



Albemarle Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101032
LEA Wandsworth LEA
Inspection number 276443
Inspection dates 6 October 2005 to 7 October 2005
Reporting inspector John Brennan AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Princes Way
School category	Foundation		London
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		SW19 6JP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02087883170
Number on roll	230	Fax number	02087800896
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend Heinz Toller
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Laurie-Ann Lamb

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils attending Albemarle come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. About half of the pupils are of white British descent. Other pupils come from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups, with significant numbers of pupils of Black Caribbean, Black African, Indian and Pakistani origin. The proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English is above average. A higher than average number of pupils, either leave or join the school part way through the year. This can vary significantly between year groups. Over the past few years there has been considerable staff change including a fairly recent change of headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This improving school gives pupils a satisfactory standard of education, a view shared by the school itself. The school is not as good as that described in the last inspection when there were no major issues for improvement. However, it is considerably better than it was a short time ago. The school currently gives satisfactory value for money. After a period of uncertainty, in which there were many changes of staff, the appointment of the new headteacher has led to major improvements in the school and greater permanency in staffing. Parents and pupils have noticed that the school is getting better. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. Most other pupils also make satisfactory progress, although some pupils in the infants do not do well enough in mathematics and not enough is done to help higher attaining pupils do better in writing. Pupils who have special educational needs or who are just beginning to learn English do well. Parents are encouraged to play a full part in their children's education. Initiatives to help parents who are new to the country are particularly good. The school puts great store in developing pupils' personal qualities and has been very active in this. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. The school does all that it can to encourage pupils to be healthy. In the main, the school takes good care of pupils but inconsistent systems to track their progress undermine this. Although there have been many improvements of late, the scope for further improvement is satisfactory because much of what has been achieved is down to the headteacher. All school leaders are very committed to making the school better; however, systems are not yet fully embedded.

What the school should do to improve further

* Enable higher attaining pupils to improve their writing in all subjects * Give more guidance to all pupils about how they can improve their work. * Strengthen the current systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning and for tracking pupils' progress. * Make mathematics activities in Year 1 more challenging and appropriate for pupils of all abilities

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall standards are broadly average and pupils make steady progress in acquiring basic skills. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English. Some pupils made inadequate progress in the past which led to the 2004 national test results being well below average in mathematics and science. The picture is much more positive in 2005. Standards in those subjects are now average and pupils from all groups in Years 3-6 make satisfactory progress. Results in the national tests at Year 2 dipped in 2004 and were a little lower still in 2005. Standards are below average in reading and writing but well below average in mathematics. Infant pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Although their achievement is satisfactory in mathematics, pupils progress at a quicker rate in Year 2 than in Year 1. This is because lessons are better

planned in Year 2. In Year 1, higher attaining pupils are capable of achieving more. Many children start school with skills and abilities that are below average. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in learning to read, write and count. Progress is quicker in the Nursery than in Reception. Throughout the Foundation Stage children achieve well in their personal and social education and acquire habits that serve them well in future years. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and those who are in the early stages of learning English, make good progress because of the good quality of help they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted satisfactorily. The strong emphasis on healthy life-styles means that pupils know about the importance of diet and exercise. This is helped by the excellent lunches which many pupils choose to eat. Initiatives such as the Walk to School Day, a very good programme of dance activities and a varied programme of physical education ensure pupils are active. Pupils have a clear awareness of how to stay safe at home and at school. Improving attendance rates, which are satisfactory, testify to pupils' growing enjoyment of school. As one pupil commented, 'I think learning's fun here now. I really like coming'. Efforts put into improving behaviour have been very successful. Pupils play peaceably and are calm in assemblies. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory, although there is occasional restlessness when lessons do not capture pupils' interest. The school council and pupil questionnaires give pupils the chance to express opinions and suggest improvements. This encourages initiative and social responsibility. Pupils understand right and wrong and reflect quietly on their feelings and beliefs in assemblies. They work well in small teams, and take on responsibilities maturely. Older girls for example, enjoyed teaching younger children skipping rhymes at lunchtime. Pupils are helped to understand something of their own and other cultures through the arts, music and dance. They develop the essential skills and attitudes for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Records of observations show that when the new headteacher was appointed teaching was unsatisfactory. There have been considerable improvements since then. The school's assessment that teaching and learning is now satisfactory is accurate. In particular new behaviour guidelines, consistently applied, ensure classrooms are settled. The best teaching sets pupils engaging tasks, often by linking work across several subjects or using resources imaginatively. Pupils in Year 4, held in rapt attention by a pop DVD about man's ravaging of the earth, listed how they could help. Ideas such as 'not throwing away rubbish but recycling it,' prepared them well for poetry writing. The infrequency of such interesting tasks is one reason why few pupils reach beyond expected levels in writing. The inconsistent quality of marking is another.

Marking in Year 2, for example, shows pupils what they need to do to improve but in Year 6 unsatisfactory work is accepted too readily. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are not always sharp. As a result, work is sometimes not challenging enough. In a small number of lessons, too little is expected of pupils. Too many uninteresting worksheets are used in Year 1. These are too easy for higher and middle attaining pupils. All teachers work successfully with specialist teachers and teaching assistants for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English. These pupils feel good about learning and progress well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features. The school is rightly revising the curriculum plan to build better links between subjects and to make tasks more interesting and enjoyable. There is a very good programme of personal, social and health education in which pupils learn about safe and unsafe substances, and respectful personal relationships. A new project directed at helping children handle some of the social and emotional demands of growing up is a very worthwhile initiative. The school also provides an increasingly wide variety of clubs and other enrichment activities. This gives pupils opportunities to practise a range of sports. This and increased opportunities to explore the arts and music is a key influence in making pupils feel the school has improved. The school welcomes visitors to share their experiences and skills with the pupils, and sets up programmes of visits to help bring learning to life. Major events such as Book Week, Jazz Week, and Black History Month help them see the rich cultural diversity of contemporary society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are right when they say it is a happy and harmonious community. As one parent commented, 'It's such a friendly school'. All the teachers know all the children and they really look after them. Pupils and staff are always on the lookout for instances of bullying. These are rare, and are dealt with quickly and effectively. New approaches to dealing with bullying and poor behaviour have worked well. Staff are fully trained in child protection procedures. All of this makes the school a very safe place, and parents are open in their recognition of this. Pupils who have special needs or are new to learning English get the help they need. The school does not have a coherent way of easily checking how pupils progress in order to be sure they all do as well as they can. Although the school considers pupils' care, support and guidance to be good this is the principal reason why it is only satisfactory. The school is very good in helping parents support their children's learning, especially parents new to the country or with little English. Among a range of excellent activities, parents took home picture-story books, made translations and tapes in home languages for use in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Determined and effective leadership by the headteacher has led to significant improvements and created a renewed sense of ambition and teamwork. The most important priorities have been tackled successfully. A closer relationship with the local authority has helped improve behaviour and teaching. Well considered appointments have ensured a more settled workforce. Pupils and parents, whose views are sought and acted upon, express great confidence in the school. Many leaders are fairly new to post and are yet to develop the full range of skills needed to carry out their responsibilities. Too much still depends on the headteacher. This is why the overall quality of leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good as the school assesses, and why the capacity for improvement is also satisfactory rather than good. Senior managers and co-ordinators regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning. However, they do not always check to see that their advice has been acted upon. Some weaknesses in teaching and learning can, therefore, remain over time. Accurate analysis of test results for pupils in Year 6 has pinpointed areas in most need of improvement. The subsequent high profile given to these in the school development plan has resulted in a recent upward swing in performance in the juniors. Analysis of performance data in Year 2 has not been as thorough and so actions to promote improvement here have not been as well defined. As a result, performance has not improved as well as it might. With the help of a very capable finance officer, governors avoided a substantial budget deficit and now operate with a small amount of surplus. This reflects good financial planning. Governors have received recent training and reviewed their working practices but do not monitor closely enough.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so helpful to us when we were in your school a little while ago. We enjoyed our time with you, and are pleased to let you know what we decided as a result of our visit.

You told us that you enjoy school, especially the clubs you take part in. We could see how much many of you enjoyed dancing in the hall and how active you were at dinner time. The school does all that it can to help you stay healthy. Having tried them ourselves we can see that the school meals are excellent. We heartily recommend them to those of you who haven't tried them yet. Some lessons are very exciting. We could see how much you liked those and how well behaved you were in them. We also saw that when lessons were too easy some of you lost concentration and became fidgety.

We think that some of the ways the school asks you to write could be more thoughtful. We saw that mathematics for some of you in the infants was too easy. We have asked the school to put both of these things right. The school keeps lot of information on how well you are doing which we would like them to make more use of so that all of you get the right sort of work. A lot of the marking helps you see how to improve your work we would like all teachers to make sure that this happens. You have a headteacher who is always looking to make improvements in the school. You told us that the school is getting better every day and we can see this for ourselves.