

Liberty Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102656
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	355229
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Peddy
Headteacher	Irene Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 30 lessons taught by 18 teachers and higher level teaching assistants(HLTA). They held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body, and spoke to pupils, and parents and carers informally. They looked at pupils work, the schools tracking of pupils progress, school policies and procedures, records of school leaders monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes from meetings and the questionnaires received from 153 parents and carers, as well as responses from staff and pupils.

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

The effectiveness of the school in raising attainment, particularly in reading and writing at Key Stage 1, and in mathematics at Key Stage 2.

The success of the schools strategies to improve teaching, particularly of mathematics, and ensure pupils make the progress they should.

The impact of strategies to improve attendance.

The development of leadership at all levels, to bring about further improvements and increase progress.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average school, located in an urban area of Mitcham. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. There are more pupils than average from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average, although only a very few of these are at the early stages of learning English. There is an average proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. These pupils include those with specific, moderate and severe learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; speech, language and communication difficulties; and autistic spectrum disorder. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award, and has been recognised for the Travel Plan initiative (Sustainable level). The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a nursery class and two Reception classes. There is a breakfast and after-school club on the site, run by the school, which was part of this inspection. Located on the school site is a centre, run by the local authority, for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. This was not inspected as part of this inspection. There are plans in place to expand the school to accept a further Reception class from September 2011.

At the time of the previous inspection in December 2009, the school was given a Notice to Improve.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The headteacher, together with her senior leadership team, have accurately identified the key areas to be addressed, implemented appropriate strategies and brought about significant improvements. As a result, teaching has improved, the achievement of pupils has risen, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, and the behaviour and attendance of pupils have improved. A parent recognised the improvements that have been brought about, when saying, My personal experience with Liberty has been positive and I feel they have worked hard to improve over the past year.

Leadership and management across the school are developing well and there is now an increasingly shared sense of responsibility for the progress of pupils. However, this is at an early stage, and the full impact is yet to be seen in, for example, Key Stage 1 results. The impact is most evident in English and at Key Stage 2.

By the time pupils leave the school, they have made satisfactory progress from their close to average starting points, with attainment that is broadly average. This means that their achievement is satisfactory. Strategies to improve reading and writing have proved effective and this has increased attainment in English. Improvements in mathematics have been slower to come about, although the work seen in lessons and pupils books shows that attainment is rising rapidly. For example, pupils in Year 6 were confident in applying the facts they know about angles. However, pupils rely too heavily on teachers to direct each step and find it difficult to find their own solutions from what they already know, or use other resources available to them.

Clear strategies to ensure teaching improves have been introduced; where these are consistently implemented, teaching is good and pupils make good progress. However, in too many lessons, teachers take too long explaining the tasks to pupils and progress slows. At times, teachers marking in books does not give pupils precise enough advice on how to improve their work, particularly at Key Stage 1.

The attendance of almost all pupils has improved and is now broadly average; attendance for the oldest pupils is high because they like coming to school and are motivated to learn. A very small minority of pupils are still not at school frequently enough, despite the schools considerable efforts.

The behaviour of most pupils is good. The few pupils who find it difficult to comply with the schools expectations are well supported by the schools robust systems to manage behaviour. As a result, the learning of other pupils continues, and pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are also helped to quickly get back on track with their own learning, and make satisfactory progress.

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The rise in attainment, improvements in teaching, attendance and behaviour since the last inspection, along with increasingly shared leadership and management and more accurate self-evaluation, mean that the school has satisfactory capacity to bring about further sustained improvements.

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?

- Reduce the absence levels of the very small minority of pupils who miss too much school, by at least 50% within a year, by working more closely with families and other partners.
- Increase the rate of progress that pupils make during Key Stage 1, by:
 - allowing pupils, particularly those who are more able, to get on with their tasks more quickly
 - making better use of marking to ensure pupils know what they need to do next, and giving them opportunities to respond to these comments.
- Help pupils to develop greater independence so that they take more responsibility for their learning, particularly in mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry is broadly average, although pupils communication, language and literacy skills are often low when they join the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils were seen to make good progress and most pupils have developed skills and knowledge which are mostly at those expected for their age by the time they join Year 1. Progress is slower during Key Stage 1, but again accelerates during Key Stage 2. During lessons seen, pupils made satisfactory progress overall, although better progress was evident in the lessons where teaching was good. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and as a result, progress in mathematics is gradually accelerating for all groups of pupils. For example, pupils particularly enjoyed a mathematics and art day, and girls now participate in a club for more able mathematicians. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported, and make similar progress to their peers. Those with a range of special educational needs are supported by highly expert teaching assistants, with well-considered strategies. They make at least expected progress and, in speech and language development, most make good progress. Pupils said that they enjoy learning, and the attendance of the majority has improved, impressively so for the older pupils. As a pupil said, There are lots of interesting things to do here, so we learn well.

The behaviour of almost all pupils is good and pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get along amicably. They are enthusiastic about their learning and are keen to participate in the opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as peer mediators. These trained pupils help others resolve minor disputes, and pupils reported that there are fewer serious incidents. Other pupils help as play leaders, house captains and sports leaders. Pupils feel that the systems to help manage behaviour work well. Pupils told inspectors that they feel particularly safe because the school site is secure and they can talk to an adult if they are worried. They feel that any concerns or incidents will usually be dealt with

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quickly, although concerns about the school toilets have taken some time to bring about action. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. They feel that the school council is active, helping to develop the school travel plan and planning for the expansion of the school. Many pupils said how much they enjoy the physical education and range of active clubs available; they know how to stay healthy, which helped the school achieve the Healthy Schools award. The moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good; spiritual development is less strong. Although pupils have a good understanding of the beliefs of others, opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs are infrequent.

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	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?

There has been effective training and monitoring to help teachers improve their teaching. For example, the use of good questioning, talking partners and small whiteboards means that pupils are actively involved in thinking about their learning. Shared planning means that tasks are increasingly accurately matched to pupils needs, although expectations are not always high enough. The progress rockets and target cards help pupils identify their progress and attainment. On occasions, teachers spend too long explaining tasks when some pupils already know what they need to do. Marking is regular and indicates pupils success, but does not always show them how to reach the next level of their learning. In the best examples, pupils respond to comments in their books, but this is inconsistent so

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opportunities are missed to consolidate their progress. Year 6 pupils appreciate the additional support they get and the early morning booster sessions are popular. The curriculum has been reviewed by the new subject leaders and is being redesigned around cross-curricular projects. The contexts for these are increasingly based on real-world situations. However, these improvements have yet to have a full impact on the outcomes for pupils. There are good opportunities for enrichment, including trips and visitors. Pupils have been particularly successful in local sports competitions, and Year 5 pupils were thrilled by the experience of singing with a huge choir at the Royal Albert Hall.

The school environment provides a welcoming, vibrant atmosphere where pupils feel valued and keen to learn. Those facing difficulties in their lives receive additional support, through the well-trained school staff and good partnerships the school has developed. An emphasis on developing emotional understanding has improved relationships between staff and pupils. The breakfast club and after-school club provide enjoyable opportunities for pupils and help those who attend to make a good start or end to the day. The school uses a broad range of rewards to encourage good behaviour and attendance and almost all pupils respond well to these. There are a range of strategies to improve the attendance of the very few pupils whose attendance is low; despite the schools efforts, improvements have been difficult to bring about.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has rightly tackled the main key issues facing the school and her actions have brought about improvements to teaching, raised attainment, particularly in English, and improved the attendance of most pupils. Actions to address mathematics are more recent. She has developed a clear leadership structure which is now becoming more effective in sharing responsibility for bringing about further improvements, for example in developing the curriculum. Good partnerships with local secondary and primary schools and other organisations enrich the curriculum, including dance, music, sports opportunities and festivals. These have raised the esteem of pupils, for example through the music scholarships. Other strong partnerships support vulnerable pupils, for example through the on-site specialist centre. While there are various partnerships established to support pupils with the lowest attendance, uncertainty over these in the past has meant that this has not been fully effective.

The school ensures that the wide-ranging experiences of pupils are valued and celebrated through assemblies and in lessons. As a result, pupils appreciate each others differences and any incidents of bullying or racial discrimination are dealt with quickly and robustly.

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High quality opportunities to interact with others, including nationally and in other countries, mean that the school makes a good contribution towards developing community cohesion. Senior leaders have made appropriate changes to ensure the safety of the pupils, and to tackle previously low attendance. The great majority of parents are positive about the changes and particularly appreciate the information they get about how well their children are doing. Further recent initiatives, such as a visual outline of the curriculum, help parents support their childrens learning. The impact in raising attainment at Key Stage 2, along with improvements in behaviour, attendance and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, means that the school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Members of the governing body ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed; at the time of the inspection, all safeguarding requirements were met. They have undertaken training, for example to ensure that adults working with the pupils are suitable. They are developing their understanding about the data and increasingly challenging the school about the effectiveness of strategies introduced; governance is satisfactory.

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	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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their learning because there are clear routines and high expectations. The stimulating environment provides a rich background for childrens learning, and they thrive because there are many interesting activities to do, both indoors and outside. For example, during a session on using numbers, children enjoyed putting groups of objects together, or writing down number sentences, while outside others practised counting during their games. Although they join the Nursery with communication, language and literacy skills which are often considerably lower than those usually found in children of their age, they quickly make up ground because there are many opportunities to develop language skills. For example, adults are well trained in

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modelling language and linking sounds and letters. By the end of Reception, they have developed skills and knowledge in line with age-related expectations; some children exceed these and are already very able learners. Pupils are confident of their ability to access resources themselves and most work well independently. Leadership of this area of the school has been developing well under the guidance of the headteacher and is good.

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 questionnaires received by the inspection team was similar to the average response rate. For most questions, the views of parents and carers were similar to the national figures and very largely positive. A very small minority of parents did not feel that the school takes account of their suggestions. Inspectors found that the school has rightly implemented some significant changes to improve the security and safety of children which have not been popular with a very few parents. There are appropriate ways in which parents can communicate with the school, although a very few parents do not choose to engage with the school through these channels. The school is currently looking at ways in which communication can be improved. Many parents said that they appreciate what the school does for their children and were positive about the information they receive about their child's progress and development.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Liberty 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 153 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 473 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	48	71	46	3	2	5	3
The school keeps my child safe	76	50	70	46	4	3	3	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	34	79	52	18	12	4	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	27	91	59	15	10	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	49	32	90	59	11	7	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	30	85	56	19	12	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	28	94	61	11	7	2	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)	37	24	89	58	17	11	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	25	95	62	12	8	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	24	90	59	12	8	9	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	17	96	63	21	14	7	5
The school is led and managed effectively	35	23	93	61	18	12	5	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	37	80	52	12	8	5	3

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.



31 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Liberty Primary School, Mitcham CR4 3EB

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school, and showing us your work. We could see that you enjoy school and you told us you like coming to school. We have judged that your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well, but there are a few things it could do better.

These are some of the things it does well.

The headteacher has made sure that teaching has improved, particularly in English, so you are doing better in your reading and writing.

Those of you in Nursery and Reception classes make a good start to your learning because the adults make sure there are lots of useful things for you to do.

The adults at the school care about you and make sure there is someone you can talk to if you are worried or need help with your work.

The headteacher and governors make sure that the school keeps you safe. You told us that you feel safe, and that any incidents are dealt with quickly.

Most of you behave well, and know what is expected of you. The very few of you who find it more difficult to keep within the school rules are supported so that you learn why this is important and are helped to improve your behaviour.

The school has encouraged you to be at school regularly, and most of you have responded well to this, particularly Year 6 pupils who set a very good example.

You like the many exciting opportunities to learn about music, dance or sports.

These are the things we have asked your school to improve further.

Make sure that the very few of you who are away from school too often are helped to get to school. You can help by being at school on time every day.

Help those of you in Key Stage 1 to make faster progress in your work, by giving you specific things to do when teachers have marked your books, and by letting some of you get on with your work as soon as you know what to do.

Encourage you to be more independent, and not rely too much on the teacher to help you when you are stuck, by using the things you already know or that are around you. You can help by thinking about what you can do to help yourself, before you ask the teacher.

Above all, continue to enjoy learning and be a positive part of your school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Lead inspector

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