



Blossomfield Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104039
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277053
Inspection dates 10 November 2005 to 11 November 2005
Reporting inspector Marion Thompson RISP

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Eastcote Close
School category	Community		Shirley
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Solihull, West Midlands B90 3QX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 744 5522
Number on roll	229	Fax number	0121 744 0607
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Lorna Bosley
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Alexis Elliott

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Blossomfield is a small infant and nursery school in Solihull. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups has doubled recently and is slightly above the proportion expected nationally. These pupils are mainly of Indian and Pakistani heritage. Three pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average.

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 many excellent features, that provides good value for money. The success of the school is, in large part, due to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Since her appointment standards have risen rapidly. They are now above average in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and well above average for mathematics in Years 1 and 2, with high attainment in reading. The long standing decline in writing has been reversed and standards are now above average, although there is room for further improvement in the writing of more able pupils, especially boys. Overall, pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, make good progress. Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved, but planning and monitoring of teaching and learning is in need of further development. The level of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good, although information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently on a day to day basis. Personal development is excellent and attendance is above average. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of interesting work they do in lessons. The headteacher has been supported by an extremely committed and effective deputy head and governing body, and staff with much improved management skills. The school has made good progress since the last inspection because of recent improvements and is very well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to improve the standards of writing in Years 1 and 2, especially for more able boys.
- Continue to improve planning and monitoring in Nursery and Reception.
- Extend the use of ICT to support learning in other subject areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children come into Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge above those expected for their age. They make good progress and most children, including those from minority ethnic groups, are above average by Year 1. Pupils in the early stages of learning English make good progress. Standards have risen over the past two years because of improved planning and teaching.

National tests results in 2005 for Year 2 were above average and were high in reading. They represented good progress for all pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups. Results improved significantly overall, but particularly for boys and more able pupils in writing, reversing the downward trend since the previous inspection. Most pupils read fluently, reaching high standards. Boys develop positive attitudes to reading because they enjoy the non-fiction books the school has bought. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and standards in writing are above average and improving. The improvement in writing is mainly due to the vigorous action taken by the school to make writing more interesting for boys. For example it has been linked to sports and to creative activities, such as art. Standards in ICT, an issue at the time of the previous

inspection, have improved since new computers have been bought. They are now average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and most reach levels typical for their ages. Pupils at an early stage of language acquisition also receive good support and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils of all backgrounds learn to consider others from an early age. Teachers help them think for themselves so they develop independence. Pupils are very keen to come to school and attendance is above average. They know right from wrong, behave exceptionally well and have extremely positive attitudes. They are very proud of their school and know they are listened to through class councils. For example, pupils decided that they would like books organised into two boxes for fiction and non fiction.

Pupils feel very safe in school and they learn how to take care of themselves, for instance, when learning about electricity or the danger of fireworks. They are active and many eat healthily. Pupils from all backgrounds are exceptionally confident and articulate. They take the wide range of responsibilities offered extremely seriously, such as being playground buddies, and contribute to a variety of charities which they choose.

Through the study of different faiths, pupils have good grasp of different cultures represented within the school and show respect for the customs and beliefs of others. The very good development of social and basic skills prepares pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and has very good features. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved over the last two years and is now consistently good. Lesson plans in all classes are based on an accurate assessment of what pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those at the early stage of learning English, need to do to move on. Consequently, most lessons present pupils of all abilities with a high level of challenge and, where necessary, support. The purpose of lessons is clear and questions are used well to make pupils think for themselves. Good feedback helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Content is carefully chosen to ensure pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as their peers. Strategies are adopted to meet specific needs, for example, the use of topics such as Bob the Builder to motivate boys to write more readily. Specific skills, such as the improvement of hand control through movement lessons, help boys to improve their handwriting. However, there is room for further challenge for the most able pupils in writing. Occasionally lesson introductions are too long so pupils get restless and the lesson lacks pace. Instructions or explanations lack clarity from time to time so pupils are confused about what is asked of them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. It has been improved over the past two years to ensure children build on their learning well. Planning is in need of some further development. In Years 1 and 2 the curriculum provides a good range of activities that ensure all pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress. It is enriched by 'special weeks' when work in all subjects is related to a topic. For example, during the inspection pupils were engaged in a topic on light, linking different faiths, cultures, celebrations and electricity. Pupils also learn how to be confident, work with others, and understand different opinions. They learn about keeping healthy and safe, and benefit from a good variety of visitors, educational visits and clubs. Although ICT has improved it is not yet fully used to help pupils learn in other subjects. Clubs before and after school, such as 'Kids Club', provide activities beyond the school day to help meet the needs of pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care given to pupils is outstanding. The school's procedures to ensure pupils' safety are rigorous and regularly reviewed. Bullying and racism rarely occur and when they do they are dealt with very effectively. Adults treat pupils with respect and demonstrate good relationships.

The school monitors pupils' progress very well and promptly responds where there is any drop in achievement. Pupils know how well they are doing and are clear about how to improve. They are set very challenging targets, which they are constantly aware of, in literacy and numeracy.

The school works very well with parents. There are also good connections with neighbouring schools, and other agencies. The chair of governors says, 'Everyone here is a partner and you're in on the deal to get the best for pupils.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. On her appointment she rapidly established an understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. She involved the whole community, including governors, parents and pupils, in developing a vision for the school and in planning for improvement. This improvement plan is of very high quality and has led to a rapid improvement in standards in all subjects and better quality provision in Nursery and Reception. She benefits from extremely high quality support from knowledgeable and effective governors, who have been trained in self evaluation, and a very effective deputy head. Senior and middle managers within the school are becoming increasingly confident and skilful in fulfilling their roles, as a result of well planned training. The recently appointed Foundation Stage leader has made a good start. Closer monitoring

of Nursery and Reception is already planned but is not yet in place. Finances are managed well and directed at areas of greatest need, for example, new premises for the Nursery. Improvement since the previous inspection had been inadequate as important areas of the schools' work had worsened, for example standards in writing and provision in Foundation Stage. However, more recently improvement has been rapid. The school is very well placed to continue to improve.

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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?	2	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	1	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	2	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?	1	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?	2	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Blossomfield Infant and Nursery School Eastcote Close Shirley Solihull West Midlands B90 3QX

11 November 2005

Dear Children

We very much enjoyed ourselves at your school and would like to thank you for making us so welcome, particularly those pupils who spoke to us at length.

We think that the best things about your school are:

You work hard, enjoy learning and make good progress, especially in reading where you do very well.

You are extremely well behaved and show respect for others. You have very good attitudes to your work.

You are very well cared for by adults in the school. They know how well you are doing and quickly help you to do better when you get behind with your work.

Your headteacher is really smashing. She knows what to do to improve the school and the other adults help her well.

We are suggesting to your school that:

Teachers help pupils to improve their writing. We feel that some very clever children can do even better.

Teachers carry on making plans to improve Nursery and Reception and look carefully at what is happening to make sure improvements continue.

More use is made of computers and other information technology to help you in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Marion Thompson Lead inspector