, time and resources they need to drive up the quality of teaching and learning
- ensuring that governors oversee the work of the school effectively and collect the necessary first-hand evidence to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

The pupils' achievement is inadequate. Attainment in Year 6 has been significantly below that of other schools and fell markedly in the most recent national tests. Although pupils did relatively well in English, attainment was exceptionally low in mathematics and science. The pupils made less progress in these two subjects than was made by pupils in nearly every other school in the country. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language also made inadequate progress. The standard of pupils' work seen during the inspection and the school's predictions indicate that the attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 remains exceptionally low.

Attainment at the end Key Stage 1 has varied from year to year and has ranged from well below to broadly in line with the national average. In 2009, pupils' attainment rose, but improvements are fragile and not borne out by the work of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2. Standards of work are well below those normally expected of pupils of this age. There have been too many inconsistencies and disruptions to teaching and adult support. Progress for many pupils has been slow.

Pupils have a sound grasp of the importance of safe and healthy lifestyles, though the school provides few opportunities for sport and exercise beyond the regular physical education lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and understand the difference between right and wrong. Relationships between pupils and staff are constructive but there are too few opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to school or the wider community; pupils feel that their views, ideas and suggestions are not valued. Pupils have some understanding of the diversity of modern society, but their understanding of other cultures is weak. The promotion of skills that prepare pupils for the next steps in their education and the future world of work is inadequate. Skills in literacy and numeracy are at a low level, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively to solve problems. Too many pupils have not yet formed the habit of regular and punctual attendance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and the curriculum are inadequate because they do not promote effective learning and satisfactory progress. This is because:

- the level at which work is pitched is insufficiently challenging
- assessment systems are weak and so teaching is not firmly based on a clear understanding of what stage pupils are at and what they need to learn next
- teachers do not modify the curriculum adequately or plan specific tasks to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities or those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English
- marking is inconsistent in the guidance and advice that it gives to pupils
- the curriculum is too narrow: it does not give pupils enough opportunities to apply and reinforce key skills. Dull, uninspiring tasks fail to motivate and inspire pupils
- the curriculum does not give pupils the chance to make a positive contribution to the school or wider community and does not prepare them adequately for their continuing education.

Supervision is adequate and staff deal with minor incidents and accidents satisfactorily. However, induction procedures and the support for the many pupils and their families who join the school in mid-year or mid-key stage are unsatisfactory. This is because the school does not provide the support necessary to ensure that pupils new to the school, many of whom are new to the country and to the English language, get a sound start to their education. Furthermore, the school does not keep adequate records of the steps that have been taken to support these or other pupils whose circumstances make them in any way vulnerable. This makes any monitoring of these pupils' progress ineffective.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

The newly arrived interim headteacher, the executive headteacher and his deputy form an able and purposeful senior leadership team. Their immediate evaluation of the school is perceptive and accurate. They have already identified weaknesses in risk assessments on the premises. They have begun to take action to protect the health and safety of pupils and staff but a local authority audit has indicated that much still remains to be done. Members of the leadership team have monitored the quality of teaching and learning and are formulating plans to improve it. Despite this promising start, the school's capacity for sustained improvement remains inadequate because this school has no recent track record of success. Almost all aspects of the school's work are weaker now than at the time of the previous inspection because:

The recently-formed partnership with a highly successful, neighbouring school has the potential to be a positive one. However, it has not been in place for long enough to have an impact on the quality of education that pupils receive.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a sound start to their education. Many children join the school with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are lower than those normally expected for their age. Communication, language, literacy, personal and social skills are particularly weak and many have limited experience beyond the home. Children are happy in school and relate well to the adults who support them. The learning environment is generally adequate. The indoor space is organised satisfactorily to cover all areas of learning, although some of the resources need to be refreshed and upgraded to promote learning more effectively. Children's access to outdoor learning is limited. The phase leader has an outdoor learning plan to ensure that there is a reasonable degree of continuity between children's work and play inside and out. However, at present, outdoor learning is not an integral part of the children's experience. Teaching is satisfactory because it promotes at least satisfactory progress. The balance between activities that adults lead and those that children choose for themselves is satisfactory. There are established systems for observing children at work and play and for recording their progress. This gives staff a view of what children need to learn next. During the inspection, there were good examples of the teacher effectively promoting speaking, listening and social interaction. Outcomes in these areas and in children's physical development and understanding of numbers are good. However, children do not generally reach expected levels in other aspects of early literacy and numeracy or in their creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The phase leader has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Of the few parents who returned a questionnaire, the majority expressed confidence in, and approval of, most aspects of the school's work. Parents commented favourably on their children's enjoyment of school.

A small number of parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour. Inspectors found pupils' behaviour to be satisfactory. Staff are generally successful in managing those

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pupils who, at times, lack self-control. The most common cause for concern amongst parents related to the quality of school management. The inspection found grounds for these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Slater Primary 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 15 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	60	6	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	47	7	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	43	8	57	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	50	6	43	1	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	47	7	47	1	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	40	9	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	20	11	73	1	7	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)	5	33	7	47	1	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	33	9	60	1	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	27	9	60	0	0	2	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	27	9	60	1	7	1	7
The school is led and managed effectively	3	20	9	60	0	0	3	20
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	33	9	60	0	0	1	7

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.



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slater Primary School, Leicester, LE3 5AS

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. It was good to see children in Nursery and Reception getting a sound start to their time in school. I was also pleased that most of you behave sensibly in class and play together safely. You get along with one another at break and lunchtime, and the teachers and other adults who supervise take care of any upsets and look after you.

Recently, however, your work in English, mathematics and science shows you are not making as much progress as you should. We have decided your school is not doing as well as it might and needs some extra help. Other inspectors will visit your school regularly to check its progress. I have asked the headteacher and staff to do everything they can to make things better. This means planning work that really interests you and makes you want to do your best. Teachers will give you work that makes you think hard and moves you on more quickly. They will have to keep a close eye on exactly how well you are doing, so that the work they give you is just right to help you take the small steps that you need to get to the next level. I have also asked the school to do more to help those who find learning particularly difficult, those who are only just beginning to speak English and all who arrive in school from other places, because everybody deserves the chance to do well.

There is something that you can help with too. At the moment, too many pupils stay away from school so attendance is too low. The school will be taking a much stricter line about this, because pupils who are not in school cannot learn. I would like to ask you all to do your very best to come to school on every single day of the school year. You will also be seeing people working in the school. They will be checking and doing jobs to make sure that your school is a safe and secure place for you, so please take care when they are around.

All of this can only happen if the school's leaders and governors check very carefully on how well everything in school is working, and on how well everybody is doing. This will help them to find out where the problems are and to make plans to improve the school further.

Yours sincerely

Glynn Storer
Lead Inspector

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