



Bulwell St Mary's Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122740
LEA CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LEA
Inspection number 281332
Inspection dates 14 February 2006 to 15 February 2006
Reporting inspector Dr. G. (Trevor) Watts LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ragdale Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		NG6 8GQ
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01159 151506
Number on roll	277	Fax number	01159 151507
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Gilbert Gimson
Date of previous inspection	24 November 2003	Headteacher	Mr. Philip Ball

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 14 February 2006 - 15 February 2006	Inspection number 281332
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a medium sized primary school with a pre-school unit, serving an area of high social and economic disadvantage. More than twice as many pupils are eligible for free school meals as the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is a little above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils of compulsory school age have statements of special educational needs, and there are no pupils who have English as an additional language. The school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2003.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school and the inspection team judge this to be a satisfactory school with several strengths. The school's previous designation of having serious weaknesses no longer applies. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses is increasingly rigorous and is having a positive impact on standards. Strengths in leadership include good monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards, and the development of the curriculum, which is now good. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Children achieve well and many reach national standards by the end of their time in Reception. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress; most achieve the nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6. Standards are considerably better than at the time of the previous inspection. The school provides satisfactory care, support and guidance for pupils. Pupils develop their personal and social skills satisfactorily. Most parents are very supportive, 'Bulwell St. Mary's is a wonderful school,' wrote one. A very small minority of parents feel that there could be better communication between them and the school, especially about how behaviour is managed. Teaching is satisfactory. However, weaknesses exist in some aspects of teaching, such as the relatively slow pace of some activities and the lack of a high level of challenge for the older higher attainers. The school gives satisfactory value for money. Considering its improvements over the past two years, it has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the good classroom practice more consistently across the school, particularly to increase the challenge for older higher attaining pupils. - Improve the quality of communication with parents and provide better information on how behaviour is managed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's attainments are low when they enter the school, especially in their social and communication skills. Children make good progress in the Foundation Unit, and many reach the nationally expected standards by the time they leave the unit. In Years 1 and 2, pupils progress satisfactorily. Their standards in 2003 were above the national average in mathematics, and only very slightly below national averages in other subjects overall. In the two years to July 2005, however, pupils did not improve their writing and number skills as much as in previous years. Pupils' progress continues satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English have risen since 2001 and they are now average, although a minority of pupils who were achieving well at the end of Year 2 do not make the expected progress by the end of Year 6. This is because in some lessons the pace of activities is not brisk enough. In science and mathematics, standards rose steadily from 2001 to 2004. In 2005 they declined slightly, but pupils' achievements

were still satisfactory. Overall, pupils, including those with learning difficulties, meet their moderately challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning and developing new skills. Attendance has been good, but has deteriorated during the past one and a half terms, partly due to illnesses. The school is taking appropriate measures to get back to a good level of attendance. Pupils are polite and behave well. A small minority of parents expressed concern about pupils' behaviour and bullying. However, the inspection team found no evidence of this. Pupils say there is very little bullying but, should it occur, it is dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils benefit from the programme to promote healthy lifestyles and to stay safe. These experiences begin in the Foundation Stage with, for example, 'Cyril the Squirrel' encouraging good eating habits. Pupils enjoy mentoring younger pupils in lessons and say that they are helped by teachers and support assistants when they have difficulties in class. Suggestions made by members of the school council have helped to improve facilities such as the toilets, playground and provision of healthy food. The school works closely with the community to extend pupils' skills in areas such as gardening and tennis. Partnerships, such as with Nottingham Playhouse, improve and extend pupils' learning, as do the popular after school clubs. As a result of their various experiences, pupils develop skills that they will need in their future lives well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand and empathise with those who need help, as seen in the 'Love in a box' charity giving. The school's close links with St. Mary's church reflect the caring and sharing ethos of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there are variations through the school, and pupils' progress is thus uneven. Where good teaching is seen, classrooms are lively and productive, with pupils performing interesting and challenging tasks. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well and have good relationships with their pupils. The well qualified coordinator and teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties provide valuable extra help for those who need their learning boosted in particular skills, such as writing or number work. In the Foundation Unit, staff use play well to encourage learning. Carefully organised activities, good resources, effective support for children and much encouragement ensure that children make good progress. There are times across the school when the pace of learning slows because teachers do not always insist on careful listening or use time to best effect. More able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not always given appropriately challenging work. Although assessment is satisfactory in the main, marking is not consistently linked to pupils'

own targets to help ensure that they know how to improve. However, learning is improving throughout the school as a result of the school's checks on teaching, although some of the initiatives have yet to make a big impact.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection when it was judged unsatisfactory. Reception children get off to a flying start with many interesting and exciting things to do. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan together to ensure that all subjects are present, including developing links between subjects through information and communication technology (ICT). The introduction of whole school themed weeks, each half term, brings the curriculum to life by making learning more relevant for pupils. Visits, such as to Wollaton Hall, and visitors, such as a poet and dance specialist, help to broaden pupils' horizons. A good range of after school clubs, such as football, salsa, ICT and recorders is on offer. As well as adding to pupils' enjoyment of learning, these rich experiences help to develop healthy lifestyles. They also foster good attitudes to school and prepare pupils well for their future lives.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school takes its duty of care seriously, with a wide ranging programme of safety education for all pupils. The school is implementing the small number of recommendations in a health and safety report from the week before the inspection. Pupils who may be at risk are well supported by close working links with external agencies. Relationships between the school and the large majority of parents are entirely positive and constructive. A few parents commented that there could be better communication between them and the school, especially about how behaviour is managed. The breakfast club is used by up to 24 pupils each day. Pupils with particular learning needs and disabilities are quickly identified and supported well in their learning by well trained teaching assistants. All pupils are prepared thoroughly before they start school and when they move to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's own evaluation is that leadership and management are satisfactory. The inspection team agrees. However, leaders provide good clear direction for the school and the quality and rigour of self-evaluation activities are good. The leadership team has worked well with officers from the local education authority to identify inconsistencies in teaching and learning through careful monitoring across the school. As a result, many changes have been made to practices. These include a great improvement in the range and depth of what is taught. As a consequence, standards

have risen to average. Governance is satisfactory. The school has a very supportive governing body. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school but do not yet have a full understanding of all that has happened over the past two years. Careful planning sees the school well on course to achieve a balanced budget in the next financial year. Resources are deployed soundly, and the school gives satisfactory value for money. The provision of a strong team of support staff for pupils who have learning difficulties has been a particularly valuable use of the school's resources. The leadership and management team has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. Much of what is planned or was put into operation during the past year and a half has not had time to have a full impact on pupils' long term learning. The great majority of parents believe the school is run well, and that the school listens to what they and their children say.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	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	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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	2	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?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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

You will remember that three inspectors came to visit your school recently. Many of you spoke with us in lessons, in meetings and in the playgrounds. We would like to thank you for helping us by showing us your work, explaining things to us and for answering our questions clearly and honestly. What we liked most about your school We found that you are polite and well behaved in lessons and that you get on well with your teachers and their helpers. Those of you who need extra help are well supported. Almost all of you told us that there was very little bullying and that teachers are good at listening to you and dealing with anything that happens. Those of you on the school council explained this very sensibly. You have interesting lessons in many subjects. Most of you like your lessons and your work is improving as a result. You told us that you enjoy the themed weeks and using the computers in different subjects. Your headteacher is working to improve many things around the school. Almost all of your parents and carers tell us that they appreciate what the school does for you and for them. What we are asking for now We would like teachers to give some of you work that is harder, so you will learn at a faster rate. You can help in this by trying hard, always paying attention when your teacher is talking, and thinking carefully about what you should be learning next. We are also asking your teachers to communicate more with parents about the way the school deals with behaviour.