

Earlsmead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102219
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	355153
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2011
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Tullo
Headteacher	Emma Billington
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed 12 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, groups of pupils and staff. They also talked to parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the governing body minutes, reports from the School Improvement Partner and data on pupils' progress. They analysed questionnaires received from 82 parents and carers, 103 pupils and 45 staff.

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

- How effectively the school is raising attainment and improving pupils' progress in writing, and raising the attainment of a minority of underachieving pupils.
- How effectively the school is providing for the needs of the substantial number of pupils with English as an additional language and the high proportion of pupils who join the school part way through their education.
- How effectively the school is reducing inconsistencies in teaching and learning.
- How effectively the leadership at all levels is monitoring progress and implementing various strategies for improvement.
- How effectively the school is furthering the personal development and key skills of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Earlsmead Primary is a larger than average-sized school. Most pupils are from minority ethnic heritage, with sizeable groups from Asian, Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds. Over half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, with 26 languages other than English being spoken by pupils' families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. These comprise a range of behavioural, emotional and social issues as well as difficulties with the basic skills of literacy or numeracy, and a few pupils with physical disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just above average. There is a high turnover of pupils, including some from Traveller families, and some incomers are from an asylum-seeker or refugee background. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. The school has Healthy Schools status and holds the Sustainable Travel award. It operates a breakfast club and after-school club. There have been significant changes in the school's status and staffing in recent times: six months ago, as part of a wider local authority reorganisation, the school was re-designated as a primary school, no longer providing for Year 7; and since the current headteacher was appointed 18 months ago there have been several staffing changes, including in the leadership team.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which successfully lives up to its motto of 'Believe and Achieve'. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds make good progress. The school's inclusive ethos is one of its strengths, with pupils, parents and carers emphasising the safe, friendly environment in which pupils learn and develop as confident individuals. This is in large part due to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by all staff. The quality of care underpins the improvements in pupils' attainment and progress resulting from the initiatives undertaken by the headteacher in the 18 months she has been at the school. A typical parental comment was, 'The headteacher has made a significant and visible improvement to the school.' The school has successfully surmounted several challenges. One such challenge has been the significant increase in the proportion of pupils who join the school partway through their education. Many of these are young people whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, and often they are at a very early stage of learning English. Last year, these pupils progressed at a slower rate than pupils who had been in the school since the Reception Year, and this was reflected in the below average attainment shown in national assessments. However, most pupils now achieve well and current levels of attainment are in line with the national average. Pupils are well on track to meet appropriately challenging targets by the time they leave school.

The drive for continued improvement permeates the whole school and starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Here, although levels of skill and knowledge are well below expectations at the start of their schooling, children make rapid progress. The use of the outdoor area to promote good independent learning is less successful than in the indoor facilities. As they move up through the school, pupils enjoy lessons and the good range of enrichment activities, in addition to successful breakfast and after-school clubs where pupils are well cared for and provided with learning opportunities. Behaviour is good. Attendance has been only average, which reflects the persistent absence in recent times of a very small number of pupils. Excellent social development is very evident in the harmonious relationships within the school, and pupils show a good understanding of different cultures and values. The curriculum is being strengthened by the development of more links between subjects, and the quality of teaching has improved as a result of extensive monitoring and opportunities for professional development for all staff. Occasionally, a small minority of pupils, usually the more able, do not achieve in some lessons as well as they should, when activities are not sufficiently challenging or engaging to keep their interest.

In an impressively short space of time, the headteacher, with quiet determination and ably supported by other staff and the governing body, has raised awareness of what all pupils can achieve. Systematic and rigorous evaluation and monitoring have combined with various initiatives, for example in the good use of assessment, to bring about improvement in areas such as boys' writing which had traditionally been areas of relative

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weakness. The high expectations of staff, the rigorous approach towards improvement and the track record of rapidly improving success show that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the attainment and improve the progress of pupils so that more of them leave school in 2012 with above average standards in both English and mathematics, by:
 - spreading the qualities of the best teaching more consistently throughout the school
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in the few instances where pupils are not challenged or engaged as consistently as they might be.
- Improve children's independent learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making more varied use of the outdoor area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils join the school often with levels of attainment well below those expected for their age and leave school with broadly average, and increasingly above average, attainment. This confirms the good progress which was very evident in lessons observed by inspectors. Pupils responded enthusiastically to good teaching and produced work of a good standard. Good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, has resulted from the improved expertise of staff and a range of initiatives, such as those aimed at increasing pupils' enthusiasm for reading, making better use of assessment and using techniques such as 'learning walls' to show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support both within and outside classes and make good progress. Previous differences in the progress of boys and girls have considerably narrowed, as have differences in the progress of groups of pupils from different minority ethnic heritage. Pupils with English as an additional language, a high percentage of the school population, are well supported and make good progress. Pupils also make positive gains in personal development. They are considerate to each other, behave well most of the time and regard the school as a happy, safe environment. Most attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils talk knowledgeably about what makes for a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy taking responsibility, whether by serving on the school council, supporting other pupils or participating in local events such as the town carnival. Their developing confidence prepares pupils appropriately for the next phase of education. Good spiritual reflections were seen in art and music, and pupils have a good understanding of what it is like to live happily in a multicultural society.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?

The teaching ensures good learning. A recent improvement has been in teachers' use of assessment: although there are some inconsistencies, it is effective. Teachers usually give constructive feedback to pupils on how to improve their work, seen for example in the way pupils are encouraged to reflect on and respond to teachers' comments in their books. Teachers use other forms of assessment well, such as witnessed in a mathematics lesson when the teacher skilfully questioned pupils at several points to test their understanding of particular concepts and showed them how misconceptions could be corrected. Pupils' targets are displayed prominently in classrooms. Other strengths in teaching include the successful deployment of support staff to help pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those at an early stage of language development. Teachers also encourage pupils to learn actively, as seen for example when pupils were encouraged to discuss with each other what new concepts and words they had learned in a mathematics lesson. Teachers now ensure pupils adopt a greater variety of writing styles. Pupils respond well to the range of learning opportunities and accordingly make good progress. Only occasionally is the teaching less effective and this is usually associated with work which is not challenging enough. At such times, learning is more limited but progress is nevertheless good overall. There is a good take-up of enrichment activities such as the choir, and the school makes good use of daily sports coaching from a visiting specialist. Students from a local secondary school assist pupils with business and enterprise projects, while parents from different faiths and backgrounds also enrich the

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curriculum by sharing their experiences with pupils. All pupils benefit from an outstanding level of care and support. The effective work of learning mentors in providing support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, parents and carers, and encouraging a higher level of pupil attendance, is highly valued. There are well-developed links with outside agencies and exemplary transition arrangements with secondary schools to ensure that pupils feel secure and confident when they move on from Year 6. The many pupils who join the school other than at the usual times, and who often come from challenging backgrounds, are integrated very successfully and consequently make good progress.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's personal drive, determination and high expectations have been at the core of the school's improvement. She has restructured the leadership team and successfully transmitted her vision to all staff. Links with parents and carers are very well developed and, as a result, they also share in the vision, and value opportunities to participate in pupils' learning, for example in attending assemblies and celebratory events. Evaluation and monitoring are now more rigorous, systematic and clearly focused on sustained school improvement. Subject leaders are involved in the monitoring process, and all staff are accountable for progress. The governing body is better prepared to ask challenging questions and provides constructive support for the headteacher, as well as holding the school to account. There are good links with local schools, having a positive impact on progress and personal development, for example by enabling more effective deployment of specialist support staff. There is no discrimination in this multicultural school community and promotion of equal opportunities is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are very confident that they all have an equal chance to do well, and believe that the very rare untoward incidents which may occur outside lessons will be promptly resolved. There are good systems to protect and keep pupils safe. These are monitored and reviewed regularly. Staff are well trained and aware of their responsibilities. Pupils are taught key aspects of safety such as internet use. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It successfully encourages pupils to celebrate their own cultural diversity while developing their understanding of other people's values, and pupils enjoy participating in community events. The school has limited links with other English schools outside the immediate area.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children from diverse backgrounds settle quickly into the Reception classes. Inspectors observed how children were keen to participate in activities, socialising well together and behaving well. Despite low levels of attainment on entry to Reception, children quickly learn skills such as listening to each other and moving smoothly between activities. Children were observed working together constructively on computers, independent of the staff. Many children are confident in speaking to adults, as when explaining to inspectors the process of making their alligator masks. Children feel very secure in a safe, well-resourced indoor environment. There is a good balance of activities overall, but the outdoor learning area is less attractive and less well resourced, and is not always used as effectively as the indoors area to promote good independent learning. Staff assess children's progress very well and record it in detail, with the information used to ensure that children acquire skills and knowledge progressively. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has established strong links with the local pre-schools, and also ensures a smooth transition of children into Year 1. As a result of good planning, teaching and assessment, along with high expectations, most children are generally reaching the standards expected for their age by the time they leave Reception, although progress in writing is slower than in other areas. The leadership is knowledgeable, and good management of all aspects of the Reception classes ensures that children enjoy their time there and are prepared well for the next phase of their education.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The number of returns of the parents' and carers' Ofsted questionnaire was below average. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and enthusiastic about the quality of its provision for their children. They are particularly appreciative of the headteacher and other staff, commenting on how well they know every child in the school and how they ensure high quality care and support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable. There was high praise for almost all the school's activities and unanimous agreement amongst parents and carers that they were happy with their children's experience at the school and that the school ensures children's safety. A few parents and carers did not feel that the school took sufficient account of their views. However, the inspection team found during this inspection, from talking to parents and reading many of their comments, that there was an excellent level of engagement between the school and parents and carers, who, like the pupils, come from a wide range of backgrounds.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Earlsmead Primary School 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 347 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	61	27	33	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	50	40	49	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	39	47	57	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	39	43	52	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	39	43	52	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	34	50	61	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	27	54	66	4	5	0	0
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)	17	21	55	67	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	23	51	62	9	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	30	49	60	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	24	48	59	9	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	34	49	60	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	40	48	59	0	0	0	0

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.



5 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Earlsmead Primary School, Harrow HA2 8PW

Thank you for welcoming us in such a friendly way when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed seeing you in lessons and talking to you about your school.

Earlsmead Primary School gives you a good standard of education. Because of this, almost all of you make good progress in your work. You also behave well, and you tell us that you feel safe and usually enjoy your lessons. Most of you attend school regularly and we know that you are confident that the teachers and other adults will look after you well. We were also impressed by the way that, although you come from many different backgrounds, you get on very well with each other. All the staff work hard to help you. Your headteacher leads the school very well. She, the other staff and the governing body are all determined to improve your good school even more. There have been several changes during the last two years, and your teachers have found better ways to mark your work and show you how you can improve it. Teachers teach you well, although we know that occasionally a few of you find the work rather easy and you feel that then it could be made more interesting. The youngest children in the Reception classes enjoy their time in school and learn well, although there could be more opportunities for them to learn in the outdoor area.

In order to make your good school even better, we have asked the school to:

- make sure that you reach the standards and make the progress you are capable of, with teachers always giving you work that is not too easy but helps you to learn as well as you can and in an interesting way
- give more opportunities to children in Reception to use the outdoor area in lots of different ways so they can learn and play even better.

All of you can help your teachers by continuing to work hard in the way we saw during our visit.

Yours sincerely

John Laver

Lead inspector

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