

Lathom Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102728
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	376756
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2012
Lead inspector	Emma Merva

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marino Grajales
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Rowlands
Head of school	Martin Stanley
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2008
School address	Lathom Road East Ham London E6 2DU
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Age group	7–11
Inspection date(s)	2–3 July 2012
Inspection number	3376756



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Introduction

Inspection team

Emma Merva	Additional inspector
Helen Hutchings	Additional inspector
Avtar Sheeri	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons or part-lessons, amounting to 13 hours in total, involving 20 teachers, with 11 visits being accompanied by a member of the senior management team. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, acting headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at its monitoring, assessment and attendance records, improvement plans, the governing body minutes and safeguarding documents. In addition, they analysed questionnaires from 77 parents and carers, 217 pupils and 20 staff.

Information about the school

Lathom Junior School is a larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is above average, the largest group being those from Pakistani and Indian heritages. An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are a large proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The number of pupils who join and leave the school at different points in the year is higher than average. The school is in a federation with a local infant school and children's centre. The school has gained the International Schools award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because the quality of teaching is not consistently high enough to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Pupils make good progress from their below average starting points so that by the end of Year 6 their achievement is good. Reading skills and the enjoyment of books are promoted effectively and, as a result, pupils are becoming increasingly confident in choosing books for pleasure.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding elements. Teachers give their best and make lessons interesting and fun. All make good use of the extra adult support to enhance pupils' learning and ensure their lessons are well planned. Nevertheless, in some lessons, the targets set for improvement of work are not clear.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted well through a range of enrichment activities which make a strong contribution to their positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe and enjoy school. These features make a real contribution to the calm and welcoming atmosphere. Attendance is above average and improving.
- The senior leadership team and the staff are ambitious for their pupils, and they have high expectations of pupils. The senior leadership team has ensured that the whole-school community shares a common purpose and promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The implementation of performance management targets, ensures that teaching is effective. Actions to strengthen teachers' performance are leading to improved outcomes. Senior and middle leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and self-evaluation is accurate. However, the role of middle leaders in observing and evaluating the quality of teaching across the school is currently underdeveloped.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress by increasing the proportion of good or better teaching by ensuring marking sets targets for improvement of pupils' work.
- Develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by strengthening the role of middle leaders to provide rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils who enter the school in Year 3 do so with attainment that is below average, although this fluctuates year on year. The school admits a high proportion of pupils at different times of the year and their attainment on entry is mostly low. Well-tailored intervention groups successfully help pupils to narrow their learning gaps and make sustained progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and numeracy is broadly average. They are given good opportunities to extend their reading skills by working together and researching topics. Opportunities for regular reading in school enable pupils to make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle and read new words. Reading is well promoted through book corners in each classroom and the two school libraries. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say that their children are making good progress, and inspection evidence confirms this.

The quality of work seen across the school, in pupils' books and in lessons demonstrates that all groups of pupils make good progress over time. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of well-planned lessons together with high quality care and support from teaching assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress, because small group support and good tracking in their acquisition of language skills helps all pupils, including those of Pakistani and Indian heritages, to learn well in lessons. For example, this was observed in a Year 6 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, where pupils were being challenged in their research techniques and recording of information about their slipper project. This activity helped to develop their numeracy and literacy skills by applying them across the topic. As a result of the teacher's probing questioning, pupils developed their understanding of how to research and explain their findings. Learning was well paced and the whole class was keen to learn new facts to enhance their historical knowledge of world history.

Quality of teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Inspection evidence is consistent with the views of parents and carers that their children are taught well and that pupils are positive about their lessons. Although marking is generally regular in lessons, advice

about next steps in learning is not always sufficiently clear to enable pupils to reach the next level. In the best lessons observed, learners displayed positive attitudes to learning and teaching was characterised by respectful relationships between pupils and adults. Teachers showed good subject knowledge, so that they were confident in their explanations and modelled this well for pupils. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils worked together well calculating probability where they used simple methods systematically and were able to confidently explain how their answers were reached.

Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons and have positive impact on supporting various groups of pupils by carefully adapting resources so that all learners can make good progress. Reading is well taught across the school and picture books have been recently introduced to enhance thinking skills while reading, particularly for pupils new to learning English. Pupils are tolerant of each other during lessons and they respect the contribution they each make. This has a significant impact on the effective development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. All groups are enabled to make the same progress, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils were well guided by teaching assistants to construct sentences using past, present and future tenses, and made good progress.

Pupils have many good opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematics in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 intervention lesson, pupils were able to read well and write in full sentences using and applying their knowledge of letters and sounds. As a result of effective small group and individual targeted questioning strategies, pupils made good progress. Similarly, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils worked well on establishing the features of a play script using the Second World War as their context to write their version for a forthcoming assembly about the effects of war on a country. As a result of good questioning and detailed lesson planning, all pupils made good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning are typically good, as was evident around the school and in lessons during the inspection. School records demonstrate that over time, behaviour is well managed and consistently good. Pupils respond well to the school's inclusive ethos and respect each other's differences. In discussions with pupils, they comment that behaviour around the school and in class is good and, as a result, they enjoy learning. The school has well-developed systems for pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable to ensure they have a clear knowledge of their needs. There are respectful relationships between adults and pupils in school. When they are working in pairs or groups, pupils show high levels of resilience and work well in partnership to effectively enhance their social development. Consequently, pupils say that any form of prejudice-based bullying, such as racist or homophobic comments, are rare but are confident that staff will deal with any incidents effectively. They know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of potential risks when using the internet. For example, in an observed assembly, pupils were able to articulate confidently how to keep themselves safe when using social networking sites.

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their children are safe in school and that their behaviour is good. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in their above average attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher and head of school have created a strong team that is setting high expectations for pupils and has a clear ambition for success. This ambition has been shared with parents and carers who commented positively on the new federation arrangements.

Evaluation systems are secure and ensure that leaders have a clear overview of strengths and areas for development. As a result, this information is used effectively to inform school development planning and professional development. There are good systems in place to ensure the management of staff performance is well administered. These developments have added positively to the school's capacity for further improvement; this is reflected in the improving attainment, the sustained good behaviour of the pupils, rising attendance figures, and in the good quality of teaching. Good partnerships between the school and the children's centre gives vulnerable families support and help by, for example, holding parenting classes.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It includes exciting and interesting activities such as residential experiences, visits to places of interest, sports clubs and breakfast club. This contributes well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the recent Year 5 visit to the zoo enabled pupils to develop a range of social skills that deepened their understanding of the world in which they live and of the care of animals. The school has developed good relationships with parents and carers through programmes such as positive parenting having an impact on improved attendance. Members of the governing body ensure that opportunities are open to all. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind, and this has made a strong contribution to the school's welcoming and harmonious ethos.

Members of the governing body regularly access training to support them in their role. For example, they have recently attended courses in finance and data analysis. As a result, they are now better equipped to provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements and give no cause for concern. The school has adopted many examples of good practice, such as the easily recognisable jackets for staff on duty and highly effective child protection procedures.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



4 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lathom Junior School, London E6 2DU

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and talking with you during your lessons and at playtimes. You, your parents and carers told us that you think your school is good, and we agree. Here are some of the things your school does well.

- The teaching you receive is good, and this helps you to make good progress and achieve well.
- Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- You tell us you get on well with each other, feel safe and secure at school.
- You enjoy school and have above average attendance.

We think your school could improve further still so we have asked your headteacher and senior leaders to:

- make sure that you always have clear targets in your work
- make teaching even better so that more of you make outstanding progress
- make sure that teachers keep a check that this is happening.

All of you can help, too, by continuing to work hard, attending regularly and behaving well.

Yours sincerely

Emma Merva
Lead inspector

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