

Five Elms Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101228
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	376527
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	498
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Canary
Headteacher	Helen Collins
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 October 2008
School address	Wood Lane Dagenham RM9 5TB
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jacqueline Marshall

Additional inspector

Joanna Jones

Additional inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons and part lessons, taught by 14 teachers, amounting to approximately 10 and a half hours in total. For approximately half of the lessons, inspectors were accompanied by the headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the school's documentation: policies, including those relating to safeguarding, data on pupils' progress, attendance figures and the school's development planning. They scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 98 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 108 from a sample of Key Stage 2 pupils and 27 from staff.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The pupils come from predominantly White British and Black African families as well as from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly half of the children are learning to speak English as an additional language and, of these, the majority join with little or no English. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is higher than average and includes a range of needs. The school has an Additionally Resourced Provision with 18 places for hearing impaired pupils. In this over-subscribed provision, there are currently 20 children aged three to 11. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A higher proportion of pupils than usual join or leave the school at other than the expected times. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes and the separate Nursery. Almost all children who attend the Nursery continue into the Reception class. The school runs a breakfast club every morning.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Children get off to a really good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue to make good progress through the school because the teaching is good and pupils are keen to learn. The school is not outstanding because some inconsistencies in teaching and the use of marking and targets for pupils restrict the rate of progress.
- All groups of pupils achieve well. Staff are particularly good at helping those who join the school at different times each term. Similarly, those learning English as an additional language and those with hearing impairments benefit from effective support and the highly inclusive nature of the school.
- Teaching has improved and is now good. Teachers make effective use of assessments to plan well-matched activities. However, tasks are not always adapted quickly enough during lessons to take account of how pupils are getting on. Most lessons engage and challenge pupils, including at the start or end of lessons when the whole class are together. Where this is not a consistent feature, the pace of learning dips. Similarly, the effectiveness of how teachers use marking and individual targets to accelerate learning varies across the school.
- Pupils enjoy their whole time in the school and their attendance is above average. Their behaviour and attitudes are good, and at times exemplary. The very large majority of parents, carers and pupils agree the school is thorough in ensuring that pupils are safe and secure.
- Leaders' and managers' plans to improve the school demonstrate their understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Performance management procedures and the leadership of teaching are good overall. However, in their programme of classroom visits, leaders do not always focus sharply enough on how well pupils are learning to secure consistency in teaching or pupils' progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress across the school in order to raise attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 by:
 - consistently using assessment information to plan tasks that are well matched to all pupils' abilities
 - ensuring that all pupils are actively engaged and involved in their learning at all times
 - ensuring that marking and individual targets are used consistently to help pupils to improve their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils typically show a positive attitude towards learning. Where learning is best, pupils respond with interest to tasks that are well matched to their abilities and they are clear both about their learning targets for the lesson and their work in general. For example, they talk eagerly about what they have learnt, about what strategies they might need to solve the problems they are set and whether they will meet the success criteria for the lesson. Sometimes, when there is less challenge at the start of lessons or pupils feel teachers 'over explain' when they would 'rather get on with' their work, progress slows for some.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children arrive with skills that are generally well below those expected for their age. They are making good progress in all areas of learning because planned activities consistently reinforce and revisit learning, helping to build children's speaking and listening skills particularly well. Consequently, pupils' attainment has risen since the previous inspection and is now average when they join Year 1. Improvements in communication, language and literacy are helping to raise the standards pupils reach by Year 2.

Throughout the school, all groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, make good progress and achieve well. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average by the time pupils leave school. The effective systems for tracking pupil progress have accelerated progress since the previous inspection. Work in books and the school's data show that the current Year 6 pupils are attaining at higher levels.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage use the skills they learn in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) as they write independently and have lots of opportunities to practise and consolidate these skills. This solid start is built upon well so that pupils' standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved year on year and are now average. Attainment in reading by Year 6 is also average, but represents good progress from pupils' below average starting points when they entered Year 3. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading is developed effectively because

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teachers promote reading well, often using texts to support learning in other subjects.

Parents and carers expressed a high level of satisfaction in the progress their children make and how well the school enables them to be involved in their children's learning. Inspection findings endorse these views.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is typically good over time and some teaching observed in the inspection was outstanding. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that this is the case. Staff prepare lessons carefully, matching the work well to pupils' different needs and linking different aspects of learning. Classrooms are welcoming, interesting and attractive environments which support learning well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the range of activities for the outdoor and indoor areas enhances different aspects of the children's development well and builds on their own interests effectively. During the inspection, children took part in planning their activities for the next day. Later, they were fully engaged in activities linked to a recent visit by the fire service. Lots of opportunities to develop their vocabulary, talk about what they would do if there was a fire, discuss whom to call and how they might help each other sprang from their ideas. Lessons on the whole are very well paced, with good use of time. Occasionally, when talking to the whole class together, opportunities to adapt questioning and tasks to reflect the differing abilities are missed and, as a result, learning dips.

Systems to help pupils new to the school settle into class are good. Staff are adept at quickly assessing pupils' starting points and using this information effectively to plan appropriate work for them. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well through a mix of class, group and individual activities. This is especially the case for those pupils with a hearing impairment. Specialist staff provide highly tailored support for each pupil's individual needs, enabling them to make good gains whether working one to one or as part of the whole class. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to ensure that pupils with behavioural difficulties are helped to learn to behave appropriately in class.

The curriculum is interpreted imaginatively, with a particularly effective focus in developing pupils' communication skills. Lessons are organised so there is an interesting range of activities to keep pupils' attention, and very good relationships between staff and pupils also keep the pupils focused. Teachers take every opportunity to thread the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into their teaching.

Work is marked regularly. In some classes, teachers consistently provide good suggestions to extend pupils' learning and pupils are frequently reminded of their personal targets as well as those for the lesson. However, in a few classes, opportunities are sometimes missed to show pupils how they can improve their work or to provide them with time to respond to the teachers' comments. Where pupils

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make rapid progress, as observed in both English and mathematics sessions in Year 6, teachers use the knowledge they gain from assessment during lessons to adjust their questioning and set new tasks. Pupils' misconceptions are quickly tackled; time to consolidate learning is provided or the level of challenge is increased.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school's positive promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key factor in their good, and sometimes exemplary, behaviour. The school's effective efforts to support the whole school community are evident in many ways. For example, the work with families who might otherwise find it difficult to access education is evident in their children's regular attendance. The popular breakfast club, as well as a highly valued resource for all families, is also successful in helping attendance and punctuality. Due to school leaders' effective promotion of the key values of 'can do, resilience, expectation, aspiration and motivation', known to the pupils as CREAM, pupils have positive attitudes to learning, get on well together and show considerable support for one another, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.

Pupils newly arrived at the school promptly learn the expectations for behaviour and settle quickly. Incidents of bullying, though recorded, are rare. Whilst pupils acknowledged that it has occurred in the past, they were keen to explain how behaviour has improved. They recognised that sometimes pupils fall out over a game or friendships, but reported that in such cases they know which adults to turn to for support. Similarly they were keen to explain how they would deal with a range of types of bullying and knew exactly whom to ask for help if they need to. The very large majority of parents, carers and pupils responding to the questionnaire commented positively on how the school deals with behaviour. Pupils also agreed that behaviour is typically good, though attention can dip sometimes when introductions to lessons are too long.

Leadership and management

Strong leadership by the headteacher and senior leaders ensures that the school's ethos is happy and cohesive, with staff feeling valued as part of the team. The school is improving. Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is now good. The school has met its recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection, so that, for example, the Nursery and Reception areas are now well resourced and inviting. As a result of this forward movement, together with the school's accurate understanding of its strengths and what remains to be done, it is well placed to continue to improve. Leaders visit classes regularly to ensure that standards of teaching are improving and have focused on improving teaching techniques. This is supported well by continuing professional development. They agree that, for a few staff, a greater emphasis on how well pupils' are learning is necessary to eradicate inconsistency in the quality of teaching and, ultimately, pupils' learning.

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Leaders, managers and members of the governing body are effective in ensuring that the arrangements to keep pupils safe are rigorous. Statutory requirements concerning safeguarding are met. Leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity particularly well, ensuring that all pupils, whatever their social or ethnic backgrounds or needs, make good progress. Hearing impaired staff provide strong role models for pupils and parents alike. Pupils respect one another, and those from all backgrounds get on well together because discrimination is not tolerated.

The curriculum is effective in meeting pupils' needs. Pupils report that they enjoy the school's programme of clubs and visits. In assembly, the pupils regularly perform short scenes to entertain their peers and to give them a taste of what they have been learning. The pupils' enjoyment of such shared experiences shows the strength of the school's development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Five Elms Primary School, Dagenham RM9 5TB

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear, from talking to you and from your responses in the questionnaires you answered, that you like school and how much you enjoy all that the teachers plan for you. We agree that you get along well and look out for one another. We think your school gives you the right help so that you know how to behave well and keep safe. Your attendance is above average – well done!

The inspection found that Five Elms is a good school. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs well and teachers are good at helping you make good progress in your work. The leaders in the school know just what needs to be done to make sure your school keeps on getting better. In order to help you to reach even higher levels, we have asked the staff at your school to do two things.

- Make sure the tasks you have always match your needs and teachers do not spend too long over-explaining them so that all of you are actively involved in your learning, throughout your lessons.
- Make sure, like in the best lessons, that you are regularly reminded of your targets, that marking always helps you know what you need to do next to improve and that you have time to respond to the comments your teachers make in your books.

You can all help by continuing to get on well together and trying your best in lessons. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall
Lead inspector

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