

John Donne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number100797Local AuthoritySouthwarkInspection number376461

Inspection dates 10–11 October 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 3–11
Gender of pupils Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll 439

Appropriate authorityThe governing bodyChairTim Higginson

Headteachers Evelyn Holdsworth/Nicholas Tildesley

Date of previous school inspection23–24 June 2009School addressWoods RoadPeckham

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed 17 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They 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, data on pupils' progress and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They analysed questionnaires received from 76 parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which groups of pupils are making progress and achieving their potential, in particular, pupils who speak English as an additional language, pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils from ethnic minorities, and pupils who are higher or lower ability.
- How effectively teachers are using assessment to promote the progress and achievement of all pupils.
- The extent to which leaders and managers at all levels are sustaining and promoting school improvement.
- How well children in the Nursery and Reception classes are provided for and make appropriate progress.

Information about the school

John Donne Primary School is a much larger than average school. The proportion of pupils who come from a range of minority ethnic heritages is well above average and over half the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include a wide range of learning, behavioural and emotional needs, is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the customary times of year is much higher than usual. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and many go on to attend two Reception classes. The school has the full International School award and the Healthy Schools award. The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club which offers childcare. The school has for several years been led jointly by two part-time headteachers, who provide support for trainee headteachers under the school's designation as a leadership support school.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

John Donne Primary is an outstanding school which enables pupils from diverse backgrounds to make rapid progress in acquiring basic skills and knowledge, while at the same time equipping them with an impressive range of personal qualities. As a result, pupils leave school as confident and often articulate young citizens, well prepared for the next phase of their education. All this takes place within a very caring, supportive environment, with the school typically being described by parents and carers as a 'patient, loving and dynamic place,' and 'a beacon of light in our community'.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make an outstanding start to their school life. The outstanding progress they make in these classes is sustained as pupils move up through the school, until they leave at the age of 11 with above average levels of attainment, reflecting an improving trend in recent years. This trend is due in large part to a sustained effort by the leadership of the school. Staff have also raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve, regardless of their background. All boys and girls, whatever their level of ability, whether they are from one of the various ethnic minority groups, whether they speak English as an additional language, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or come from particularly challenging circumstances, share in the outstanding progress. This has been achieved through a combination of skilful teaching in the classroom, that one parent described as a 'kind, wonderful and supportive environment', and not least, the school's well-developed arrangements for a wide range of intervention strategies to ensure that those pupils in danger of underachieving are not left behind. Examples of this were seen during the inspection, such as when very small groups of pupils received intensive and skilful help from specialist staff in developing their basic mathematical skills. Also impressive is the school's success in quickly integrating the unusually high proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the usual times, and who sometimes come from vulnerable or challenging backgrounds. These pupils also make outstanding progress, both academically and in their personal development.

Teachers are skilled at meeting the needs of all pupils. The good teaching, with some outstanding features, engages pupils' enthusiasm and is characterised by appropriate pace and challenge and by the effective use of assessment, which shows pupils how to improve their work. Teachers usually encourage pupils to think creatively and independently, so that they learn actively. Occasionally, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not provide the challenge early enough in the lesson at a level which

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would enable more able pupils in particular to achieve at an even higher rate. While teaching assistants usually provide high quality support for pupils, occasionally they miss opportunities to get pupils to think more for themselves and develop their independent learning skills further.

Outstanding care, guidance and support strongly underpin pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They feel very safe in school and say so. Although attendance is only average, it is improving. Pupils love the wide range of enrichment activities such as the school choir. They have an excellent understanding both of healthy lifestyle issues and of a wide range of different beliefs and values in the world. This understanding arises from involvement in the local community and links with schools in Europe and Asia. It has resulted in the school achieving the full International School award. This in turn contributes to the school's highly inclusive ethos and excellent social development, which is evident in the way pupils of all ages work and play together harmoniously.

The two headteachers, ably supported by other staff and governors, are rigorous in evaluating the school's performance and relentless in their desire to maintain high standards and improve further. The school has successfully addressed the issues identified at the previous inspection. The continued drive for excellence, combined with a track record of success in achieving high standards and outstanding personal development, demonstrates that the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching, so that more teaching matches the best in the school, by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide the most appropriate level of challenge, especially for more able pupils, when encouraging them to work creatively and independently
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are consistently encouraged to provide a demanding level of challenge when supporting pupils in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children join the school with attainment well below age-related expectations, particularly in some of the key skills of language and literacy. By the time they leave Reception, children's attainment is much closer to the expected levels. By the age of 11, pupils have above average levels of attainment. A high proportion of pupils attain particularly well in both English and mathematics. As in the previous year, Year 6 pupils are currently on track to meet or exceed appropriately challenging targets. Assessment data and the observation of lessons and support sessions during the inspection confirmed the outstanding progress made by all groups of pupils. Lesson observations showed that most pupils have an excellent attitude towards learning, for example by their eager response to questions and to opportunities for discussion.

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

This was observed, for example, in a challenging philosophy lesson for younger pupils where they were developing the art of thinking for themselves. The development of pupils' own questioning skills and the art of thinking both critically and independently were also observed in a lesson for older pupils, where they were considering different ways of describing famous characters. Observations of small booster groups demonstrated the rapid progress made by pupils with particular learning needs, such as those at an early stage of speaking English. They were seen responding very positively to brisk-paced and high quality teaching.

The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and the school has worked hard to improve attendance and impress upon parents and carers the importance of this. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because of their confidence and their outstanding success in acquiring key skills. They enjoy both lessons and the enrichment activities available to them. Pupils thrive on responsibility, for example when serving on the active school council, helping younger pupils, fundraising for charities or taking part in activities within the local community. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. They discuss issues very maturely, such as what food should be served in the canteen, the importance of exercise and the implications of having the Healthy Schools award. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Issues surrounding respect for different values and beliefs are dealt with very well in assemblies and lessons. Wider understanding of these issues is encouraged through initiatives such as inviting parents and carers into school to read stories from different cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

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How effective is the provision?

The good teaching, with outstanding features, combines with pupils' very positive attitudes towards learning and the excellent systems to support particular individuals, and leads to outstanding progress. The school has improved its use of assessment since the previous inspection and teachers use targets and marking effectively to show pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Teachers are skilled at encouraging pupils to develop their understanding of concepts. They ask questions such as, 'Why don't all questions have a "right" or "wrong" answer?' Other strengths of teaching are lively pace and challenge, particularly as teachers increasingly provide speaking opportunities or problem-solving activities in lessons. This encourages pupils to learn actively. Occasionally the pace of these activities is not challenging enough for the most able pupils to achieve their highest potential. Although teaching assistants generally provide good support for individual pupils, they are not always deployed effectively to support creative and independent learning.

The school has an outstandingly good curriculum. It provides all pupils with the opportunity to make excellent progress. The development of more interlinked topics which help pupils to see the relevance of their learning across different subjects is well under way. The many clubs, including knitting, drama, sports and the outstanding choir, are very popular. Outstanding care, guidance and support underpin both academic success and pupils' outstanding personal development. There are well-developed procedures to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary schools. These procedures are particularly helpful for those pupils joining the school other than at the usual times, so that they also achieve great success during their time in school. The breakfast club gives several pupils a healthy start to the school day. Pupils are also cared for very well in the after-school club. Excellent relationships with other agencies complement the strong support procedures within the school. This includes support for both vulnerable pupils and their parents and carers.

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		
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support		

How effective are leadership and management?

The joint headteachers have very successfully conveyed their high expectations to

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

other staff and they are supported by knowledgeable, active and challenging governors in taking the school forward. The leadership has a high profile within the local authority in supporting aspiring headteachers and in making John Donne Primary School a centre for excellence in Early Years Foundation Stage education. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and informed by rigorous monitoring, which is carried out by subject coordinators and phase leaders as well as members of the senior leadership. Teachers share good practice and are encouraged to research ways of further improving teaching and learning, while the leadership has invested heavily, and with excellent results, in developing assessment and other initiatives since the previous inspection.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding in their impact. Parents and carers feel very well informed and welcomed by the school. They participate in initiatives to involve them in pupils' learning. This is done through activities such as home reading schemes and parental workshops. One such workshop was observed during the inspection, with parents enthusiastically learning mathematical skills, enabling them to be better aware of their children's progress. There are well-developed links with other agencies such as social services, and with schools. These have a direct impact on pupils' progress and well-being, for example by providing specialist help in teaching sport, and the creation of joint projects, which help to improve teachers' skills in assessing pupils' work and setting appropriate targets.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are outstanding. These reflect the inclusive ethos of the school. Pupils and staff are very aware of all aspects of safety, including, for example, when using computers and internet facilities. The school is outstanding in its successful promotion of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Pupils feel safe and valued. They are encouraged to be individuals, while also respecting diversity and the uniqueness of others. As one pupil put it, 'I've learned that we can all relate to each other and agree on many things.' The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. Pupils enjoy contributing to the local community in events such as the 'Southwark in Bloom' initiative and links with other schools in the United Kingdom. These involve communication by e-mail and mutual visits to help extend pupils' understanding of different parts of their country. There are strong links with schools overseas, for example a joint eco-project with an Indian school and developing links with Malawi. The school hosts international development events and entertains visitors from overseas. Many pupils have a mature understanding of the different facets of life in a global context.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account:	_
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1

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

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes, after quickly settling into their new environment and learning the established routines. Although many join the school with low levels of knowledge and skills, children develop guickly both as individuals and members of a group, for example through activities such as the 'community lunch'. Children were observed engaged in both 'free-flow' and teacher-led activities, invariably working very well together. For example, one boy who could write his own name accurately was 'teaching' a girl how to write hers. Other children eagerly focused on creating 'dinosaur books' and were keen to talk to visitors, often articulately and confidently, about what they were doing. Children develop creative skills and play well, while teachers skilfully introduce new vocabulary and encourage their imagination, as observed when children were involved in role play about 'being in the magic world of dinosaurs'. The outdoor environment has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now a very effective resource for learning and play. There are strong links with parents and carers, for example through home visits and workshops. There are well-developed transition procedures both into the Nursery and later into Year 1. Staff assess children carefully. Much of the teaching is innovative and inspirational, as seen, for example, when children were encouraged to design their own houses, thinking critically about the relative importance of different rooms. This thinking was taken further as children made castles from milk cartons. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, and is used as a model of excellent practice within the local authority. The leadership is involved in an exciting project to further link critical thinking and independent learning skills of young children with developments higher up the school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	-
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	4
Stage	1 1

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

Views of parents and carers

The rate of return of the parents' and carers' questionnaire was below average, but the response showed that parents and carers are very appreciative of the high quality of all that the school provides. The responses were almost unanimously positive about the school, including teaching, leadership, the degree to which pupils are safe and well cared for, and pupils' overall enthusiasm and well-being in school. Very few parents or carers had any concerns about aspects of the school's provision and there was no common theme to the few concerns expressed. Parents and carers are very positive about the links they have with the school and they feel there is strong support, not just for their children, but also for everyone in the community. As one parent put it, 'The school is a caring, nurturing place for pupils, parents and staff.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at John Donne 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 439 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree			
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	76	17	22	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	55	72	20	26	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	62	27	36	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	59	29	38	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	43	57	31	41	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	63	27	36	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	58	30	39	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	45	38	50	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	49	33	43	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	54	30	39	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	43	40	53	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	49	64	26	34	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	64	26	34	0	0	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)				
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate	
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0	
Primary schools	6	46	42	6	
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9	
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3	
Special schools	30	48	19	3	
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5	
All schools	10	44	39	6	

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.

the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and Attainment:

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.

the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, Leadership and management:

> 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.

the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and Progress:

> over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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



12 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Donne Primary School, London SE15 2SW

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

John Donne Primary School gives you an outstanding standard of education. You make outstanding progress in your work as you move up through the school from the Nursery to Year 6, doing better in subjects like English and mathematics than pupils in many schools. Although a few of you do not attend school as regularly as you might, we know that you enjoy school, feel safe, and are good at acting responsibly, for example when serving on the school council or when those of you in the upper years help those younger than yourselves. The school provides you with lots of interesting things to do, not just in lessons but also in a range of clubs. For example, the choir is excellent. You have a very good understanding of how people live in different countries and what they believe, and in your own school you get on very well together. All your teachers and staff look after you really well, and they also teach you well. Your headteachers lead the school outstandingly well and as a result, you get lots of really good opportunities.

Although you are taught well, occasionally some of you, especially those who find learning easier, could get even more opportunities to learn for yourselves. Therefore, in order to make your outstanding school even better, we have asked the school to:

make sure that your teachers and teaching assistants give you, especially the most able pupils, challenging opportunities that allow you to be more independent in your learning and able to make the best progress possible.

You will help your teachers achieve this if you go on showing the same enthusiasm for learning that we saw during our visit.

Yours sincerely

John Laver Lead inspector

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