

James Dixon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101631
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	355041
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Len Blomstrand
Headteacher	Kate Reynolds
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 19 lessons taught by 12 different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, with a representative of the local authority and with staff and pupils. They looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, teachers' lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's documentation. Responses to inspection questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and by 98 parents and carers were also considered.

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

- How rapidly and consistently do pupils make progress and what are their current levels of attainment?
- How successfully has the school ensured that Early Years Foundation Stage children have a balanced programme of activities and attain well in all areas?
- How well do staff use assessment information to plan challenging work so that pupils, particularly those with English as an additional language, make good progress?
- What are the current attendance figures? Is the trend as positive as the school suggests?
- What is the effectiveness of the current senior leaders and managers, the governing body and subject leaders, and the school's capacity to make improvements?

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools and is expanding, with two classes in each year up to Year 2. This is an ethnically diverse community, with a wide range of minority ethnic groups represented. The largest groups are those of Black African and White British heritage. Almost half the pupils speak English as an additional language, with 33 different languages spoken, although relatively few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most have moderate learning difficulties, speech and language issues, or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school offers additional specialist unit provision for up to 18 pupils with complex learning needs, mainly autistic-spectrum disorders. A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

When the school was removed from special measures at its 2009 inspection, it was part of a Federation with an executive headteacher. This arrangement subsequently ended. After an extended period as acting headteacher, the current headteacher took up her post in January 2011. The school shares its site with a Children's Centre. This is managed independently of the school and is the subject of a separate report, as are the breakfast and after-school clubs, managed by a private provider within the Children's Centre and attended by pupils from this school.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness:	how	good	is	the	school?	
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The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has made steady progress since its last inspection, dealing effectively with weaknesses in both attendance and attainment. The school is attentive to pupils' personal development and well-being, and provides good pastoral support, especially for pupils who enter the school with little or no English. Older pupils have particularly positive attitudes to learning. Most feel safe and have confidence in adults. However, a significant minority of pupils, and some parents and carers, have concerns about the behaviour of other pupils and the school's response to incidents. School leaders are aware that these concerns exist, although they consider that overall behaviour has greatly improved in recent years. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy participating in sport. Although consistently low in past years, attendance is now broadly average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily across the areas of learning. In recent years and outcomes are now much closer to those expected, although some areas of learning are less well developed. Pupils' progress remains satisfactory. Pupils' progress and achievement in Years 1 to 3 have been variable, reflecting inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has, however, been improving. With good teaching, progress and achievement in Years 4 to 6 have consolidated and improved so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is now broadly average. Although intensive input in reading and writing this year is supporting rapid progress, progress in mathematics has been slower. Pupils in the specialist unit make good progress in their personal development but less rapid progress academically. The curriculum is satisfactory, although the proportion of time given to embedding literacy and numeracy skills has led to some imbalance. The school recognises the need to raise the profile of some subjects, partly through strengthening the role of subject leaders.

Teachers use assessment information well in some lessons and pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to achieve. Marking, although good in writing, does not, in other subjects, always give enough guidance as to how pupils can improve their work. Pupils have individual targets in writing and mathematics, and these are supporting better progress, particularly for the older pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, the senior leadership team is new and, currently, under strength, so that its effectiveness remains relatively fragile. The school recognises the need to strengthen middle management. Some parents and carers feel that school leaders are very defensive when issues are raised with them. The governing body is very committed, although its impact is satisfactory at present because it does not yet challenge the school leadership sufficiently. However, the effectiveness of the school's efforts to raise standards at the end of Year 6, pupils' improved attendance, the commitment of the teaching staff and the school's accurate self-evaluation and well-

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grounded vision for improvement all suggest that the school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Evaluate the school's behaviour management practice in the light of pupils' and parents' concerns, so that the positive outcomes evident among the older pupils set the standard for practice and outcomes in other years.
- Strengthen the leadership of the school, so that all aspects of its work are capably led and managed, by:
 - further professional development for senior leaders, middle managers and subject leaders
 - more rigorous evaluation of the impact of all initiatives taken
 - ensuring that the governing body holds school leaders to account for the pace and effectiveness of the school's work.
- Ensure that pupils in all phases make more consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics, through:
 - further development of teachers' classroom management strategies
 - more rigorous evaluation of assessment information
 - providing clear guidance through marking so that pupils are aware, in all subjects, of what they need to do to improve
 - enabling pupils to experience a broad and balanced curriculum
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Children's skills on joining the school are below the level expected for their age. With more consistent teaching in Years 4 to 6 and improved attendance, attainment has picked up by the end of Year 6. Pupils' learning is most effective in lessons where teachers set a brisk pace, have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and have effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. These were key strengths in all the lessons seen in Years 4 to 6 and underpin the improved attainment in those year groups. For example, in a lively Year 6 literacy lesson, the enthusiasm of the teacher, very clear explanations and meticulously prepared resources empowered pupils to achieve as well as they could. A tightly managed physical education lesson in Year 4 encouraged pupils to challenge themselves by devising ever-more creative balanced shapes when working with partners. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher questioned pupils closely so that he could be sure that they understood the tasks set. Employing precise language helped to focus pupils' thinking and gave them new confidence in their ability to share information. However, although these strategies lead to the desired outcomes for pupils, they are less effective in developing independent learning.



Teaching assistants are satisfactorily deployed, occasionally in support of gifted or talented pupils, so that they benefit from individual attention. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in mainstream classes make satisfactory progress. However, teachers' planning is not always closely related to pupils' individual targets, so that work is more effectively matched to their needs and capabilities. Pupils with more complex needs in the specialist unit are well supported in relation to their social skills and behavioural needs. There is less focus on their academic development.

Pupils' personal development is good in some respects. They work well co-operatively when given the opportunity. The school council offers pupils experience of the democratic process. Spiritual, social and moral development is satisfactory. Cultural dimensions are less strong than the others. Pupils' contribution to the school community is good. However, although the school is racially harmonious and there is a strong sense of common values, there is limited awareness of the traditions and impact of different faith communities in England, other than Christianity. Average, but improving, basic skills mean that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for future study and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	2
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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 satisfactory, with some strengths. Most staff are enthusiastic and sustain positive relationships with pupils. Where teaching is consistently good, there is a clear, positive impact on pupils' learning and this supports good progress. As yet, however,

progress remains variable, reflecting inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Pupils at an early stage of learning English get good support from a specialist teacher. Given the significant number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, the school aims to provide good access to quality spoken English, so that they can develop their understanding. In general, this strategy is effective. Although a recent focus, the use of assessment information is not always sufficiently fine-tuned to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress. Marking has improved in English. However, this rigour is not yet so evident in other areas.

The curriculum offers pupils satisfactory learning opportunities. Given the need to raise attainment, the school has given priority to extending and embedding basic literacy and numeracy skills. Standards in these crucial areas have gradually risen as a result. However, the curriculum, particularly for the older pupils, lacks balance, with some subjects taught infrequently. The planned use of mathematical and literacy skills in other subjects is relatively limited, as is the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is carefully planned. Provision for the creative arts, particularly art and design, is stronger than in other areas. External partnerships, though limited, contribute satisfactorily to extending pupils' learning. These include occasional enrichment activities in mathematics for gifted and talented pupils in Year 6. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory.

Staff are responsive to pupils' needs. All pupils, particularly those in the specialist unit, are well supported in relation to their social and emotional needs and their personal development. Transition arrangements are good, particularly in supporting pupils identified as vulnerable due to their circumstances. The school works closely with support agencies. There is good practice, well managed by the family worker, in supporting the health, social and behavioural needs of pupils in challenging circumstances. The active promotion of regular attendance has had a very positive impact and attendance has risen significantly in the last year.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have an understanding of the school's remaining weaknesses, including inconsistencies in pupils' progress, and have a commitment to deal with these, building upon the progress already made. Staff morale is positive. However, the leadership team is relatively inexperienced, with several new members. A deputy headteacher has yet to be appointed, so that the team is not yet at full strength. Generally effective systems are in place to track pupils' progress and assessment practice is becoming more systematic. The

monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although there is a tendency to have a more positive view of the quality of teaching and learning than is currently the case. The school is aware that there is more work to do to raise the quality of teaching. Senior leaders are not yet rigorous enough in measuring the impact of initiatives taken.

Governance is satisfactory. Well-organised, committed members bring good outside experience to the role and are keen to support the school. However, while they monitor the school's performance and increasingly hold it to account, their level of challenge is not always rigorous enough to ensure that outcomes are more than satisfactory. There is a tendency to accept assurances given and as a result, the governing body makes assumptions about aspects of provision which can be less than secure.

Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Staff training is generally up-to-date. Discrimination is tackled effectively and the promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Partnerships are satisfactory. An increased number of events have been planned to help engage parents and carers in their child's learning. Nevertheless, these initiatives are not yet sufficiently embedded to have a significant effect upon learning. Satisfactory links with support agencies contribute to the satisfactory progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the school does not draw sufficiently upon the potential of creative links for training and further professional development with the local authority and other schools to support, for example, newly appointed senior leaders. The governing body ensures that community cohesion is satisfactorily, if inconsistently, promoted. The governing body recognises that pupils have few opportunities to engage with the diversity of cultures and communities within the United Kingdom. Global links are only beginning to emerge.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

These are the grades for leadership and management

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills and knowledge on entry to the Nursery are below expectations for their age, particularly in their personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. A significant proportion of children have limited knowledge of English. Good induction arrangements, including home visits, establish en effective bond with parents and carers, and ensure that children feel safe. Welfare matters are given priority, though there are some gaps in the information provided for parents and carers when children first join. Once in school, children receive sensitive caring support and build good relationships. They behave well and engage positively with adults and other children.

Overall, children make satisfactory progress through Nursery and Reception. Focused adult-led activities ensure that they extend and develop their skills. Until 2009, outcomes when children leave Reception had been extremely low. Although inconsistent across the areas of learning, these had improved significantly by 2010, with children reaching average outcomes in communication and language and in personal, social and emotional development, but not in the other areas. This year, staff aim to redress the balance, particularly in relation to the relatively low outcomes for boys and the very low proportion of children attaining at the high levels. The school has been working to improve provision for children with particular needs, such as those who are gifted or talented, or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children's skills in reading and writing are satisfactorily supported by a programme for teaching sounds and letters (phonics), and this is reflected in better progress in these areas. A fair balance of activities chosen by children and those led by adults ensures that, overall, learning has a satisfactory pace. Although children develop some independence in their learning, they are not always able to engage in meaningful play when choosing for themselves. Staff recognise that the outdoor areas could be further developed to promote all areas of learning. Planning has improved and is thorough. Assessment observations are informative and provide an accurate picture of children's learning and attainment. The school is working to ensure that judgements are more rigorously moderated. These records enable staff to track children's progress accurately.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is relatively new to her role and some aspects are at an early stage of development. Although leadership is currently satisfactory, the school recognises that there is a need to embed current practice. Further input by local authority staff is planned.

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		
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	

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was lower-than average. Those parents and carers who did respond are generally happy with the school and the care it provides for their children. Most parents and carers feel that their children enjoy school. One said, 'Teachers sincerely care about the well-being of the children in mind, body and spirit.' However, some parents and carers � and also pupils - have concerns about pupils' behaviour. They feel that the school's approach to behaviour management leaves their children vulnerable and that the rights of the victim are not given sufficient priority. During this inspection, the inspection team observed the behaviour of the older pupils to be

generally good in lessons and around the school. There is more variability and volatility in the behaviour of younger pupils, particularly in lessons where the teaching is less effective. Although the school judges that behaviour is now significantly better than in past years, it recognises there is still work to do, particularly when pupils enter school with little sense of personal boundaries. A few parents and carers are critical of school leaders, feeling that they do not give sufficient priority to parents' and carers' concerns about behaviour in the school. Inspectors believe that school leaders are committed to dealing promptly with issues which affect children's safety and well-being.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at James Dixon 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 339 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	nts Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	62	33	34	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	61	35	36	2	2	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	57	36	37	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	53	40	41	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	46	47	48	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	42	43	44	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	30	54	55	9	9	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)	24	24	52	53	6	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	35	50	51	4	4	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	30	48	49	10	10	8	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	28	57	58	3	3	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	43	44	39	40	6	6	5	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	48	45	46	3	3	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

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.

What inspection judgements mean

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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:	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.
	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.

19 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of James Dixon Primary School, London, SE20 8DW

Thank you for making us welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that, although yours is a satisfactory school, it has made progress in some important areas recently.

Our main findings are these.

- Those of you who are older almost always work hard.
- Progress has improved and is good in Years 4 to 6 so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is now around the level expected.
- You undertake various jobs and make a satisfactory contribution to the school.
- Staff care for you and support you well.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good lessons.
- Your attendance has improved and you have a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.
- You experience a satisfactory range of subjects, clubs and extra activities.
- Those of you who find learning difficult get satisfactory support.

We are asking the school to make the following changes so that you can do even better:

- ensure that senior staff are well trained and have the skills to lead their areas of responsibility effectively
- ensure that all of you are helped to make good progress, especially in mathematics, by, for example, giving you guidance through marking on how to improve and more opportunities to develop your independent learning skills
- check that staff are implementing the behaviour policy effectively and consistently, so that pupils and parents and carers are no longer concerned about poor behaviour.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan Lead inspector



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