

Arnold Mill Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122720
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340199
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Hopewell
Headteacher	Mr Matt Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2006
School address	Cross Street Arnold Nottingham
Telephone number	01159 667930
Fax number	01159 667931
Email address	head@arnoldmill.notts.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Inspection number	340199

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom spent half a day checking safeguarding. Inspectors observed 18 lessons. All teachers were seen at least once and several teaching assistants were also observed working with groups of children. Individual inspectors spent most of their time looking at learning, ten and a half hours in total. Meetings were held with staff, a governor and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its progress-tracking system, the development plan, teachers' planning and leaders' monitoring reports. There were 90 parental responses to the questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were also received from school staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- how effectively teachers use assessment and tracking of progress to make sure all children, whatever their gender or ability, are effectively challenged to achieve as well as they can
- whether the current teaching brings about good enough progress throughout the school
- how effective the leadership is in bringing about improvement in attainment at all levels
- to confirm strengths in pupils' personal development identified by the school.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average school of its type in an urban setting. Most pupils are of White British origin with very few from minority ethnic groups. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is greater than that in most schools. Many of these have various degrees of autism and some learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. Since its previous inspection, the school has undergone a period of severe disruption. It has changed its name, undergone significant staff turbulence in Key Stage 2 and 18 months ago moved into a new school building. The school has a designated yearly admission number of 40 pupils, which results in Key Stage 2 classes of up to this number. In Key Stage 1, there are three classes of up to thirty pupils, all with a mix of Year 1 and Year 2 children. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision, consisting of Nursery and Reception classes. There are 40 children in Reception and 25 in each morning and afternoon Nursery class.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The headteacher constantly communicates his vision for excellence and the whole staff, teaching and non-teaching, share in this ambition. School leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work well together as a highly committed and motivated team. The high quality of children's work on display in the entrance foyer and around the school leaves no doubt as to the high expectations the headteacher and staff have of the children in their care. As a result, pupils achieve well and take pride in their achievements. Their behaviour is excellent and underpinned by well-established routines, followed by all staff and understood by all pupils. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly place for learning. Pupils feel very safe. Incidents of bullying and harassment are minimal and are quickly dealt with should they occur. Pastoral care is good. Safeguarding is excellent and ensures that learning takes place in a safe and secure environment. . . Pupils learn to respect and care for each other as 'buddies' to those younger, more vulnerable or newer to the school than themselves.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average because of the school's persistent efforts to improve and maintain it. They make good progress because the curriculum themes are exciting, relevant to modern life and effectively meet their needs, whatever their abilities and backgrounds. Teachers effectively make use of the school's good systems for assessment. All pupils have targets for improvement at an appropriate level, and many show understanding of the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

In Key Stage 2, class sizes are particularly large and some parents and carers expressed disquiet about this. Inspectors found that with the current level of staffing, these large classes are actually advantageous, since the school is able to employ 'floating' teachers and a large number of well-qualified teaching assistants. These give good guidance to a variety of smaller teaching groups of all abilities and are involved in tackling identified underachievement in Key Stage 2.

In all classes, staff set great store by the development of spoken English through paired and group discussion, and pupils make good progress in this. They attain above-average standards in reading by the end of Year 6, but writing is below average and an area for development throughout the school. Mathematics attainment is also below average in the current Year 6 due to past underachievement. The development of literacy through the wider curriculum is more consistent than numeracy. The school has identified girls' underachievement in mathematics and has recently put in place measures to improve girls' attitudes to the subject.

Pupils who attend the school throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress from

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

their starting points and attain at least average standards. Good progress is not always reflected in Year 6 national test scores, because a significant number of pupils, many with learning difficulties, enter the school in Years 5 and 6. Although they are given good support and guidance and make good progress, they do not all reach the standards expected for their age in this shorter time in Key Stage 2.

The school aims to develop the whole child, and prepares its pupils for life in their next school and beyond. Their social skills are highly developed, together with a strong sense of belonging to the school community and their place in it. They willingly take on posts of responsibility as members of the school council or other 'handy helpers'. They enthusiastically take part in cultural activities, such as visits to London. Pupils gain knowledge of a wide range of cultures through religious education, French, residential visits and links with an inner-city multicultural school.

Since the previous inspection, despite the disruptions, there have been many improvements in leadership, curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment, which have impacted positively on pupils' progress. The school is now well placed to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing, by:
 - ensuring that there is sufficient emphasis on mark-making and emergent writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - developing consistent guidelines for handwriting and presentation in all subjects
 - making sure that pupils learn to spell commonly used and specialist vocabulary correctly
 - making more opportunities for extended writing in all subjects.
- Improve attainment in mathematics, by:
 - improving girls' attitudes and confidence
 - providing more opportunities to develop numeracy in the wider curriculum
 - putting mathematical problem-solving into real-life situations relevant to boys and girls.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well. Their excellent behaviour plays a major role in their successful learning. They show interest and enthusiasm across a wide range of subjects. Their practical skills are very well developed, as shown by the quality of art in individual drawings based on Lowry's 'Fight', and the highly imaginative robots in Key Stage 2.

Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 considered how their puppet 'classmate' could improve his handwriting and come up with suggestions such as 'don't give up', 'practice makes perfect'. Inconsistencies in the style of handwriting and presentation are a common

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

feature of written work in the school. Year 6 pupils held animated discussions about the suitability of letters of application for the job of woodcutter. Higher-ability pupils in particular showed good knowledge of grammar, connectives and persuasive words. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities worked on the same topic with good guidance from a teaching assistant.

Assessments in Key Stage 1 show pupils make good progress and the majority are now exceeding the attainment expected for their age. In Key Stage 2, attainment in writing and mathematics remains slightly below average, although progress from their starting points is good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress. The very few who speak English as an additional language make very good progress because of well-targeted support. There is no significant overall difference between the progress of boys and girls, except in mathematics, where boys do better than girls.

Parents, carers and pupils, themselves, agree that learners are happy and safe in school, and that they have someone to talk to if they are troubled. The school is well regarded in the local community and on trips, because of the good manners and exemplary behaviour of its pupils. Many visitors from the local community come into school regularly, to eat lunch, for instance, or to help pupils with their allotments, where they learn to grow their own healthy food. This, together with their good participation in sporting activities and their understanding of dangers such as those from drugs or the internet, prepare them well to grow up living a healthy lifestyle.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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

<p>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</p> <p>Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
<p>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</p> <p>Taking into account: Pupils' attendance¹</p>	<p>3</p> <hr/> <p>2</p>
<p>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</p>	<p>2</p>

How effective is the provision?

A high proportion of good and some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection, agreeing with the school's own view of its quality. Teaching staff make learning enjoyable. For instance, they help pupils make good use of information and communication technology for finding out, for example, about the life of Henry VIII. Simulations, such as murder-mystery puzzles are used imaginatively and, increasingly, pupils are helped to assess their own learning. Younger pupils much enjoy reinforcing learning through games such as 'I spy', often with the help of their glove puppet 'classmates'.

The development of teachers' expertise is given a high priority in all subjects. Outside experts in gymnastics and music give lessons alongside school staff to boost teachers' knowledge. Staff effectively use day-to-day assessments to plan for the next steps in learning. Marking of work is regular and most teachers give comments to support improvement, often related to pupils' targets, but they less often follow up corrections to work, particularly for spelling, sentence construction and neatness.

The recently improved school curriculum now provides an imaginative and broad range of experiences which meets the needs of pupils effectively and helps them learn. There are strengths in the provision of music, art, French and science, but lack of consistency in using mathematics to solve problems. Literacy is developed better than numeracy, but opportunities for extended writing are not consistently taken up. Links with universities provide additional challenge for gifted and talented pupils, who study Ancient Greek, Latin and philosophy. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities including sport, the arts and three popular residential visits. These are well attended and enrich pupils' learning experiences.

This an inclusive school, where all pupils can do well, whatever their barrier to engagement and learning. There are very well organised systems for the care of all pupils, with carefully targeted support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who participate in all activities that the school provides. The most vulnerable pupils are enabled to participate through highly effective support and interventions. Pupils are guided well when they leave for secondary school and are given a satisfactory foundation of basic literacy and numeracy upon which to build their secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team involves both senior and middle managers representing all major aspects of school development. All leaders say that they feel empowered and valued and have shared responsibility for the strategic development of the school. This good distribution of leadership has improved since the last inspection.

There is good monitoring and evaluation of teaching, which has led to improvements in learning and the use of assessment. This is helping to improve attainment and is ensuring good overall progress. There is a particularly good improvement in setting targets. These are now based securely on reliable information about pupils' performance and are appropriately challenging.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors fulfil all statutory duties and support the school well. They have good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and are involved in its accurate self-evaluation. There has been some good monitoring of the school's work, but there is scope to extend this aspect and for governors to hold the school more accountable for pupils' attainment.

There is a good contribution to promoting community cohesion within the school, where all adults and children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and caring for each other. In its outreach to the local community, it benefits from strong links with local schools and groups such as churches and care homes. Links further afield are starting to develop.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2

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	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Most children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are below expectations for the age group. By the time they enter Year 1, only a small minority do not attain all the early learning goals. Consistently good teaching by all adults who work in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress and thoroughly enjoy learning.

There is an excellent and well-equipped learning environment both indoors and outdoors with free-flow use of both teaching areas. Good leadership ensures planning is good and effective use of the good assessment systems ensures that activities are matched well to the different abilities of the children. The safety and care of all children has a very high profile. Behaviour is excellent and children settle quickly into school routines.

There is a good curriculum that includes exciting activities across all the areas of learning. It includes an appropriate balance of whole-group, teacher-led and free- play activities. There are regular sessions to develop linking letters and sounds and mark making. The leaders recognise the need to maintain the focus on these activities since they are the relatively weaker aspects of children's learning. There are excellent relationships with parents and carers, including home visits and parental meetings.

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

The vast majority of parental returns were entirely positive. All said they felt their children were safe in school. One or two reported individual incidents, both positive and negative. Many praised communication and the headteacher. There were several negative comments about class sizes. Inspectors' response is that with the present level of staffing, class size does not constitute a problem, as many more children get attention in small groups than they would with fewer staff and smaller classes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Arnold Mill Primary and Nursery 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 289 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	71	24	27	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	76	20	22	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	66	30	33	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	62	32	36	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	67	28	31	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	61	31	34	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	69	27	30	1	1	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)	44	49	41	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	60	35	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	51	34	38	9	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	51	34	38	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	62	28	31	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	49	63	49	2	2	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.



Friday 26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arnold Mill Primary and Nursery School, Nottingham, NG5 7AX

Thank you for being so friendly, well mannered and helpful when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed the time we spent with you, seeing you in your lessons, working hard and having fun at playtimes. You told us and wrote in your questionnaire returns that you think yours is a good school and we agree with you.

These are some of the things we found to be good in your school.

Your headteacher and other leaders do a good job.

All the adults take excellent care of you. You always have somebody to talk to if you are troubled.

You enjoy your lessons and do well.

Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on well with each other.

You know how to live a healthy lifestyle. You enjoy lots of sport, and grow and eat healthy food.

You take on lots of responsibility in the school, in the school council and in 'helping hands'.

You have a good community spirit and look after each other as 'buddies'.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make this happen I have asked them to:

- help you improve your writing
- help you improve your mathematics.

I am sure you want your school to be better too, so please make sure you work hard and do your best all the time. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.