

Richard Alibon Primary School with ARP for Cognitive and Learning Difficulties : SEN Base

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Unique Reference Number | 130357 |
| Local Authority | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham |
| Inspection number | 360132 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 January 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | John Paull |

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

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 450 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Terence Wade |
| Headteacher | Mr Andrew Fullagar |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 March 2008 |
| School address | Alibon Road Dagenham RM10 8DF |
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Inspection number 360132

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons that were taken by 17 different teachers. Pupils' work in books, folders and on display was scrutinised. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders and managers, members of the governing body and pupils. Eighty-six questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers were analysed and an inspector spoke to a small number of parents and carers face to face. All views expressed were taken into account. Information in documents related to safeguarding, future plans and others that track pupils' progress through the school were also taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- The effectiveness with which leaders and managers explore whether attainment, learning and progress are high enough for all pupils, including those in specialist provision.
- The extent to which teaching, assessment procedures and the curriculum have improved since the previous inspection.
- The accuracy with which the school has evaluated its provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The strength of the school's partnership with parents and carers and whether new initiatives to improve it are working.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than most other primary schools. It serves a culturally diverse area of East London. The school has its own Nursery and Reception classes for three- to five-year-olds in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nearly half of its pupils have minority ethnic heritages. The largest of these groups is drawn from Black African backgrounds. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above average. The school accommodates a specialist base for pupils with learning difficulties of a cognitive nature. The school manages a breakfast club.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and it is improving quickly under its headteacher's astute and highly caring leadership. His evaluation of what to do next to secure improvement is perceptive and accurate, and initiatives to raise performance are beginning to take effect. The identification of teaching quality as the most important aspect to tackle is bearing fruit particularly effectively. Teaching is now consistently good, whereas it was satisfactory and inconsistent in the inspection of 2008. Nevertheless, several staff are recently appointed, including some in leadership roles. Improvements in the delegation and redistribution of leadership responsibilities, while beginning to show impact on performance, are therefore not fully embedded in practice, so the school's capacity to improve remains satisfactory.

Progress in lessons has accelerated and is now good and previous underachievement is being eradicated. As a result, higher proportions of pupils are attaining the expected levels for their age and attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science, with upward trends since 2008. However, not enough pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels are doing so. Learning over time and overall achievement, therefore, remain satisfactory, rather than good, owing to previous underachievement that is now being addressed. A contributory factor here is that curricular planning is not always sufficiently clear about links between learning in different subjects. This limits opportunities for pupils to explore the relevance of acquired skills and knowledge to new situations across the curriculum. Leaders have also correctly identified the need to develop a more creative approach in what is taught. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both within the cognitive learning base and in the main school, also make satisfactory progress. The reasons that their progress is not faster are similar to those for all other pupils. Advice and support from experts and agencies are sought and applied systematically. Teaching is nearly always lively and engaging so pupils concentrate and learn effectively. This improvement means that pupils' needs are now being met effectively.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and pupils' behaviour are good. For example, pupils understand the principles of right and wrong and apply this knowledge well to their behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils get on sensibly, so little time is wasted on correcting poor behaviour. They cooperate well socially, so groups and partners work well as teams, further enhancing opportunities for learning and progress. When asked, pupils are quick to state that they enjoy school and feel safe. None of this is surprising as the care, guidance and support that staff offer pupils are strong elements of provision and staff vetting and safeguarding are taken very seriously. Average attendance contributes to satisfactory preparation for pupils' futures. While schemes to raise awareness of community cohesion nationally and globally remain at an early stage, success is evident in establishing the school within the local community.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in all subjects, with a particular focus on pupils with the potential to attain at levels above those expected for their age.
- Improve the curriculum, by:
 - developing cross-curricular links more effectively, with a particular focus on the thinking skills of potential higher-attainers
 - completing plans to put greater emphasis on opportunities to develop pupils' creative skills.
- Ensure that all new initiatives to raise performance, such as those in English and investigative approaches in mathematics and science, are fully completed and embedded in practice

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve broadly average attainment in English, mathematics and science. Learning and progress are currently good in lessons, but underachievement in the past has held back some potentially higher attainers. Overall achievement is therefore satisfactory. For example, one Year 6 class made good progress in applying their understanding of decimal notation in the recording of measurement. However, much of this was filling in gaps in past learning. As a result, even though this learning was very successful, it did not fully match the higher levels that might otherwise be achieved. In another Year 6 lesson, pupils showed good understanding of how to separate compound shapes into constituent parts to work out perimeters. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively, including those in specialist provision, so their rates of learning are also improving well. Pupils' books throughout the school demonstrate that the pupils' writing is beginning to include examples of rich vocabulary, good use of punctuation and reasonable spelling. Reading skills are also improving, so progress is picking up here as well, helped by sessions that are set aside for all pupils to practise their skills. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported effectively and thrive in the school's caring ethos, so their learning and progress are equally satisfactory overall, but also improving to good rates currently.

Similar patterns of learning, progress and achievement are also seen in the work of younger pupils. Those in Year 2 are currently learning effectively and making good progress in lessons. Attainment now is much closer to average and is improving year on year. In assessments in 2010 all subjects were broadly average, whereas two years ago they were below average.

One of the main reasons that pupils give for feeling safe at school is that older pupils support younger ones so well. This is based on pupils' great willingness to contribute their time and effort in helping the school to run smoothly. A group of playground helpers, known as 'RAPS', help and advise other pupils in how to play together effectively, for example. They receive training to carry out their duties and take the role very seriously. This is typical of how pupils conduct themselves. They know much about eating healthily and the importance of physical activity. However, they admit themselves that they do not always do as much as they could in these respects outside school. Pupils contribute well

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also to the community beyond school, raising funds for charity and visiting elderly people's homes to sing and wish them well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good in all subjects. It is frequently characterised by good planning that details what should be done to adapt work to interest different groups, including boys and girls, and those of different ethnicity. Teaching is also adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Formal assessments, allied to teachers' ongoing knowledge of pupils, are used effectively to plan future work. This is equally the case for those with cognitive difficulties, both when they are working in the specialist base and when they are in classrooms in the main school. That said, longer term planning of the curriculum is less clear about how and where cross-curricular links should be made, reducing opportunities for more-able pupils especially to think creatively. On rare occasions during the inspection, there were insufficient relevant activities planned for pupils. When this was the case, the pace of learning drifted, slowing progress down as pupils ran out of things to do and waited for the teacher. Planning contains all the subjects that it should, including personal, social, health and citizenship education, and places a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. This includes a whole-school focus on the recent introduction of a scheme known as 'Big Writing'. Improvements in investigative

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skills in mathematics and science are also underway, although not yet fully embedded in practice. Extra-curricular activities, including after-school clubs, contribute to enhancing the children's learning experiences and developing basic skills, particularly in sports and music. Nevertheless, scope exists for adding to enrichment activities through educational visits.

Adults encourage pupils to tell them at any time if they have any worries. Pupils are very appreciative of this and of the boxes provided in their classrooms where they can post concerns. Pupils confirm that the staff respond effectively when they do this. This approach contributes much to the good relationships formed between pupils and adults in the school which, in the classroom situation, adds to pupils' willingness to accept advice and correction, enhancing teaching and learning. The breakfast club provides a smooth start to the day for those pupils using it and its staff manage it calmly. Transition arrangements to secondary school are carefully managed with a series of meetings for parents and carers and meetings between class teachers and tutors, special needs coordinators and teachers from special needs departments. Similarly, transition from Reception classes to Year 1 is well managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The present headteacher took up his post shortly after the last inspection. He made it the main priority to improve the quality of teaching, based on clear and astute identification of weaknesses. A programme of careful monitoring, evaluation and professional development has proved remarkably successful, coupled with good appointments when posts are vacant. Other improvements are underway, including, for example, to the curriculum and arrangements for involving parents and carers effectively in meetings to establish and share planning of their children's future learning. The school's leadership team has also undergone much change in personnel and roles, as have the responsibilities and accountability of subject leaders. Owing to the newness to role of several leaders and managers, these changes, while beginning to demonstrate their worth, are not fully embedded in practice. Partnerships that promote learning are sought with alacrity and advice is pursued effectively. One telling example is the school's involvement in a project known as 'London Challenge'. This allows teachers to acquire each other's most effective methods by visiting each other in school and sharing what works best. Ideas learned this way are already producing further improvements in teaching and the curriculum. The governing body is increasing its involvement. Its members are supportive and

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knowledgeable of the school and are beginning to ask pertinent and helpful questions. That said, they are too dependent on the headteacher for much of their information.

Other well-managed partnerships include several with agencies that support the school's pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. As a result, social or other barriers to learning are dealt with so pupils can benefit from the school's much-improved quality of teaching. Equality of opportunity is evident in the way that any such vulnerability is tackled with determination, irrespective of pupils' ethnicity or backgrounds. However, this is not as effective in promoting the needs of higher-attainers. Family learning opportunities have contributed to the school's growth as a cohesive element in the life of the community around it. An audit and action plan showing how to forge links further afield are, however, at an early stage. Safeguarding, including policies for child protection, first-aid and the assessment of possible risks to safety are thorough and effective and are also applied to the breakfast club.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Successful routines that settle children quickly when they first arrive are evident. These are built on good initial contact with families, including home visits. Later on, the staff provide meetings for parents and carers about early learning. Information that parents and carers share is used to ensure that children's progress begins quickly as soon as they enter the Nursery. The staff observe children's activities and use their ongoing notes and assessments to plan relevant activities based on all areas of learning. Indications are that learning and development are improving well, although performance was weaker a few years ago. By the time pupils enter Year 1, attainment is now broadly average. Improvements in planning and the layout of the Nursery and Reception classes are

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underway and more are planned. Already this has enabled teachers to focus better on establishing the correct balance between opportunities for children to pursue their own ideas indoors and outside and times when adults direct learning. This is improving children's independence and self-reliance. It is also contributing to raising their levels of interest and engagement with activities.

All the adults are well-motivated practitioners, who plan thoroughly. Resources are tailored effectively to meet individual requirements, although the complexity of adults' questioning of children does not always vary sufficiently according to each individual's different needs. Sound leadership is ensuring that improvements are secure and continuing, although much of what has been introduced is recent and not enough time has passed for it to reach full effectiveness. The present Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator is knowledgeable and has many good-quality plans for further development, but has been in post for only a short time.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are pleased with the school, which can be seen in responses to questionnaires and the comments of those who were spoken to directly. A few feel that the school does not do enough to promote a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that options for children at lunchtime are good in this respect and a reasonable range of physical activities is available. When asked, a number of pupils demonstrated that they know much about healthy eating and keeping fit and that the school emphasises it. They admitted that they do not always follow this when out of school. Other small proportions of parents and carers felt that behaviour is not good and that their suggestions and concerns are not taken into account. Inspectors saw little to support the view that behaviour is a problem. On the contrary, it was consistently good in lessons and pupils were polite and helpful out of lessons. New procedures for consulting parents and carers have been introduced and other changes are planned. Effectiveness is subject to ongoing monitoring and future review.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Richard Alibon Primary School and base for pupils with cognitive and learning difficulties to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 450 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 47 | 55 | 37 | 43 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 48 | 56 | 36 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 32 | 37 | 47 | 55 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 29 | 34 | 53 | 62 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 33 | 38 | 48 | 56 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 31 | 36 | 47 | 55 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 26 | 30 | 49 | 57 | 10 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 24 | 28 | 57 | 66 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 24 | 28 | 57 | 66 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 32 | 37 | 42 | 49 | 40 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 17 | 20 | 55 | 64 | 10 | 12 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 30 | 35 | 46 | 53 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 39 | 45 | 40 | 47 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 1 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of

completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Alibon Primary School with ARP for Cognitive and Learning Difficulties: SEN Base, Dagenham RM10 8DF

Thank you for being so polite and willing to talk to my colleagues and me when we came to your school. Your good behaviour and helpfulness contributed a lot to make the two days go well. We also enjoyed visiting your lessons and seeing your work. It is good that so many of you say that you like your school. All of the children to whom we spoke said that they feel safe and well looked after. We found that your school provides a satisfactory standard of education and that it is improving well.

You will see some of the other important things that we found out in this list.

- Your teachers teach you well, so you succeed and make good progress in your lessons.
- Progress was not as good a couple of years ago. This means that some of you have some ground to make up, although this is improving quickly.
- All the adults in school care for you well and the staff work together closely to make sure that you enjoy school and are safe there.
- You show great willingness to do jobs that help your teachers to run the school smoothly.
- The headteacher has worked hard and successfully to introduce new ideas to improve your school, although it will take more time for some of these ideas to bed down.

We have asked your school to do three things to help improve it further.

- Focus on providing more difficult work for those of you who can do it. You can help by telling teachers when you find work easy.
- Provide you with more opportunities to be creative.
- Make sure that all the new things that have been introduced are completed and followed through thoroughly. You can help with this too by making sure that you completely understand all the new ways of doing things.

Yours sincerely

John W Paull

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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