

Sladefield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103255
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323783
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	360
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	Don Bates
Headteacher	Kay Mercer
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bamville Road Ward End Birmingham B8 2TJ
Telephone number	0121 327 0662
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the rate of progress in each key stage and whether it is even in all year groups and all subjects
- the impact of school initiatives to raise standards in reading to match those in writing
- the quality of teaching in reading and writing across each key stage and in all subjects
- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work and discussion with pupils, staff and the chair of governors, and from scrutiny of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation and questionnaires returned by parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average infant school. Most pupils are of Pakistani origin, but a small proportion represents a diverse range of other ethnic backgrounds. Eighty-five per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is well above average, and nearly 20% are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These pupils' needs cover a wide range but are mainly speech and language, behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of four Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Its success stems from the exceptional commitment of all the staff and governors, led by a quietly determined and inspirational headteacher who wants to provide pupils with the best education possible. Outstanding leadership and teaching result in pupils having extremely positive attitudes to school. The school engenders in them a real love of learning. As a result, their achievement is outstanding and they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school provides a friendly, supportive environment where pupils gain confidence and independence quickly. As a result, they feel secure, happy and valued at school. Parents typically describe it as 'a very caring, happy school where all staff are brilliant and children thrive.' Pupils form excellent relationships and know that all the adults in the school will help them if they are worried or upset. This trust and mutual respect inspires pupils to do their best. Their eagerness to learn is reflected in the way they listen attentively and settle to their work without fuss. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They treat each other kindly and willingly help others. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. They join in the keep fit activities enthusiastically, select healthy food options at lunchtimes and play safely and sensibly. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. Their understanding of global issues such as recycling is very good. They join in many local activities, for example, the Easter Bonnet Parade, festivals and fundraising events. Community members of all faiths and cultural heritage are frequent visitors in school. By working with these visitors, pupils gain an excellent understanding of and respect for their beliefs and traditions when they explore, for example, daily routines of people who live in other countries. Pupils do jobs around the school proudly. For example, sports leaders organise play activities and school council members help to recruit new staff. While most pupils attend regularly, despite all the school's good efforts, overall attendance is only average because a very small minority are absent too often and this hinders their progress. Hence, pupils' personal development is good rather than outstanding.

High quality teaching ensures pupils of all abilities make excellent progress in their learning. Pupils who find learning difficult receive excellent individual support so that they achieve as well as their classmates. Bilingual staff give those pupils new to speaking English extensive language support so that they participate fully in all lessons. Improved assessment procedures provide teachers with the information they need to set pupils the right targets to improve their work. Children make an excellent start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes because teachers plan exciting activities and experiences that capture children's interest and enthusiasm. At the end of the Reception year, they attain average standards in all the areas of learning. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2. In the teacher assessments in 2008, standards were well above average in writing, while only above average in reading and mathematics. The school is addressing this differential effectively through improvements in developing pupils' word-building and reading skills and providing more opportunities for problem solving in mathematics. As a result, pupils in Year 1 are working at standards that are higher than was the case for Year 1 at this time in 2008. The curriculum, with its many enrichment activities, is outstanding. It is creatively planned to help all pupils achieve well in both their learning and their personal development. A high emphasis on speaking and listening and extensive practical activities in science have already had a significant impact on raising standards

since the last inspection. Vibrant displays of pupils' work show that pupils' creative skills are of very high quality.

Care, support and guidance arrangements are good. The school takes excellent care of its pupils and provides sensitive support to those who need it. Outside agencies are consulted if necessary. Child protection and health and safety procedures meet requirements, as do the procedures to ensure that adults who come into contact with pupils are vetted appropriately. Detailed analysis of each pupil's progress allows the school to deploy staff to best effect to help every pupil succeed. While this analysis is thorough and used effectively to plan provision, it is not readily accessible in its current format for teachers to check pupils' progress quickly.

The school is somewhat modest in its self-evaluation. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Expectations of staff and pupils are very high and the school successfully meets the very challenging targets it sets itself. The headteacher involves all staff and governors in identifying the right improvement priorities and evaluating the school's performance. The monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and staff have the support they need to develop their knowledge and expertise. Excellent teamwork has resulted in managers at all levels taking the necessary action to make changes in provision so that pupils attain higher standards in all subjects. The governors, again strongly led, monitor the school's performance well and check that agreed priorities are followed through successfully. The school works very hard to foster harmonious relationships within its local community. Excellent links with parents, local schools and the diverse community groups in the locality and those from other countries show that the school strives to provide pupils with excellent opportunities to learn from and relate to people beyond the school. The school knows that, despite all its good efforts to encourage parents to send their children to school every day, the poor attendance of a few, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, remains an issue. Given that leaders have been successful in raising standards and that the school now provides excellent care and education, their capacity to improve the school further is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff have high expectations of what the children can do and provide excellent support for those who need extra guidance. Care and welfare arrangements are excellent. Children's personal and social development is a high priority as many lack confidence when they first start. They thrive in the supportive atmosphere where routines are well established. Children are extremely happy and confident. They work happily with others and respond very enthusiastically during class discussions. Excellent liaison with parents is reflected in their high praise of the school with comments such as, 'My child loves it here.' Parents are very confident they can discuss any concerns with staff because 'everyone is so approachable'.

Children start in the school with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age. Many are new to speaking English and so their language and literacy skills are often weaker. Outstanding teaching, that includes the excellent expertise of bilingual staff, helps all children make rapid gains in all the areas of learning. They take great delight in exploring the many imaginative activities that staff organise for them, both inside and outside. Independent tasks are balanced carefully with those that staff direct. Leadership and management are outstanding. Early assessments identify those children who need additional support and staff assess all children closely by watching and talking to them about their work. Developing children's language and literacy skills is high priority and children are sensitively guided to these activities

even if they find them challenging. Occasionally, a few find creative activities challenging because they are unfamiliar with the variety of resources staff invite them to explore, but they quickly learn that such activities are fun, for example, when making their dragons for Chinese New Year celebrations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance by impressing upon the few parents who keep their children off school too often the impact this has on their children's learning.
- Refine the assessment procedures to make sure that information regarding pupils' progress is easy for all staff to access.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Sladefield Infant School, Birmingham B8 2TJ

You may remember that two inspectors recently came to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and for talking to us about all the interesting things that you like about your school. We know that you and your parents are very proud of your school and you have every right to be, because it is outstanding. Your headteacher and all the other staff do an excellent job in making sure you make a good start to your education.

Your behaviour is excellent, and it was lovely to see how well you get on with each other. We could see that you love school because so many of you were so eager to show us your work and you were all keen to answer questions in lessons. The best thing was seeing how hard you try to do your best and how you help each other. We were really impressed to see how many of you knew and made such good use of your individual learning targets. You told us how much you enjoy all the interesting activities at the school and we saw that many of you take part in lots of clubs. We particularly enjoyed watching you do keep fit in the hall and were very impressed with your beautiful artwork that is displayed around the school. So many of you have jobs as school councillors and sport leaders and you carry out your duties very sensibly. Staff take excellent care of you and they give you plenty of help so that you know what you need to do to improve your work.

You all make excellent progress. The youngest children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes and those of you in Year 2 are working at standards that are higher than we would expect at your age.

Even in a school as good as yours, some things could be better. Most of you come to school every day but a few of you have too many days off. You need to make sure your parents send you to school every day so that you do not miss important work. In addition, we have asked your teachers to improve the way they record your progress so that it is easier for them to check how well you are doing.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and coming to school every day. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector