



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
John Donne Primary School

Southwark Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 16-17 March 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Contents

Section	Page
Basic information about the school	iv
Introduction	1
Main findings	1
Key issues	4
Inspection findings	4
Standards achieved by the pupils	4
The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	6
The quality of education	7
Leadership and management	8
Implementation of the action plan	9
Appendix – Information about the inspection	11

Basic information about the school

Name of school:	John Donne Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Ms J Klimek
Address of school:	Woods Road Peckham London SE15 2SW
Telephone:	020 7653 9246
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr M Chaudhury
Local education authority area:	Southwark
Unique reference number:	100797
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs J Ward HMI
Dates of inspection:	16-17 March 2004

Introduction

1. John Donne Primary School is situated in Peckham, south London. It is a large primary school, with 343 pupils on roll including 39 pupils in the nursery. The school has a multi-ethnic population with approximately 211 pupils from Black heritages. The proportion of pupils who come from homes where English is an additional language is well above average. Small numbers of the pupils are from refugee, asylum-seeking and traveller families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average while the number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is average. The number of pupils who leave and join the school part way through their primary education is high. The school is part of the Southwark Excellence in Cities Education Action Zone.

2. The school was inspected in June 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of June 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on three occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In March 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June 2002.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- the quality of the teaching and learning and the progress pupils make have improved significantly since the inspection in June 2002. Most lessons are taught well, and the headteacher's leadership and management are very effective, resulting in an upward trend in pupils' attainment throughout the school;
- most pupils enter the school with a narrow range of learning experiences and although they make sound or good progress throughout the Foundation Stage, they enter Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment which are below those expected for their age. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and are unable to express their needs and wishes easily. For a significant proportion of pupils these limitations persist well beyond the Foundation Stage;
- the pupils' attainment in the national tests for Key Stage 1 in 2003 represent slight improvement on the school's overall results for 2002. However,

standards in writing, especially those achieved by the boys, were too low, and lower than those achieved by the school in 2001 and 2002;

- the pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003 was very low in all subjects when compared with the standards attained by pupils nationally and in similar schools. There is evidence in pupils' work and assessments that standards are beginning to rise, albeit slowly;
- the pupils' knowledge and understanding in science throughout the school have improved, as have their skills in setting up investigations and experiments. The higher attaining pupils are working closer to average levels;
- the pupils in Key Stage 1 are working within the expected levels in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils in Key Stage 2 are becoming confident in using a range of programs, although there are gaps in their experience and skills;
- standards in lessons reflect the levels attained in tests and assessments, and a greater proportion of pupils in each class are working at levels close to those expected nationally. However, most are working at levels below those expected for their ages. The school is working effectively to address the low attainment through concentrated teaching programmes;
- the pupils made at least sound progress in all the lessons; and good or very good progress in two thirds. Throughout the school, the standards attained and the rate of progress the pupils make have improved steadily during the past year;
- there have been major improvements in the pupils' attitudes to learning and the way they respond; their response in all lessons was at least satisfactory, and was good or very good in three quarters. When the teaching was well focused on their needs, the pupils were very attentive, willing participants in lessons and collaborated well in small groups;
- attendance levels have improved overall, but remain lower than found nationally. Pupils' attendance continues to need constant monitoring and review by all agencies;
- the ethos of the school is a strength; provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies are vibrant occasions that include very good opportunities to involve the pupils in musical, and speaking and listening activities. A high level of care and attention is paid to their personal development, and relationships are good throughout the school;
- the school has continued to strengthen and develop the range of visits and additional curricular opportunities available for the pupils, including successful involvement in events and visits as part of local initiatives;

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- the school environment has improved significantly. Lively displays of the pupils' work are mounted in corridors and central areas. The links with the parents and the community are now good; parents appreciate the support and guidance the school provides for themselves and for their children;
 - the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons and good or very good in two thirds. The teachers' planning is good, and most use day-to-day assessment effectively to inform them of the next steps in the pupils' learning;
 - the quality of education is good overall. Well-written schemes of work and other guidance are used effectively by staff to provide a broad and balanced curriculum;
 - the provision for the pupils who have special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language is sound. There have been weaknesses in the management of special educational needs for some time, but the recently appointed co-ordinator is developing effective procedures to ensure appropriate support is provided, and that the progress the pupils make is carefully monitored;
 - the headteacher is a very effective leader, and provides clear purpose and direction to the work of the school. She has led and managed all improvements very well, including providing the teachers with appropriate training, support and guidance to enable them to improve the quality of their lessons. Her strong and sensitive leadership has been a key factor in the rapid progress the school has made;
 - the co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science, ICT, and assessment and record-keeping have made a good start in leading their areas. They are beginning to oversee improvements throughout the school, focusing appropriately on assessment and monitoring pupils' progress;
 - the governors are well informed about the work of the school. They are well placed to take an increasingly influential, strategic role;
 - the school's routines, policies and practices are well documented and implemented consistently. Roles and responsibilities, including those for monitoring and reporting on practice, are clearly outlined and supported;
 - the training and guidance for teachers and managers provided by the local education authority (LEA) have been effective. The LEA has made a commitment to continue to provide a similar level of support for the forthcoming year.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to improve standards in reading and writing by ensuring the systematic and regular teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 and the first two years of Key Stage 2;
- continue to raise standards in mathematics, science and ICT throughout the school;
- continue to develop the effective procedures to support and guide teachers in planning for, and teaching pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The pupils' attainment in the national tests for Key Stage 1 in 2003 represents slight improvement on the overall 2002 test results in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2B and above in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there has been a dip in the proportion of pupils attaining a basic Level 2 or above in reading and writing. Standards in writing, especially those achieved by the boys, were too low, and lower than those achieved by the school in 2001 and 2002.

8. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003 was very low in all subjects. The results were in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally and of similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, there is evidence in pupils' work and assessments that standards are beginning to rise, albeit slowly.

9. The pupils enter the nursery with a narrow range of learning experiences and underdeveloped skills, especially in speaking and listening; overall their standards are low. However, the pupils settle well and make good progress in all areas of learning. Many pupils in the nursery are acquiring language rapidly and building their vocabulary well. The pupils learn to retell familiar stories and they begin to write using recognisable marks. The reading and writing corners and role-play areas all encourage the pupils to use books and make notes and cards. By the time the pupils join the reception class they have become more confident and sociable, sharing equipment appropriately and playing together happily. The reception classes build upon the strong start made by the pupils in the nursery. Standards overall are below average, but most pupils are making acceptable progress as a result of well-organised learning opportunities. They make good progress in developing their spoken language and skills in reading and writing. The pupils' number skills are appropriate, and they learn to identify and replicate basic patterns and count on accurately. The team of teachers and classroom assistants work together well, using the two rooms and outdoor spaces effectively.

10. Standards in English throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 are improving, but not at a consistent rate. The continuing variation between year groups is at least in part a result of erratic teaching in the past, the turbulence in the school population and weaknesses in the pupils' basic command of English. Across the school, the pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing well as teachers seek to provide regular opportunities for pupils to speak in small groups and in front of the class. Pupils of all ages, many with English as an additional language, were keen to talk with each other and to adults; conversations with their 'talk partners' were often lively and animated. Pupils in most classes are reading with increased confidence and accuracy. Those whose grasp of English is tentative have made significant gains as a result of the school's focus on guided reading. Overall, the pupils' limited knowledge of phonics from reception to Year 4 inhibits progress as they move up the school.

11. By the end of Key Stage 1, a minority of pupils have already reached the standards expected for their age in writing; however, overall standards are well below national expectations. In Key Stage 2 writing skills are improving slowly. In a Year 3 lesson, careful drafting of weather diaries resulted in clear descriptions that made accurate use of subject vocabulary. Letter formation was variable but punctuation was generally accurate. The higher achieving pupils, in a very strong Year 4 lesson focusing on descriptive language, identified the use of alliteration and homophones in the text. Year 5 pupils wrote clear and often perceptive appraisals of their reading books in their 'learning diaries'. The standards achieved by some pupils in Year 5 were above national expectations. However, in Year 6, the gaps in pupils' previous learning inhibited the contributions they were prepared to offer to a challenging lesson on persuasive writing.

12. The pupils have additional teaching support for literacy and numeracy to boost their standards and secure the skills they have acquired. Standards of attainment in mathematics are rising in most classes. In Year 1 the pupils can sequence numbers and have mastered simple addition. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils are reasonably confident in adding and subtracting, and in counting on and back in twos, fives and tens. However, they are less accurate when using other operations.

13. Some pupils in all classes in Key Stage 2 are working close to the level that might be expected for their age. Planning is closely linked to the National Numeracy Strategy and this helps to provide appropriate challenge in most lessons. Where the teacher's subject knowledge is secure, good questioning consistently seeks accurate calculation and the correct use of mathematical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 3, for example, learned the inverse relationship between multiplication and division through well-planned work on number families, and pupils in Year 6 calculated accurately when investigating triangles. However, they were unable to explain higher-level properties of angles or circles. Pupils' skills when explaining the strategies and methods they use to solve problems in mathematics have strengthened, and most attempt to contribute in plenary sessions. When learning about ordinal numbers, most pupils could answer closed questions accurately; they were less confident in giving explanations for their answers.

14. The work in science has broadened and the pupils have had several good opportunities to investigate materials, make predictions and draw conclusions from their experiments. The teachers provide good first-hand experiences to learn about science, for

example, babies and toddlers visit the Year 2 classes to support work about growth. Pupils are making progress throughout the school in science, but it is variable. Most pupils are able to work collaboratively when setting up experiments. In a very good lesson in Year 5, for instance, pupils investigating sounds were fascinated by the discovery that vibration produces sound, and very good progress in their level of understanding was made. However, more work is needed on fair testing and the use of scientific terminology.

15. Standards in ICT are continuing to improve. At Key Stage 1 the pupils are achieving standards similar to age-related expectations; for example, pupils in Year 2 use the function keys to edit writing, most can load and save programs, and some are able to print out their work independently. At Key Stage 2, standards in some elements of the ICT curriculum are at the expected level; for example, pupils could load, edit and save text. Year 6 pupils have begun to master software to make presentations to their classes. However, there are gaps in the pupils' skills and competencies due to past weaknesses in the teaching for ICT, and in the unreliability of the hardware. The recently appointed co-ordinator has been effective in improving the teachers' confidence and the quality of their planning for ICT. The pupils have greater opportunities to improve their skills during sessions in the computer suite; they are beginning to reflect on the outcomes of their work, for example when handling data.

16. The foundation subjects are well represented within the curriculum; for example, in art and design, pupils have explored a wide range of media, producing work in the styles of famous and local artists, and designed and made puzzles to the style found in the Tudor times. A wealth of artwork is on display around the school; it is of a good standard and represents different cultures. Exciting work in history has included examining the way the Ancient Greeks represented their lifestyle in pottery. Good use is made of visits to enhance the foundation subjects; pupils in Year 4 have made recent visits to the Maritime Museum, the National Portrait Gallery and Tate Britain, making use of these experiences in their history lesson on the Tudors.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The ethos of the school is a strength; provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies are vibrant occasions that include very good opportunities to involve the pupils in musical, and speaking and listening activities. They are also well used to praise effort and achievement. One Key Stage 2 assembly reflected on the theme of caring and supporting each other, drawing extensively from the pupils' contributions. The pupils prayed respectfully and broke into spontaneous applause for the recorder group. The very strong musical experience that closes most assemblies involves all the pupils and staff singing, with accompaniment from teachers and pupils on guitars, drums and recorders.

18. A high level of care and attention is paid to the pupils' personal development, and relationships are very good throughout the school. The pupils are aware of the need to respect others and to care for those less fortunate than themselves. These values are constantly reinforced in lessons, assemblies, at play and in the lunch hall. Stronger links with the local community have allowed the pupils to engage successfully with other pupils in different situations.

19. The school provides the pupils with many excellent opportunities to attend extracurricular clubs; these activities encompass a wide range of sporting, social and creative pursuits. Many of these activities have included support from the Education Action Zone. All these opportunities have contributed to improving the pupils' attitudes and behaviour, particularly with regard to taking responsibility for their own actions.

20. The pupils' behaviour is good; they respond positively to the teachers' higher expectations of them and a purposeful atmosphere is established in most lessons. The days start very well and pupils settle quickly to initial tasks during registration. The pupils' attitudes to the school and their application to work have improved significantly over the past year. Pupils are attentive, willing participants in class lessons and they collaborate very effectively in smaller groups. Attendance rates have improved; most pupils arrive punctually and lessons begin on time. However, attendance remains lower than found nationally and requires continual, rigorous monitoring.

21. The school environment has improved significantly. Interesting and lively displays of pupils' work can be seen in corridors and central areas. The pupils are proud of this work and show much greater care and respect for their school, the work on display and the equipment they use. The school has taken advantage of donations and sponsorship from local groups and businesses to improve the environment.

22. The school works very well with parents. The parents are appreciative of the high level of support and guidance that they receive from the school for themselves and their children. Much has been achieved to build strong and productive links with the pupils' families and the local community.

The quality of education

23. The quality of the education provided is good. The teaching is mainly good and there are some examples of very good teaching throughout the school. All lessons are well planned and there is greater consistency in the content of the curriculum between similar-aged classes and across each year group.

24. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons and it was good or very good in two thirds. The teachers plan and review their work conscientiously. Expectations of pupils are much higher than found a year ago, both in terms of their conduct and their anticipated levels of achievement, and the best lessons are paced briskly. Work is carefully structured but sometimes takes too little account of the needs of those pupils with higher abilities; there is a tendency to deal with this matter through the quantity of work which is required, rather than adjusting the difficulty of the task or presenting the work in a different way. There are some very good examples of teachers using a wider range of strategies in their lessons; for instance, pupils working in groups and pairs to discuss and present aspects of their work is becoming a well used strategy to improve the pupils' speaking skills, and their confidence when contributing in class.

25. Most teachers assess the pupils' learning effectively to help them to match the work they set to the pupils' needs but not all the tasks set are sufficiently challenging. The teachers have improved the quality of their marking, and there are examples of constructive guidance

given in pupils' books to help them improve, but this practice is not yet consistent throughout the school.

26. The school has developed very effective systems for tracking the pupils' attainment and progress over time. This helps both the teachers to set targets for the pupils to improve their work and the senior managers to monitor and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. There are appropriate arrangements for the longer-term, as well as the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress. Progress within the units of work in most subjects is recorded against the learning objectives. National Curriculum and other test results are recorded individually to track the pupils' progress as they move through the school. The setting of individual and school-wide targets for pupils' performance is developing well; these targets are well considered, but challenging. They contribute to the high but realistic expectations of pupils and to the gains in standards across the school.

27. Schemes of work and curriculum guidance have been completed; staff use the guidance to good effect and continue to refine it in the light of experience. Careful monitoring and analysis of pupils' work and test results inform reviews of provision, and identify areas of weakness. Key Stage 2 results, for example, revealed shortcomings in aspects of pupils' writing skills, especially those of the boys, and there are well organised and effective booster sessions to address these gaps in pupils' learning.

28. The curriculum is organised effectively and managed efficiently. Shared planning results in good mutual support for the teachers. The teachers are now making well-considered cross-curricular links between subjects. For example, some work seen in science and history had involved the pupils in using ICT to collate their findings, sometimes on graphs, to take notes and to write reports.

29. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language is sound, but there is room for further development in the monitoring systems to ensure these pupils are making the progress they are capable of, and the tasks set for them in lessons are appropriately matched to their needs.

Leadership and management

30. The headteacher is a very effective leader, and provides clear purpose and direction to the work of the school. She has led and managed all improvements very well, including providing the teachers with appropriate training, support and guidance to enable them to improve the quality of their lessons. Her strong and sensitive leadership has been a key factor in the rapid progress the school has made.

31. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science, ICT, and assessment and record-keeping have made a good start in leading their areas. They are beginning to oversee improvements throughout the school, focusing appropriately on assessment and monitoring pupils' progress. The deputy headteacher manages the provision for those pupils with English as an additional language, and co-ordinates the Foundation Stage of learning; there have been substantial improvements in bringing a cohesive approach to the early years curriculum from the nursery to the reception year. There have been weaknesses in the management of special educational needs for some time, but the recently appointed

co-ordinator is developing effective procedures to ensure appropriate support is provided, and that the progress the pupils make is carefully monitored.

32. The school's management and improvement plan usefully guides the short and longer-term work of the school. Self-evaluation by the school places it in a secure position to identify future training and support requirements, including the role the LEA can usefully play. The school and LEA have worked well in partnership to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. It is now timely for the school to fine-tune the help it needs for specific subjects. The LEA has submitted a plan which details the level of support the school can expect during the forthcoming year.

33. An effective system for monitoring the quality of the teaching, learning and the progress pupils make has been established. The analysis of information gathered has resulted in improvements in the school's work and contributes appropriately to planning for its future development. The school has accurately identified where shortcomings remain in pupils' work, and has set in place systems to address these weaknesses. There is further work needed to ensure that these systems are effective in raising the standards all pupils achieve over the next year.

34. The governing body provides the school with increasingly effective support in relation to management, budget-setting and determining priorities. The governors' committees work well, and the chair has been very supportive of the headteacher and staff; he has steered the governors towards strengthening their role in monitoring the school's improvement, including keeping a close watch on the progress being made. Governors are well informed about the work of the school. They are well placed to take an increasingly influential, strategic role.

Implementation of the action plan

35. The inspection report of 2002 required the school to address six key issues. These principally related to: raising standards; securing effective leadership and management by the senior and middle managers; improving the teaching; strengthening the effectiveness of the governance; improving the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school; and improving the curriculum and procedures for assessment. Overall, good progress has been made and most tasks have been completed well.

36. Pupils' reading skills and competencies are improving slowly. The strategies taught during guided reading sessions are being applied effectively by the pupils during their reading in literacy lessons. However, fewer pupils are able to apply their knowledge and use of phonics in their writing, to ensure spelling is correct. The pupils' investigational skills are improving, as are their enquiry skills.

37. Good quality support and guidance have helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The teachers' ability to manage pupils' challenging behaviour has been strengthened and, in most classes, the teachers have positive and encouraging attitudes to the pupils. The teaching has improved considerably and more lessons are well taught.

38. The behaviour of the pupils around the school continues to improve. Good routines for entering and leaving school and for moving from lesson to lesson are firmly established; the pupils line up in an orderly way and move around quietly and efficiently so that lessons start promptly. The staff are more consistent in managing the pupils' behaviour. The attitudes of the pupils in lessons are never less than satisfactory and often good.

39. The school has introduced curriculum maps for Years 1 to 6, together with guidance on curriculum organisation and planning. The curriculum is now appropriately balanced and includes specific 'focus' sessions, for example guided reading, whereby the teaching assistants are timetabled to support groups. The overall curriculum is richer. Explicit links have been made to themes and topics by including visits out of school, visits to school and joint learning ventures within the LEA and Education Action Zone.

40. The senior and middle managers have clear lines of responsibility, with appropriately recorded expectations regarding individual accountability. The senior and middle staff lead and manage their areas of responsibility with greater confidence. Throughout the school, the managers are facilitating improvements; the school is much stronger, and is providing a more consistently taught curriculum.

41. The governors have undertaken training to enable them to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the school; the budget is well managed and creative use has been made of monies to provide a good level of staffing. The governors are supportive of the drive to raise pupils' attainment, including monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in June 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January, June, and November 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of June 2002.

In March 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twenty-five lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and four registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff and representatives from the LEA and governing body; informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

Notes

