

Ellen Wilkinson Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102759
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	376765
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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	Dawn Hutcheon
Headteacher	Sue Ferguson
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty-five lessons or part lessons were observed, led by 15 different teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff, and the headteacher. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress, and school policies, including safeguarding documentation and the school development plan. In addition, questionnaires from 259 parents and carers, 98 pupils and 22 staff were analysed.

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

- How well reading skills are promoted throughout the school.
- How well pupils understand how to improve their work.
- Whether progress is consistent through the school.
- How well middle leaders contribute to the drive for improvement.

Information about the school

This school is much larger than average. It caters for pupils from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, including an increasing proportion of Eastern European origin. Two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language, a higher proportion than usually found. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs. Principally, the statements are for moderate learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties. A higher proportion of pupils than average enters or leaves the school part-way through their primary education. More pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school provides a breakfast club. The school shares a site with a privately run nursery and a children's centre, which were not included in this inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery for part-time attendance, mornings or afternoons, and two Reception classes. The school holds Healthy Schools Status and several awards for its provision including Activemark and the International Schools Award.

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 has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress and develop strong personal skills in response to the welcoming, thoroughly inclusive atmosphere, and the school's good levels of care, guidance and support. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe in a range of situations. Their behaviour is good and they are polite and considerate toward others. Pupils enjoy school because of the interesting and varied curriculum on offer and activities and lessons, which they say are fun.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good overall progress is maintained in Years 1 to 6 because teaching and support have improved over recent years and are now good. Teachers guide pupils well, through verbal and written marking and effective target setting in writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils understand how to improve and they achieve best in those subjects. Pupils do not do quite as well in reading at any stage. There are clear reasons for that. Not all opportunities are taken to promote reading skills through the curriculum, for instance, in themed learning or across the full range of subjects. Target setting, which is well developed in writing and mathematics and helps pupils understand how to reach the next level, is at an early stage of development in reading. Questions teachers ask to make sure pupils understand and think about their reading are sometimes too narrow in focus and do not explore pupils' imaginations fully.

A minority of lessons inspire outstanding rates of progress in pupils. In those, teachers adapt their plans readily in response to pupils' questions, making the most of opportunities to learn. In such lessons, pupils are fully involved in a variety of challenging activities, matched well to their different abilities. However, there are minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and, therefore, in pupils' progress, throughout the school. In some weaker lessons, there is too much talk from the teacher and too little activity for the pupils, slowing the speed of learning.

Effective leaders and managers have brought a good measure of improvement since the previous inspection. Incisive self-evaluation has resulted in an improvement in the rate of pupils' progress. For example, the rigorous evaluation of attainment in writing and mathematics has led to teachers gaining a detailed knowledge of what every pupil throughout the school should achieve. That has been a powerful tool in improving lesson planning and driving up progress. The improvements provide ample evidence of the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Senior and middle leaders work together well to drive improvement. They have a clear and accurate

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view of the school's work and are committed fully to its further success.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of learning in all lessons to that in the best by:
 - allocating a higher proportion of time for active learning on tasks that challenge the different abilities in the class
 - responding more deeply to questions posed by pupils, in order to extend their learning.

- Raise attainment in reading by:
 - setting ambitious individual reading targets shared with pupils and reviewed regularly
 - using questions matched well to targets and that extend pupils' understanding, thinking skills and imagination
 - increasing opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to read.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the school with skills levels and abilities that are often low in comparison with expectations for their age. Attainment is broadly average when pupils leave Year 6. All pupils make good progress, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who enroll later than the usual time, and the high proportion who speak English as an additional language. Good progress for those groups and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is ensured through early identification of their needs, strong contact with parents and carers, and precise planning. The more-able are helped through tasks matched well to their abilities, which led to all such pupils in Year 6 achieving the higher National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics in 2011.

Pupils learn successfully in most lessons because they behave well and are attentive to their teachers. The clear guidance they receive through their marking and the way teachers make sure that every pupil is aware of the learning that is expected, also, add to pupils' capacity for good learning. Pupils enjoy their learning and particularly like the opportunities to discuss problems with their partners because it helps to clarify their thinking and enables them to make progress. Pupils learn best in those lessons where tasks are matched carefully to the different abilities, such as in a reading workshop in Year 6. The workshop was fast moving, with a variety of different and interesting reading activities. The teacher assessed pupils' understanding carefully throughout the lesson, through astute, probing questioning, and instantly adapted plans in response. However, pupils' progress in reading is not quite as good as that in other subjects across the school, because not all lessons promote reading skills so well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils are mindful of one another and generally tolerant of their differences. Pupils are opposed

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strongly to bullying and racist behaviour and say that such incidents are uncommon in school. They have a good understanding of issues relating to healthy lifestyles and are aware of potentially dangerous situations, including those linked to the use of the internet. Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school via school council activities. They contribute much in the local area, but their understanding of communities further afield is just developing. They work hard at charitable fund-raising. Their average attendance and average basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) fit them adequately for their future lives.

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

How effective is the provision?

Most lessons offer a variety of activities matched to pupils’ abilities well and there is good pace to learning. Teachers make sure that pupils know what is expected of them by the end of the lesson and that they have the right resources to achieve their lesson targets. Teachers know their pupils’ abilities well and their use of assessment and marking has improved significantly since the previous inspection, with planning responding to pupils’ individual needs and clear indications about how they can improve. That has been of particular benefit to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the high proportion who speak English as an additional language. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to challenge thinking and get the best out of pupils in most lessons, but, in reading, questions are less probing, and some opportunities are missed to include reading in themed work. Well-trained and skilled teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils’ learning. They

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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manage pupils sensitively in lessons and in small-group work. Good links across subjects help pupils to build up numeracy and writing skills purposefully. There are a small number of occasions when learning is less effective because too long is spent recalling work learnt already, or working as a class, rather than getting on with independent learning. Interest wanes when that happens and progress slows. Pupils are confident in class and keen to ask questions, but, occasionally, staff miss opportunities to extend learning by responding in depth to these questions.

Pupils enjoy the engaging curriculum, through which they achieve well. Strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills has benefits for learning in other subjects. That was particularly noticeable, for example, in a science session with Year 2, when pupils described the feel of different materials, extending their vocabulary well with words such as 'flexible' and 'rigid'. A good range of activities outside lesson time enables pupils to nurture some of their favourite interests, such as chess and football. The school's work to achieve Activemark and Healthy Schools status is reflected in pupils' keen enthusiasm for sports and their sporting skills benefit also from productive links with local schools and a local professional football club. Visits and visitors enrich learning by giving additional insight into themed work.

The school is quick to identify potentially weaker groups and potentially vulnerable pupils and give them additional support. Home-school links are very successful in reducing absenteeism and removing other barriers which may hinder pupils' learning and achievement. That work and the support offered in the school's well-run breakfast club encourages attendance, which has risen considerably this term. Effective work with outside agencies ensures good, targeted support for pupils. Most parents and carers are very happy with the helpful arrangements for pupils joining the school and transferring to the next and feel that they are very well informed about their children's 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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Determined leadership from the headteacher and active support from the governing body has established a cohesive staff team that shares strong commitment to school improvement. Clear direction and shared vision has enabled all staff, through the self-evaluation process, to understand and contribute to what needs to be done. As a result, improvements in all aspects of teaching and learning have led to pupils' improved outcomes. Senior and middle leaders and managers make a strong

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contribution. Robust evaluation of attainment and progress in writing and mathematics, for example, has given all staff a sharp insight into the effective use of assessment. That has had a very positive impact on planning and expectations for varying groups of pupils leading to improved attainment. Leaders recognise now the value of extending the good practice to reading, in order to bring about further improvement. Teaching and learning are managed effectively. Astute appointments and regular monitoring and discussion have contributed to an improved picture.

Governance is good and the governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities efficiently. Its members provide good measures of challenge and support and hold the school to account for its academic performance and other areas for improvement. It is very much aware of the school’s context and monitors provision rigorously. Discrimination is not tolerated and there is common determination that all pupils have the equal opportunities to achieve well. Measures taken to safeguard pupils are good. All adults are well trained and fully aware of their responsibilities, and pupils report that they feel very safe in school.

Community cohesion is promoted well and this has helped the school gain the International Schools Award. Links with a school in South Africa have encouraged deeper international understanding. Strong links are established with local schools’ groups and the school is a culturally harmonious community, where pupils form good friendships. Nevertheless, pupils’ first-hand experiences of the United Kingdom beyond the local area are not as well developed. The school is aware of the need to strengthen further its contribution to that element of community cohesion.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a strong start in the Nursery. Throughout the setting, they enjoy their learning and make good progress in the setting because of the well-organised and well-planned provision for them. Their welfare and safety are given high priority. As a result, children settle quickly into routines, gain in confidence, and learn to work well in groups. Children are courteous and behave well. Procedures for observing and recording children’s individual progress are good and provide clear guidance when staff plan next steps in their learning and development. Good provision for children’s development of early literacy skills and their use of ICT enables them to tackle these areas confidently and become good, independent learners. Teaching is both supportive and encouraging, but, just occasionally, in the Reception Year, questioning is not thorough enough to ensure children’s understanding, for instance, in phonics (linking sounds with letters) sessions. Activities are punctuated with questions and prompting to ensure children get the most from their play. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and others which children choose for themselves. Resources are used well to set up stimulating play both indoors and in the outdoor area. Leaders and managers have established strong teamwork throughout Nursery and Reception Year. There is a clear plan for continued development and this has led to good improvement since the previous inspection.

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

An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Of those, the vast majority expressed highly positive views about most aspects of the school, especially how well the school keeps their children safe and ensures their children enjoy school. The points where parents and carers disagreed with the statements were of no particular pattern. A very small minority expressed concerns about their children’s progress or whether the school is meeting their children’s needs. Inspectors examined the school records of progress and provision for groups of pupils covering the range of needs in the school. The findings are reflected in the report. All concerns brought to inspectors’ attention were checked and discussed with school leaders, while ensuring that parents’ and carers’ anonymity was protected always.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ellen Wilkinson 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 259 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	155	60	101	39	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	151	58	102	39	4	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	128	49	113	44	18	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	34	142	55	22	8	6	2
The teaching is good at this school	109	42	129	50	15	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	96	37	132	51	24	9	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	100	39	143	55	15	6	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)	88	34	133	51	17	7	2	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	81	31	134	52	27	10	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	110	42	125	48	16	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	33	139	54	18	7	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	105	41	131	51	13	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	121	47	118	46	15	6	2	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

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

28 November 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Ellen Wilkinson Primary School, London E6 5UP

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me and the inspection team when we came to inspect your school recently. Thank you for responding to the questionnaire. We enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us a lot about the things you enjoy. We found out a few good things for ourselves also. We noticed, for example, how polite and well mannered you are and that you behave well. We could tell from your enthusiasm that you are proud of your school. All of those things are very important, so do keep them up.

Your school has improved over the last few years. It is a good school. All of you do well. The standards most of you reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6 are about the same as other 11-year-olds nationally and more of you than usual gain higher levels. You make good progress in your work, although your reading is not quite as good as the other subjects. Your teachers do a good job and all the adults take good care of you. That is why you take good care of each other, enjoy school and achieve well.

Despite all of these good things, your school leaders would like it to be even better. To help that to happen, we have suggested two things for them to work on. The first is to make sure all lessons are as good as the best ones, with plenty of activity for you and different tasks that are just right for your ability. Sometimes, more learning can come from the questions you ask, so we have asked for teachers to take this into account. The other point is to help with your reading a bit more by setting you targets, like those you have for writing, and by asking you to read in lots of different lessons, not just literacy. We have asked for teachers to make their questions about your reading make you think hard because, if you read well, this opens up learning in every other subject. All of you can help by continuing to work hard and to read as much as you can.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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