

# Larkfields Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122577
<b>Local Authority</b>	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	314332
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tony Harvey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S E Rose
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Coronation Road Nuthall Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG16 1EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9137730
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9458201

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The provision for children of higher attainment in English and mathematics.
- The amount of challenge in teaching for all children.
- How the school monitors, evaluates and improves its practice.

The inspector gathered evidence from observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and the school's documents, and from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 small infant school takes children from Nuthall and surrounding areas on the outer edge of Nottingham. The large majority of children are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion currently eligible for free school meals is well below average. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds the Investor in People and Artsmark Gold awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This school provides an outstanding quality of education. Children are happy and really enjoy their time here. Parents are very pleased with the care and education provided and how confident their children become as a result. The school values equally those of all abilities and from different backgrounds. This warm and supportive ethos ensures the children thrive and do very well. Many parents speak warmly of the school, summarised by the comment of one that 'Larkfields is a fantastic school, because it's friendly, well run and committed to every single child'.

Children enter the school with standards that are slightly above those expected for their age. They make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills that are above and, often, well above expectations, especially in their personal development. They make good progress in Year 1. In Year 2 they make excellent progress and at the age of seven do very well in national assessments. They make outstanding progress in their reading and standards are exceptionally high. Reading is supported very effectively, including through the work of reading volunteers and parents. Standards in writing and mathematics are above average and in some years well above average. At the age of seven, virtually all children achieve at least the level expected for their age in national assessments and many exceed this. Whilst not quite as many reach the higher standards in writing and mathematics as they do in reading, nevertheless children of all abilities make excellent overall progress and achieve very well.

Children's personal development is outstanding, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is one of the main reasons why the large majority grow in confidence and make rapid gains in their learning. The 'Every Child Matters' national agenda is the central focus for everything the school does. This is reflected in assemblies, displays, the school improvement plan and as a focus for governor visits.

The behaviour of the children is excellent and they have very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. Attendance is high. The school provides lots of high quality activities to develop physical fitness from enjoyable daily 'Wake and Shake' activities to lunchtime play and after-school sports. Much work has been done to help children recognise the benefits of a healthy diet but there remains more to do to persuade them and their families of the benefit of healthy packed lunches.

There are excellent opportunities for children to make a positive contribution to the school and local community. For instance, members of the school council were disgusted by a dog fouling in the local area and so wrote to the local newspaper and council. This was followed by a visit from the community warden. The children then made posters and presented them to the mayor of the borough and these were then fixed to the lampposts outside school. The school council has also visited County Hall and held its meeting in the committee rooms. This helps children develop a mature attitude for their age and prepares them very well for their future.

The school is very active in helping everyone learn how to keep safe including being a lead school in the national 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' initiative. There is no evidence of bullying and parents speak with pleasure about how happy their children are at school. Staff are very determined not to be complacent and continually monitor site safety issues including the on-going problem of parents driving into the school grounds.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding overall. It is particularly strong in Reception and Year 2. Here teachers plan very carefully to ensure a high level of challenge is provided for

all groups of children. Throughout the school, staff carefully track the progress children make from entry onwards. Such information is used particularly effectively in Year 2 to provide different but challenging activities for the range of abilities. While teaching in Year 1 is good overall, it is not quite as effective as in other parts of the school. Children are not always actively involved in tasks and sit and listen to adults when they could participate more. Occasionally concentration then wavers and some children offer little to discussions.

The curriculum is outstanding. The school has maintained a very positive focus on the arts, shown in high quality work around the school and in records of recent activities. The staff also plan a wide range of practically based tasks which are often recorded in the children's own words and style. This is very effective in encouraging them to observe things closely, discuss their ideas and think for themselves. There is a very good range of enrichment activities including sports and the arts.

The care, guidance and support of children are outstanding. The pastoral care is excellent and there is much warmth in relationships. Assessment is excellent. The needs of children are recognised through the systematic tracking of skills and progress from entry onwards. This helps identify if and where additional help might be needed, and support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. The needs of higher ability children are also recognised and challenge provided for them. Child protection procedures and the checks of those who work in school are thorough.

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher's commitment to the school community and determination to keep moving forward is exemplary. The senior teacher also offers excellent support including very high level teaching skills. School self-evaluation is excellent and recognises the strengths and areas for further development in all aspects of its work. The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection and has the capacity to continue to make excellent progress. Governance of the school has improved and is now outstanding. Discussions illustrate that several governors have a real depth of understanding of the work of the school. While there is only the minimum number of full governing body meetings, the programme of well planned visits by governors ensures an excellent focus on improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding in all areas. Because staff have created such a warm and welcoming ethos, children settle very quickly to school routines and are keen to work like their friends and siblings. Progress is particularly notable in their personal and social development and in developing communication, language and literacy skills. Many speak with a mature vocabulary for their age and are keen to read and write. They also have above expected skills in other areas and those of all abilities achieve very well. This is largely because teaching and learning, including curriculum planning, are excellent. Staff work together very well as a team and provide a very good range of activities with a practical basis and with an element of fun. The care, guidance and support of the children is excellent. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent with clear monitoring. This includes arrangements to ensure that the teaching and planning for the next group children who will be admitted next term is of high quality.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that children in Year 1 are provided with a wide range of activities that involve them in all parts of lessons and offer a consistently high level of challenge.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 the 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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Larkfields Infant School, Nuthall, NG16 1EP

Thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, at lunchtime and when I spoke to the school council. I think your school is great, it's outstanding! I think it's a happy place to be and your parents are right to be proud of how much you learn.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- Mrs Rose, the staff and governors all make sure that everything the school organises is excellent.
- You all seem to love coming to school and make lots of new friends.
- You make excellent progress in your work and learn a lot.
- The way everyone looks after you is outstanding.
- Teaching in Reception and Year 2 is excellent.
- There are lots of really interesting things to do in school and extra activities too.

This is what that I think could be improved.

- I think some of you in Year 1 could do even better if you were involved more in all parts of lessons.

To help your school, you could make sure that you try hard all the time. I would like to wish you every success in the future. Please remember to eat healthily!

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead Inspector