

Annie Lennard Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103932
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308461
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sonia Goldby
Headteacher	Michelle Hollingsworth
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 0001
School address	The Oval Smethwick B67 6LE
Telephone number	01214 294284
Fax number	01214299032

Age group	3-8
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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: whether the school had been too modest in some of its self-evaluation, achievement and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and its use in other subjects and the impact of middle managers on raising achievement. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, the school's own assessment records, observation of the school at work, discussions with children, staff, parents and governors, and analysis of parental questionnaires. All classrooms were visited. 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 the self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Annie Lennard's is smaller than most infant schools and is situated in a large urban conurbation. It is part of a Federation with Moat Farm Junior School and it is unusual in that it has a Year 3 class. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. More pupils than usual are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties is above average. When children join the Nursery, their attainment is below the expected levels, especially in their communication and language skills and in their personal and social development.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Annie Lennard's is an outstanding school where pupils of all abilities and backgrounds succeed and thrive. One of the key reasons for the school's many successes is the fact that the headteacher's inspiring leadership enthuses others to have the highest possible aspirations for the school and the pupils. She has skilfully built a staff team that is totally committed to school improvement and who strive for excellence in all that they do. All parents speak in glowing terms about the school's considerable achievements. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote, 'This is a warm, welcoming school that has exceptional reviews within and outside the immediate community'. Others say that they would recommend 'this fabulous school to their friends' and another says, 'I only wish the school was a primary and could keep my child until Year 6'.

It is obvious from the moment pupils, parents and visitors enter this attractive school with its stunning displays, where they are warmly met and welcomed by the headteacher, that this is a very happy, safe and lively place where learning is fun. From a below average starting point in the Nursery, all pupils achieve outstandingly well and attain exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This impressive achievement has been the picture for the last four years. The achievement of pupils in Year 3 is also excellent and this, coupled with very close links with the nearby junior school, ensures that they are very well prepared for transition into Year 4.

Children are given an excellent and very happy education in the Foundation Stage. There is a highly effective emphasis on developing children's early communication and personal and social skills, which results in outstanding achievement. Children are also successfully encouraged and enabled to become independent by selecting their own learning activities. The Foundation Stage staff confidently and capably succeed in ensuring that all children make outstanding progress and virtually all attain the expected levels on entry to Year 1.

Pupils say they love school, and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They behave exceptionally well, get on extremely well together and enjoy taking responsibility by being school councillors and playground 'buddies'. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and underpins much of the school's work. As a result of the very successful personal, social and health education, pupils understand extremely well how to keep themselves safe and healthy and understandably are very proud of their recently acquired Gold Healthy Schools Award. Despite the school's excellent efforts, pupils' attendance remains broadly average. Attendance figures are depleted because many young children contract childhood ailments and a small number of parents take their children out of school during term time to go on holiday.

The school's safe and very supportive environment enables all groups of pupils, including looked after children, those learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to flourish and make excellent progress. Parents recognise and appreciate the outstanding care provided for all pupils and in particular for those with complex learning or medical needs. One parent who had 'doubts and fears' that her child would find life in a mainstream school difficult writes, 'I can already see a vast improvement in my child's learning and social skills because the staff welcomed us with exceptional care and consideration and true professionalism'.

A fundamental reason why standards are so high is that the quality of teaching throughout the school is outstanding. This has a considerable impact on pupils' learning and achievement. By pitching work and support precisely at pupils' own levels, staff ensure that all pupils enjoy their work and feel they are successful. There are obvious strengths in how work is planned, how time is managed and in staff's high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. ICT is skilfully and effectively used by staff and pupils so that standards are above the expected levels and used competently in all subjects. The team of learning support staff are much valued staff members and confidently take responsibility for leading the Healthy Schools project and for overseeing and ensuring the high calibre displays throughout the school. Staff make excellent use of precise assessment information to catalogue and track pupils' progress and to make predictions. Challenging targets are used to great effect in helping pupils to attain in tests at the end of all year groups. Most pupils are aware of how they can improve their work but a few pupils are unclear about what their learning targets are. The excellent curriculum is enriched with many clubs, special weeks, visits and visitors which enhance teaching and pupils' enjoyment. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. There are excellent arrangements for guiding pupils on their academic performance and the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. Excellent links with parents, outside agencies and the local community enriches and enlivens pupils' learning.

The school's success is securely founded on extremely effective leadership and management. Staff make a highly effective team, extremely well directed by the headteacher, whose vision and perceptive monitoring continue to drive this particularly successful school onward and upward. Senior leaders and middle managers play a very successful part in the school's management, producing action plans which not only steer their subjects but also feed the priorities of the school's improvement plan. Governance is very supportive and is effectively developing its role in evaluating the school's work. The headteacher has an extremely clear view of the school's strengths and wastes no time in identifying and taking action where improvements are required. This outstanding evaluation, coupled with excellent improvement since the last inspection in terms of raising pupils' achievement and skilfully tracking their progress, proves that the school has an enormous capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As soon as children join the Nursery, they start to make rapid progress in all areas of their development because of the outstanding leadership and management, excellent teaching and loving care they receive. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children attain the expected levels for their age. One of the main contributory factors to this excellent achievement is the fact that staff skilfully assess children's precise level of spoken language. This accurate assessment is immediately followed up with outstanding support and exciting activities planned to develop children's communication skills, thus raising children's confidence and self-esteem. Nursery and Reception staff work as a highly effective team and have excellent knowledge and understanding of the personal and learning needs of young children. This ensures that children make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their general well-being, and are well equipped for their Year 1 class. Parents feel their children have a 'wonderful start to school life' and appreciate the endless patience, happy faces and unbounded enthusiasm of all the staff. The curriculum is excellent and provides constant pleasure, excitement and adventure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils are told how they can make their work even better.

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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 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 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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

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.

Annex A

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 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	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

26 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Annie Lennard Infant School, Smethwick, B67 6LE.

It was a real treat for me to come to your school, and thank you for a very happy day. Your school is outstanding. That means that the staff not only take excellent care of you but are also extremely successful at helping you to do your best and reach really high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

There are lots of great things about your school.

- You are very good at working hard, helping each other and listening to your teachers, and you do extremely well in all your lessons.
- The staff care about you very much; they are excellent at teaching you and they make learning really interesting and fun, giving you many exciting things to do.
- Your headteacher and other staff are very clever at running the school and making sure you all have a good time and do really well.
- Anybody who needs extra help is always given it.
- You love learning new things and are very good at behaving well and being kind to each other.
- For all these reasons, you make excellent progress.

Your headteacher and staff have lots of good ideas to make the school even better. I agree with them that it would be good to make sure all of you know exactly how you can make your work even better.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and behave well, and always being kind to each other.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox Lead inspector



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Lead inspector