



Grendon Junior and Infant School (NC)

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103205
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276870
Inspection dates 19 September 2005 to 20 September 2005
Reporting inspector David Driscoll RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Grendon Road
School category	Community		Kings Heath
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Birmingham, West Midlands B14 4RB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4742460
Number on roll	399	Fax number	0121 4742460
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Green
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Ms Christine Pyke

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Grendon Infant and Junior School is a larger than average primary school, situated in an area of high deprivation. There are very few pupils from a minority ethnic background and the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. A new headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI 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 or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Despite the good education offered by the school from Nursery to the end of Year 2, the inadequate teaching and curriculum, and resulting underachievement, in Years 3, 4 and 5 mean that the school is not providing a satisfactory education or value for money and its effectiveness is inadequate.

The school's managers judge the school's performance to be good, because too much emphasis is placed upon the strengths, rather than recognising the seriousness of the weaknesses. There have been indications of falling standards and/or underachievement in the past few years, but these have not been identified in sufficient detail until recently, so actions to improve matters have either not been taken or have proved ineffective; the school's managers have not demonstrated the capacity to improve the school's performance.

Children get off to a good start at the school, so that by the end of the Foundation Stage, their standards have been raised to the national average. However, by the time they leave Year 6, pupils' standards in mathematics and writing are too low because many make little or no progress in Years 3, 4 and 5. Better progress is made in Year 6, but this is not enough to rectify the deficiencies of the previous three years. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in their personal development; they behave well and their attendance improves.

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What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5 in order to raise standards in mathematics and writing
- Carry out more rigorous monitoring of the school's work, especially teaching, to identify and tackle problems at an earlier stage
- Increase the amount of mathematics and writing carried out across the different subjects in Years 3 to 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils have individual targets which are suitably challenging, but high proportions fail to reach them by the end of Year 6.

Children join the Nursery with standards that are significantly below average. They quickly settle into the school's routines and their good progress provides a solid foundation for the rest of their school life. This good progress continues throughout the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, so that by the time they are ready to start Year 3, their standards of reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average and they have developed skills, such as listening to others, that prepare them well for the future. They clearly enjoy their time at school and the work they do.

In Year 3, however, the ethos of hard work that pupils have come to expect is no longer present and much of the good work from earlier years is undone. Throughout Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils make inadequate progress. Progress in mathematics and writing is particularly poor, with large proportions of pupils making little or no progress in mathematics; many remain at the same level as they were when they were in Year 2. The boys and higher attainers make least progress, because they are set work that is too easy, or which they find boring. Better progress is made by pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, because the teaching assistants are able to ensure that small groups of pupils work on tasks that are suitably demanding, while providing the support necessary for the pupils to reach their targets.

In Year 6, pupils make good progress, especially in mathematics, because the teaching is better. Pupils in Year 6 speak of how much more they enjoy lessons, compared to those in Years 3, 4 and 5. However, even their good progress in Year 6 cannot make up the ground they have lost in the previous three years. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 show standards to be average in science and English, but significantly below average in mathematics. Standards of writing are much worse than standards of reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Relationships are good. Pupils from different backgrounds and abilities get on well together and enjoy coming to school. The youngest pupils quickly learn that working and playing together makes life more pleasant.

Attendance has improved to an average level. Older pupils say that they enjoy being with their friends and appreciate the opportunity that they have to seek help from Year 6 pupils who are trained to support pupils in sorting out their differences amicably. Behaviour is good and pupils show consideration for others. Most pupils understand why rules are in place and keep to them. There are some instances when teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5 does not sufficiently engage pupils and their attention wanders, but on the whole, pupils have good attitudes to learning.

Pupils have a strong voice in the school and influence what happens through the School Council. They have a firm understanding of how to keep safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils were eager to talk to inspectors about changes to the snacks on offer at break times to reflect healthy eating. The 'Huff and Puff' activities that encourage physical activity at break-time are very popular. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a problem or concern and are confident that help and support will be there from adults. The oldest pupils acquire adequate basic skills so that they can move on to the next stage of their education, but their rate of progress from Year 3 to Year 5 is inadequate.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is inadequate because it is not good enough in Years 3, 4 and 5, where it fails to meet the needs of boys and higher attainers in particular.

Pupils experience consistently good teaching from when they start Nursery until they finish Year 2. Teaching is also good in Year 6. Teachers plan lessons that involve quick changes of activity that alternate between being relatively passive, such as sitting quietly together to learn what the senses do, to being more active, such as pupils going outside to use their senses. Such an approach ensures that pupils remain interested in their work and enjoy the activities. Teachers have a very good idea of what pupils can achieve, so they set work that is sufficiently difficult and know when a pupil simply needs encouragement rather than help.

In Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils experience a completely different diet. Targets remain challenging, but pupils often do not come anywhere near achieving them because the tasks are too easy or because they are not expected to produce enough work. In writing, for example, higher-attaining Year 2 pupils produced more written work in their topic books last year than higher-attaining Year 5 pupils did in geography, history and religious education put together. The teacher will often spend too long talking to the class, which results in pupils becoming bored; boys in particular switch off and play no further part in the lesson. Whilst there are some weaknesses that are common across all classes, another problem is variation in approach. Some teachers use targets with their pupils, for example, while others do not. Some teachers enforce the school rules regarding behaviour, but others are not firm enough, so pupils start to fidget and distract others. Too little emphasis is placed on developing the basic skills of writing and mathematics, which in turn leads to pupils underachieving in these areas.

Pupils with learning difficulties or other disabilities make better progress than others in Years 3, 4 and 5, because teaching assistants and other support staff have a good knowledge of their pupils' capabilities and ensure that they work at an appropriate rate, even when the rest of the class is working too slowly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Whilst the full curriculum is planned, it is inadequate. This is because planning does not effectively promote sound progress for pupils in some year groups in the key areas of writing and mathematics. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception, as well as in Years 1 and 2, is good and firmly based on the acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy as well as providing plenty of opportunities for learning through doing. In Years 3 to 5, there is much more variation in the extent to which planning builds securely upon what pupils can already do. Additionally, pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not get the chance to use their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.

The good range of activities provided beyond normal lessons is greatly appreciated by the many pupils who take part. There is good planning for pupils' learning about safety and health.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is satisfactory. The school takes good care of pupils and is mindful of their safety and well-being on a day-to-day basis. As a result, pupils feel secure, right from the early days in the Nursery. Pupils' longer-term well-being is well catered for because of the good opportunities they have to develop a healthy lifestyle as well as learning how to keep safe. There are examples of very good guidance and support for individual pupils that have led to much improved attendance or better behaviour and so boosted achievement. When advice is sought from outside the school, it is used effectively to improve teaching that focuses on specific difficulties. In some year groups, pupils are clear about what they are aiming for in their work and how their targets will be reached. However, not all pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 benefit from such a clear direction to help them improve their performance and this slows their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate because nobody has taken action quickly enough to stem the tide of falling standards; there is little evidence to suggest that the school has the capacity to improve.

There have been clear signs of underachievement at the school since 2003, but even before this there were indications of falling standards and declining achievement. Managers at all levels, including governors, have not been sufficiently critical of the school's performance and have only recently carried out sufficiently detailed analyses of test results and other performance data. The school has not been helped by external monitoring that found achievement to be good and no major problems with results. Actions taken to improve standards of writing - the main weakness at the time of the previous inspection - have proved ineffective.

The school's managers now have a clear idea of its weaknesses; they know that teaching is not good enough in Years 3, 4 and 5. However, the way that the quality of teaching is checked lacks any real rigour, with little in the way of negative comments or judgements that identify where teachers have taught lessons that failed to reach a satisfactory standard. The school now has several initiatives in place to improve the quality of education, but almost all of these are new and have not had time to bear fruit.

In some cases, the school's managers have been far too slow to react; detailed plans for improving mathematics were only produced at the start of this term, for example, and performance targets for teachers this year make no mention of improving standards in mathematics.

Nevertheless, there are areas of strength in the school's leadership and management. Managers seek and act on the views of parents, most of whom are happy with the education provided. Efforts to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour have proved successful, and the managers have ensured a safe and healthy environment in which pupils can develop.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, some inspectors visited your school recently to check on how well it was doing.

Thank you very much for the way you welcomed us - and a special thank you to all those who spoke to us and told us about their life at school.

All the teachers and other grown-ups make sure you are safe and healthy, and that you learn to behave well and come to school when you should. You do well in your work from the time you start at Nursery until the end of Year 2. However, after that, some of you learn more slowly because the work is sometimes too easy. In Year 6 you start to do better again - you tell us that you enjoy Year 6 more than Years 3, 4 and 5, and we can see why.

The people who are in charge of the school have a good idea of where there are problems, but we think they need help in putting things right. We have asked them to make the teaching better in Years 3, 4 and 5, and make sure you do more writing and mathematics. We have also asked them to keep a closer watch on how well you are doing, so that they can sort things out more quickly.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.