

Blossomfield Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104039
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	323945
Inspection date	15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Timothy Bristow HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	219
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	113
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorna Bosley
Headteacher	Alexis Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Eastcote Close Shirley Solihull B90 3QX

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	15 October 2008
Inspection number	323945

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement and standards, particularly in boys' writing; the school's capacity to improve; teaching and learning; academic care, guidance and support; the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); and how well the school promotes community cohesion. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors and pupils, and from the parental questionnaires. Lessons were observed, the relevant school documents were scrutinised and samples of pupils' current and previous work were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its selfevaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Blossomfield Infant and Nursery School is below average in size. The majority of children generally join the school with skills that are above national expectations. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The pupils benefit from the privately managed Kids Club before and after school. The providers have yet to receive the report from their recent inspection. The school has been awarded the Gold Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Inspectors agree with the comments of one parent that sums up the views of many, 'The happy warmth of the school is truly infectious. I couldn't have wished for a better start in education for my children!' The achievement and standards of pupils are outstanding. Most pupils make very rapid progress through Key Stage 1 after an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the end of Year 2, standards are exceptionally high in reading and have been for the past five years. Standards in mathematics in recent years have been well above average. Since 2007, they have risen and in 2008, they were exceptionally high. The school has been extremely successful in raising standards in writing, which they identified as an area of relative weakness. In 2007, standards were above average, with the gap between boys and girls being wider than seen nationally. In 2008, standards were exceptionally high and the gap between boys and girls narrowed considerably; both boys and girls made excellent progress. Pupils' work and school assessment information show that these standards are being maintained. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher level for reading, writing and mathematics is well above average. Pupils who have moderate learning difficulties with English and mathematics, as well as those who have more specific difficulties, make similar progress to their peers. Pupils report that they love coming to this school. Their behaviour and attitudes to their work are outstanding. They work extremely hard in lessons, displaying great independence and cooperation. As well as being lively and enthusiastic, pupils demonstrate that they are very good listeners and respect the opinions of others. For example, in an excellent assembly pupils listened with great interest to their peers' thoughtful opinions on the issues raised by the story of The Selfish Giant. The attendance of pupils is above average. Pupils have a very responsible attitude to their own safety and their development of a healthy lifestyle is excellent. This is due to the outstanding curriculum for personal, health and social education. The contribution to the community made by pupils is good. Playground buddies take great responsibility for helping children at lunchtime and Year 1 pupils really appreciate working with a Year 2 partner when reading. Pupils' preparation for the next stage in their education is outstanding. Several factors explain why the pupils' achievement, and personal development and well-being are outstanding. Teaching and learning are outstanding and underpinned by excellent relationships between pupils and adults. The teachers' knowledge about each pupil is very impressive. They use this information exceptionally well to tailor activities to meet the specific needs of each pupil. Teaching assistants demonstrate great expertise when working with groups of pupils. The curriculum is excellent. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm when listing their many visits. As one parent reports, 'The school offers a huge variety of enriching activities and trips which help to make the children enthusiastic learners.' For example, the recent walk taken by Year 1 pupils in Bluebell Wood has motivated them to write some creative poetry. The teachers are highly skilled at exploiting links between subjects. This gives pupils the opportunity to practise skills learnt in English, mathematics and information and communication technology lessons in other subjects. The care, guidance and support for the pupils are outstanding and are at the heart of the success of this school. Many parents appreciate the great care each child receives so that they all feel very safe and secure. All procedures for child protection and health and safety are in place. Excellent measures for tracking progress mean that teachers are constantly checking to make sure pupils are doing as well as they can. Teachers exploit a range of high quality additional reading, writing and mathematics activities to help pupils who find their work difficult. The school has good links with outside agencies to support the welfare and progress of different groups of pupils. Good links have been established with the Kids Club

so that pupils benefit from activities that complement lessons in school. The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The leadership of the headteacher is extremely effective. She has established a very able team who demonstrate excellent leadership skills. Self-evaluation is rigorous and has led to considerable improvements. For example, the steps taken to raise standards in boys' writing have not only been successful in doing this so that they are now exceptionally high, but have also raised standards in girls' writing. Consequently, the school demonstrates outstanding capacity for improvement. Governance of the school is good. The governing body has recently experienced a period of transition when some experienced governors retired and were replaced by new personnel. Nevertheless, a strong core of experienced governors has ensured that this has not affected the work of the school. The school promotes community cohesion well. There are many opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to appreciate and understand the local and wider community. For example, a Muslim parent comes to talk to the pupils about the Islamic religion. However, the school has recognised that a very small minority of parents are reluctant to become involved in the life of the school. The vast majority of parents are supportive of its work. The school gives outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The EYFS is outstanding. As one parent reports, summing up the views of many, 'My daughter, now in Year 1, had a superb experience.' Leadership and management are outstanding. The staff have prepared thoroughly for the new EYFS requirements. The Foundation Stage coordinator has worked extremely effectively to improve the provision in the EYFS since the last inspection. This has been very successful because children make rapid progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the end of Reception in 2008, all children achieved skills that were in line with expectations for their age, whilst most exceeded them.. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents report that their children have settled into nursery extremely well and some report that they are surprised and delighted by the rapid progress they are making. This is due to the very high levels of care, guidance and support provided by the staff, who work very effectively together. An extremely important feature of the success of the EYFS is the knowledge and understanding the staff have of the needs of each child. There are very thorough procedures for the observation and assessment of each child coupled with excellent partnerships with parents. This enables staff to be very accurate when matching activities to the requirements of each child. Consequently, children thoroughly engage in the many exciting and stimulating activities provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take steps to encourage and involve the very small minority of parents who are reluctant to be involved in the work of the school.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 October 2008 Dear Children Inspection of Blossomfield Infant and Nursery School, Shirley, B90 3QX Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. You made us feel extremely welcome. If you remember, we came to look at the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were extremely friendly, well behaved and polite. You are very respectful and considerate to each other. You get on very well indeed with the adults in school and we agree with you when you say that you feel very safe and secure. We were pleased to see that you thoroughly enjoy your very interesting lessons. You all work very hard and do extremely well in your lessons. We agree with most of your parents who think that you get a fantastic start to your education in this school. You are extremely well looked after. Your headteacher, staff and the school governors have worked very hard to achieve this, but they are always looking for ways to make your education even better. I have said to them that they should now find ways to involve all your parents in the life of the school. I am sure that you will all continue to work hard and thoroughly enjoy your education. Yours sincerely Tim Bristow Her Majesty's Inspector