

Richard Alibon Primary School with additional resourced provision for cognitive and learning difficulties : Special Educational Needs Base

Alibon Road, Dagenham, RM10 8DF

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress made by pupils is uneven across the school because not all teaching is of a good quality. This has held back the drive to improve attainment.
- Teaching is not always pitched at the right level for more-able pupils and some lessons move at only a slow pace.
- Pupils in the additional resourced provision are not integrated well enough in lessons other than for English and mathematics.
- School leaders and governors do not evaluate the impact of their actions on accelerating pupils' progress rigorously enough. When planning improvements they do not always link these to pupil progress targets.
- The governing body does not hold the school to account well enough for the way pupil premium funds are spent.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is working hard with school leaders to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching caused partly by the absence of key members of staff.
- Children start their school life well in the Nursery and Reception classes because teaching is good and activities interesting.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe because of the attention paid to ensuring their welfare. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their keen attitudes to learning and improved attendance.
- Parents greatly value the well-attended workshops in mathematics which help them understand how key skills are taught so they can support their children at home.

- The re-organisation of subjects into topics has extended the range of pupils' experiences and greatly enhanced their understanding of the world.
- Initiatives in writing which were underway at the previous inspection are now established and starting to lead to more rapid pupil progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 15 were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, parents, members of the governing body including the Chair and a representative from the local authority.
- As there were only six responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), inspectors also took account of a recent survey of parents undertaken by the school and held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Mayle	Additional Inspector
David Wolfson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools and pupil numbers are increasing as it expands to three forms of entry.
- Nearly half of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and numbers are rising. A quarter are from families of Black African heritage. One third of pupils speak English as an additional language, but few are at an early stage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium (which is extra money given to schools for pupils in local authority care, from Forces families and who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- More pupils than in other primary schools join or leave part way through their primary school education.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. This is because the school has additional resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. It caters for 24 pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and three Reception classes.
- Currently four teachers are on maternity leave. This includes one of the assistant headteachers.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress and improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - reducing the length of lessons and increasing the pace of learning by checking that all teachers plan lessons to make the most of the time available
 - planning more interesting activities to develop pupils' higher-order reading skills, such as comprehension
 - making sure that the more-able pupils do not waste time listening to explanations of work they already understand
 - providing training for staff so they can integrate pupils in the additional resourced provision fully into mainstream classes for subjects other than English and mathematics
 - ensuring that all teachers provide time for pupils to respond to the written comments in their marking.
- Strengthen the leadership and management to secure sustained improvement by ensuring that:
 - checks on how well the school is doing take account of the impact of the school's actions on the pupils' progress
 - priorities in the school improvement plan are linked to clear targets for increasing the pupils' rate of progress
 - governors hold the school more closely to account for use of pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When pupils leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment is below average in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, there is an improving picture, but many of the more-able pupils are capable of reaching higher levels in their work. Progress is adequate rather than good. It varies across Years 1 to 6 and is best in Years 2 and 6.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, although their attainment is still below average by the start of Year 1. Children learn through a wide variety of stimulating activities, both inside and outdoors, and quickly become able to work and play cooperatively with others.
- Pupils usefully plan and practise particular skills over a period of time before putting them into an extended piece of writing. These are in a wide range of styles from newspaper articles to stories. Skills which pupils develop in sessions to practise their handwriting are transferred to their written and other work. The pupils' neat presentation reflects their pride in their work.
- Daily activities to strengthen the pupils' mental arithmetic and their speed of recall are starting to improve pupils' confidence with numbers. Regular opportunities to apply these skills in solving real-life problems are deepening their mathematical understanding and helping them to see the relevance of what they are learning. Despite these improvements, pupils are not yet making consistently good progress in mathematics.
- In the Year 1 check in 2012 on pupils' use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), attainment was higher than seen nationally. Wider reading skills, such as comprehension, do not develop as rapidly because sessions to develop these skills do not always engage the attention of all pupils.
- Pupils attracting the pupil premium funding are making faster progress so that the gap between their attainment and national expectations is closing. Pupils new to learning English, of Black African heritages, and the many who join late make similar progress as others.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress overall, but with some variations across the school. Successful steps have been taken to improve the small-group teaching of English and mathematics for pupils in the additional resourced provision classes. As a result their progress is now good in both subjects. Action has been less effective in ensuring they can participate fully in mainstream classes for other subjects and so their progress slows at these times.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is still too patchy. It is much better in some classes and year groups than in others. More teaching requires improvement in Years 1, 3 and 4 than in other years. Some lessons last too long and the pace of learning slows when teachers do not plan enough to fill the time allocated. At times teachers do not give hard enough work to the more able, particularly when they have to listen for long periods to explanations of work they already understand.
- The most effective teaching is where tasks are pitched at the right level for all pupils and learning is built up in small steps. In these lessons, teachers make use of a variety of interesting resources and activities to maintain a rapid pace. New technology, such as 'visualisers', adds extra interest and helps to retain the pupils' attention. These features motivate pupils so they are keen to learn.
- Teaching assistants are generally deployed well and make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly when supporting pupils with specific learning needs.
- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and are skilled at achieving them. By insisting on 'no hands up' they are able to ensure that all pupils are involved in answering questions and that everyone listens. No individual can dominate the lesson and all have to stay

alert. Pupils are often bursting to answer but understand they have to wait their turn.

- There is some highly effective marking but this is another area of inconsistency. All teachers indicate what has been done well and many give helpful advice about how work can be improved. The most effective marking gives time for pupils to respond to suggestions, for example about how extracts of writing can be redrafted or problems set in mathematics to apply the skill just learnt. Pupils are not always given time to respond to teachers' comments and put suggestions into practice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils routinely behave well in lessons. Any disruption to learning is very infrequent as teachers are consistent in their praise and sanctions. Pupils enjoy working together to discuss ideas and complete tasks or by constructively assessing each other's work. They work hard and are keen to answer questions, although a small number of pupils lose concentration when teaching is occasionally less interesting and work not stimulating.
- Pupils take responsibility seriously, for example as representatives on the school council or by helping newcomers to settle into school. Pupils say that behaviour on the playground has improved considerably with the introduction of 'mini-mentors' who support pupils who find it difficult to fulfil the school's expectations of them.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. The community police officer talks to them about e-safety which pupils find useful as it reminds them of potential hazards they might face. Incidents of racism and bullying are very rare and dealt with swiftly. Pupils know what to do if they witness bullying or feel bullied themselves. Any hurtful name-calling or problems when friends fall out are quickly resolved.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are polite and show respect for others. They enjoy school and their attendance and punctuality have improved considerably. Incentives for regular attendance have reduced absence sharply over the last year. Careful monitoring of inappropriate behaviour enables the school to identify any patterns and put into place action to help individual pupils learn what is acceptable. This has significantly reduced incidences of poor behaviour.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is building a cohesive team, although some staff absences have slowed the process. Frequent observations of teaching by senior leaders enable them to identify where additional training for individuals is needed. This includes learning from the more effective teachers by watching them teach. Formal arrangements for managing teachers' performance are rigorously implemented. Only teaching that leads to good pupil progress is rewarded.
- Rigorous monitoring enables leaders to identify where improvements are needed and plan actions to raise attainment. However, checks on how well the school is doing do not take enough account of the impact of actions on the pupils' progress, concentrating instead on their attainment. Furthermore, targets in the school's improvement plan are also not based on increasing the pupils' progress.
- The school rightly focuses on ensuring equality of opportunity and helping pupils who struggle with their learning. Pupil premium funding is used carefully to provide additional support in school and out of school hours for pupils in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have greatly improved provision for pupils in the additional resourced provision and their achievement. Further training is planned to enable teachers and support staff to integrate these pupils fully into lessons other than English and mathematics.
- Interesting themes and topics, including one on the Second World War, encourage pupils to develop a wider understanding of their world. The introduction of 'philosophy for children' enables pupils to think more deeply about questions such as 'How do you acquire wisdom?' Special events from outside experts such as 'Mathletics' and 'Mad science' are hugely enjoyed

and help pupils see how to apply the skills they are learning to practical situations.

- The school's close engagement with the local authority has been a key factor in supporting improvements in phonics teaching, marking and teaching in the additional resourced provision. Training provided for governors has helped them to become more effective in their role.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit the school regularly so they can understand how well it is doing, the quality of teaching and where improvements are needed. They are quite clear about the quality of teaching and understand how the headteacher sets targets for teachers, rewards good performance and tackles underperformance. Regular training is undertaken, including in how to interpret school assessment data in relation to other schools, but with insufficient focus on pupils' progress. Governors are fully involved in making financial decisions. They understand how pupil premium funding is allocated but have not checked rigorously enough whether it is helping to raise achievement for eligible pupils. The governing body is very active in ensuring that procedures to keep pupils safe are rigorously implemented and their impact regularly reviewed.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	130357
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	406378

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	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terence Wade
Headteacher	Andrew Fullagar
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 January 2011
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