



New Invention Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104192
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 277097
Inspection dates 6 June 2006 to 7 June 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Mcdowall HMI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Cannock Road New Invention Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 5SA
School category	Community		
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01922 710376
Number on roll	355	Fax number	01922 491091
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss Anne Tyler

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school serving an area of mixed housing and some disadvantage. Approximately one fifth of children are from minority ethnic groups. The school has experienced significant staff turnover and some staff absence in recent months. There are more boys than girls in the school. The school is part-way through a major building programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school is emerging from a period when it has experienced considerable disruption because of building work, staff turnover and staff absence. This has distracted the leadership and management of the school at all levels and some focus on improving standards and achievement was lost for a time. This is no longer the case. The children have continued to be well cared for and their personal development is good. The school accommodation is now much improved and everyone is very positive about the new classrooms. The staffing situation is much more stable and the school is well placed to move ahead. The school is satisfactory overall and provides satisfactory value for money.

Standards and achievement are broadly average. The school recognises that some more able learners could do better and that standards in mathematics could be higher. There are some signs that standards in writing are improving. During this time of change, the school has not been checking on the quality of teaching and learning carefully and some weaknesses in presentation, marking and target setting have not been addressed quickly enough. Consequently, some children are not doing as well as they can.

There is the capacity for improvement because there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection and a sound track record of improvement prior to the recent difficulties. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses and has appropriate priorities for improvement, but it needs to be clearer about who is responsible for leading changes and how it will measure its own success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring teachers set challenging work for all children.
- Bring greater consistency to the way work is presented and marked and involve the children more in their own assessment and target setting, so that everyone is clear about the next steps in learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the way in which the school allocates responsibility and sets measurable targets for improvement and then follows up on decisions it has taken, to ensure everyone is implementing agreed changes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the school with standards that are just above average. Progress last year was not as good as it has been owing to the effects of staff changes and the building programme. However, progress is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and good in Years 5 and 6. Children from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress overall and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make good progress.

Standards in science have risen steadily in recent years and are good. Standards in English were good in 2004 but fell to broadly average in 2005. The school has had some success in improving the standards of writing this year. Standards in mathematics are average. The school is increasingly setting more challenging targets for the children to achieve and has some success in meeting them, although some more-able learners could do better still in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Children enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The children have opportunities to explore different cultures and they develop positive attitudes to people from different backgrounds. The majority of children behave well in school and show respect for others. The few who sometimes behave badly are well managed by the school. Children showed their maturity by the way they responded positively in assembly to poems about personal feelings.

The children say they feel safe at school. Through the school council, they take part in decision making, although some of the children were not clear about how the school has responded to their requests. The children say they can go to the staff if they have any concerns and feel action is taken when rare cases of bullying occur. By the time they leave, the children have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and the importance of exercise. This knowledge is not always demonstrated in the choices a few children make at lunchtime. Activities such as the 'World at Work' project, and such events as charity collections, adequately prepare the children for adult life and enable them to make a sound contribution to the local and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features in Years 5 and 6 that enable children to make better progress than in other years. The best lessons observed by inspectors in these years featured a brisk pace and lots of challenge for children of different abilities. Information and communication technology (ICT) was used well to capture children's interest and the teachers created a very positive learning ethos that underpinned good progress. Occasionally, the work set for the most able learners is not sufficiently demanding and this limits the standards they are capable of reaching.

Assessment has been improved and is satisfactory. Marking of the work in English books lets the children know what they need to do to improve and targets are used well to support their next steps in learning. This is not always the case in mathematics books, where marking lacks evaluative comment and is seldom more than ticks. In some classes, untidy presentation of work goes unchecked and this is a particular weakness in mathematics.

Teaching assistants are well trained and they give good support, especially when they are working with groups of children with complex learning needs. This ensures that these children make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It offers an appropriate breadth and balance between subjects and ensures that children build on what they have learnt before. Regular personal, social and health education lessons usefully involve pupils in considering moral and social issues, for example, when discussing the benefit of recycling. Good attention is paid to enabling children to keep safe and work is being done to promote the value of healthy lifestyles. The use of ICT to support other subjects has improved since the previous inspection and is an emerging strength. Good curricular provision is made for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Sometimes, the work set is not hard enough for the most able learners.

The curriculum is adequately enhanced by various activities. For example, all children in Year 5 are learning to play a musical instrument. A range of visits takes place to link into topic work, such as the visit by Year 4 to an Egyptian exhibition. After-school clubs are enjoyed by those who attend; however, some children told inspectors that they would like more clubs made available.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care ensures that children are safe and looked after personally. Parents view this aspect of the school's provision most positively. Sensitive support is provided for children with learning difficulties and this helps them to do well both academically and socially. Very good links with a range of services result in a strong safety net being in place to support those who are particularly vulnerable. Child protection arrangements are secure.

The attention to pupils' health and safety is good. Children are taught about safety in practical activities, such as physical education. They are also given plenty of opportunities for exercise and are encouraged to eat healthily.

Managers are working successfully to develop children's independence and responsibility in learning, with positive impact already reflected in children's self-assessment in writing. The use of targets to support better progress in mathematics is developing but practice is inconsistent and this is rightly a key priority in the school's improvement plan.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership has an accurate picture of the school's performance and has set appropriate priorities for improvement.

They have been successful in building a supportive team of staff, who have the best interests of the children at heart. This strong team work has served the school well in recent times in managing the major building programme and high staff absence and turnover. However, the time taken in managing these situations in recent months has meant that the leadership has been less rigorous than it was before in the way it checks on the quality of teaching and learning and the progress children are making. Consequently, there has been a slight fall in overall achievement because action has not always been taken quickly to address weaknesses in the teaching and learning.

Currently, the school has teams of teachers sharing responsibility for leading subjects. This is effective in providing support to staff but at present there is a lack of clarity regarding where the ultimate responsibility for improvement lies and who is accountable for success. Action planning lacks detail regarding how the school will measure the impact of its actions.

The governors have provided good support to the school during the recent period of disruption. They have a satisfactory committee structure that ensures the school meets its legal requirements, but they are not sufficiently involved in measuring how effective the school has been in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and achievement. The parents support the school and have influenced the timings at the end of the school day and developments in the school reports.

There is the capacity to improve because until recently there has been a steady increase in standards. The school has recognised that it has been distracted by the new build, but recent developments, such as the drive to improve writing, are beginning to pay dividends. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3	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	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Can I start by saying a big thank you to everyone for being so helpful to us when we visited your school recently.

These are the things that we liked about your school:

We like your new building and feel that you have much better classrooms to work in than you did before.

We think that almost all of you behave well and work hard.

All the people working at your school really care about you and work hard to keep you safe and help you get better at your work.

We like the way you all get on well together and know about how to stay safe and eat a healthy diet. Unfortunately, a few of you sometimes bring unhealthy snacks to school.

To make your school even better we have asked the school to:

Make sure you improve your numeracy by setting work that stretches you all.

Improve the way your work is marked and presented and involve you more in setting your own targets so you know what you need to do to improve, especially in numeracy.

Make sure that when the school makes plans for improvement, it is clear about who is in charge of the work and how it will know when things have improved.

Thank you again for all your help in the inspection and good luck for the future.