



Colmore Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103189
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286587
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector David Rzeznik HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Colmore Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3–7		B14 6AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4642820
Number on roll (school)	323	Fax number	0121 4644543
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Michael E R Jones
		Headteacher	Vivien Randall
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006	Inspection number 286587
-------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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 two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Colmore is a larger-than-average infant school with a part-time nursery. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; around a fifth are of Asian origin. A small number are of Black background or mixed heritage. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is slightly above average and rising. A handful of pupils are at the early stage of acquiring English. The school population is stable. The number claiming free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, is lower than average. Attainment on entry is average. The school has achieved the Arts Gold Mark, Investors in People status and Birmingham Healthy Schools accreditation.

Day care is provided before and after school in conjunction with the neighbouring junior school on the same site. The provision was inspected around the same time as the school and a copy of the inspection report is attached.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Inspectors agree with the school's own view of its success. One of the school's aims is to ensure that each child develops a love of learning and the self-confidence to approach a wide range of situations both in and out of school. Inspectors judge that this aim is met in full.

Pupils start school with skills that are typical of three- and four-year-olds. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes (Foundation Stage) particularly in terms of personal and social development and reach the expected levels for their age. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are developing well. Whilst their reading and writing skills are satisfactory, they are not as good as they could be. Standards at the end of Year 2 are significantly above average overall. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school because teaching is effective and the curriculum is innovative, interesting and suitably challenging. Classrooms and outdoor areas are organised imaginatively and are well resourced to provide interesting learning experiences. The arts curriculum is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal, creative and imaginative development.

Teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching methods are well selected and time is used very productively. Relationships in the classroom are excellent. Well-directed teaching assistants reinforce and support learning very effectively. In the Foundation Stage, child-initiated experiences and direct teaching are well balanced. Assessment of pupils' learning is good and the targets set in reading and writing are helping pupils to understand the National Curriculum level at which they are working and how they can improve. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are not formally assessed and so pupils' attainment and progress in both aspects are unclear.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils love coming to school and really enjoy themselves when they are there. They feel secure, and are self-assured and confident. They are enthusiastic, keen to work hard and their behaviour is exemplary. The research work being done by the brightest pupils is outstanding, and is making a difference. Enquiry-based work is leading to improvements in the outdoor curriculum and the resources used to teach writing in Year 2. Research successfully develops pupils' critical thinking and negotiating skills. One parent commented, 'the research project has given the opportunity for my child to 'think out of the box' and it really motivates him in other areas of learning'.

Pupils are well cared for. Child protection, staff vetting and health and safety procedures are effectively implemented. Leadership and management are good at all levels. This is a school constantly seeking to improve on its previous best. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and a strong sense of direction. She is rightly focused on developing the 'whole child' and removing the barriers that may impede their all-round development. Planning for improvement is secure; however, the school improvement plan is insufficiently sharp. It is not made sufficiently explicit how outcomes will be measured, particularly with regard to their impact on pupils'

performance. Initiatives are not always properly costed and some key subject priorities are omitted from the strategic plan. The school has satisfactory systems for tracking pupils' attainment. This is not yet underpinned by a robust analysis of the progress made by different groups of pupils. The school's capacity to improve further is good, as demonstrated by its ability to consistently raise standards since 2001.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Improve pupils' progress in reading and writing in the Nursery and Reception classes by developing literacy skills across all areas of learning.
- Improve development planning and further refine the tracking of pupils' progress to evaluate the attainment and progress made by different groups of pupils and use the information to inform intervention.
- Assess pupils' listening and speaking skills to judge their attainment and progress over time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the Nursery with skills that are broadly average. By the end of the Reception year they have made good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development.

By age of seven, standards are significantly above average in mathematics and writing, and above average in reading. Pupils make good progress given their original starting points and capabilities. Since 2001, results have been rising at a rate above that seen nationally. The more able pupils are achieving particularly well in mathematics and writing. Results in 2006 indicate that pupils' progress in reading has improved from satisfactory to good. Pupils with learning difficulties and those from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils work very well together in lessons, organise their own games in the playground and play happily together. The skills necessary for economic well-being are being developed at a fast rate. Pupils are actively encouraged to take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning. As a result, pupils are independent, articulate and confident to take risks. These qualities, in addition to the good progress made in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), are excellent preparation for the next stage of their education. The promotion of healthy meals and snacks is paying dividends as more and more pupils are choosing to eat fruit, salads and vegetables at mealtimes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because teachers have high expectations and use methods and resources that are consistently challenging. Lessons are stimulating and the imaginative use of resources leads to high levels of interest. For example, in an outstanding lesson about subtraction, pupils were spellbound as the teacher used music, physical activity, a computer toy and Arnie the purple parrot to teach them how to count back accurately. Behaviour management is excellent and teachers are good at sharing the lesson objectives so pupils know what they have to learn. Pupils relish the opportunities to show initiative, use the interactive whiteboards and to work collaboratively. Underpinning their enthusiasm is an understanding that learning is fun and important. In the few lessons where teaching and learning were just satisfactory teachers talk too much and pupils do not get enough opportunities to clarify their thinking or apply their prior learning. On occasions, the more able are set work that lacks challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum enables all pupils to make good progress in their basic skills and exceptional progress in their personal, moral and creative development. The wonderful drawings, paintings, sculptures and collages on display show how the arts curriculum fires pupils' imaginations. The work done with the artist in residence in the Foundation Stage is exceptional. It successfully develops pupils' speaking, imaginative and model-making skills. The 'Feed Me' project, based at the local allotment, allows pupils to successfully explore the natural environment and learn about their local heritage and history. The inspectors agree with the child who described the range of textile art that came out of this work as 'amazing'. Enrichment activities such as Bollywood dancing and Black History Week play an important role in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world at large.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know the pupils well. They work effectively as a team to provide a good level of care, guidance and support in a secure, safe and stimulating environment. Fire appliances and electrical items are subject to regular safety checks and sound risk assessments are undertaken for trips off-site. Guidance and support for pupils' personal development are particularly strong. Where pupils are set targets for what they need to learn next, in reading and writing, this is effective. There is a lack of guidance about how pupils can improve their reading and writing skills in the Foundation Stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide good strategic leadership. Leaders are not frightened to take risks and welcome innovation. The school is outward looking and enterprising. It has entered into a number of successful partnerships, which has increased the level of available expertise to further raise standards and has increased pupils' enjoyment. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Previously identified weaknesses, such as the provision in ICT and lack of a policy framework in personal, social and health education, are now strengths of the school.

There is a strong team ethic and the recent restructuring of responsibilities has led to staff being even more accountable for the standards and the quality of education provided. The school deservedly enjoys the confidence of parents, who hold it in high regard.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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 the learners' needs?	2
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

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Colmore Infant and Nursery School, Colmore Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 6AJ

Hello, I am one of the inspectors that visited your school. I am writing you a letter to tell you what we found out. Thank you for talking to us and for being so friendly and open. I know your mums and dads think the school is good, and the inspectors agree.

What the inspectors liked most

- Everybody works hard to ensure you enjoy yourself and get a good education. I can see why your parents are so pleased with the school and why they send you there.
- Your behaviour is outstanding both inside and outside the classroom. All the adults and the children get on so well together and you were very open and honest when talking to inspectors.
- All grown-ups help you learn as much as you can.
- We were pleased to see that you were choosing healthy options at lunch and snack time. Your work at the allotment is also helping you understand the importance of a healthy diet and that home-grown food is good for you.
- We were pleased that you knew your reading and writing targets and that they were helping you improve. The research you were doing was making a real difference by improving the outdoor curriculum and the resources used to teach writing in Year 2.
- The models, paintings, drawings, sculptures and collages on display were excellent. Your music is also of high quality.

We have asked the teachers to do some things to make the school even better

- We want the very youngest ones to improve their reading and writing. I think that they could read and write more often, and in more subjects.
- We have asked the teachers and governors to get even better at checking how well the school is doing and planning better for the future.
- Teachers are going to record how well you are listening and speaking.

Best wishes

David Rzeznik Lead Inspector