

Parsloes Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101227
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	276473
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector	Sheena MacDonald HMI

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 on roll	
School	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ray Parkin
Headteacher	Mrs Aedin Lipski
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2000
School address	Spurling Road Dagenham RM9 5RH
Telephone number	020 8270 4925
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Parsloes is larger than most primary schools. It serves an area of significant social deprivation and higher than average numbers of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The make up of the school population has changed since the last inspection and now almost one third of the pupils come from minority ethnic heritage communities, mainly Black African and Black Caribbean. Higher than average numbers of pupils join the school after the start of the Foundation Stage and the level of mobility is rising.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with many elements of good practice across all areas. A high priority is placed on ensuring that all pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. As a result relationships are good and pupils respond by behaving well both in lessons and in the playground. Good and well implemented systems ensure that the few incidents of inappropriate behaviour, racism and bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils feel confident that their concerns will be dealt with quickly and parents appreciate the care and personal attention their children receive.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They enter a stimulating lively environment and make impressive progress particularly in the important area of personal and social development. Overall, achievement and standards are both satisfactory. Standards in Key Stage 1 rose in 2006 reversing a three year downward trend but are still below average and too few pupils achieve the higher levels. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been erratic, particularly in mathematics and writing, but improvements in 2006 brought standards up to average levels. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books confirms that writing is continuing to improve due to a whole school targeted approach and increased opportunities for speaking and listening. There is further scope for improved achievement, particularly for more able pupils.

Teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall. All teaching staff work hard to provide well structured lessons with clear objectives. Lessons are usually pitched at the right level for most pupils but they do not always provide enough challenge or opportunities for independent learning to challenge and stretch the more able. The pupils told us they enjoy lively, stimulating lessons which include for example drama and real life problem solving. Opportunities for this sort of learning which motivates pupils and encourages a real love of learning although increasing, particularly in English lessons, are still fairly limited at present.

The new headteacher along with her equally new senior team is already providing strong and determined leadership and there are encouraging signs that this is beginning to lead to improvements. There are good systems of communication and a shared commitment amongst all staff to raise standards and improve the quality of education across the whole school. The governors provide good support and are increasingly able to challenge and hold the school to account. Carefully planned actions and robust systems of monitoring and evaluation are beginning to lead to steady improvement therefore the school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations of what more able pupils can achieve and make sure that there is appropriate challenge and suitable provision to meet their needs.
- Improve the curriculum so that there are greater opportunities for stimulating, active learning which promote enjoyment and the personal qualities of independent learning and taking the initiative.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement overall is satisfactory. When children enter the Foundation Stage their attainment is very low compared with national expectations particularly in social skills, communication and

language and mathematical development. They make good progress particularly in personal, social and physical development. On entering Key Stage 1 attainment is still below expectations but children are beginning to catch up. Standards in Key Stage 1 are below average and few are achieving or working at the higher levels. Standards are just beginning to rise reversing a downward trend over several years. This improvement continues in Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6, pupils in 2006 achieved national expectations in reading and above average in science. This represents good progress in these subjects but the trends have been uneven over the past two years especially in writing and mathematics. The work in pupils' books confirms continuing improvement and in most lessons pupils are working at national expectations although few are achieving higher than this. The school sets challenging targets which for the most part are achieved. Very effective tracking and analysis of assessment information is linked with focused support for pupils with learning difficulties and those in danger of falling behind. This ensures that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils from ethnic minorities and pupils who have English as a second language also make satisfactory and often good progress. The achievement of some boys and more able pupils is not as high as it might be and improving the achievement of these groups is a priority for the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall and outstanding in the Foundation stage. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is good. The great majority enjoy coming to school and they generally get on well with adults and pupils. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring racial harmony and promoting positive values. Pupils like their teachers because as some said, 'They take care of us and they explain things well'. Pupils feel safe and valued and are sure that if they need help adults will listen to them. They become mature and responsible individuals who know how to take care of themselves and others and stay safe. They are keen to take on responsibilities such as playground pals and know their views are respected through their representatives on the School's Council. Thanks to a concerted effort by the school attendance has improved and is now broadly average. However more could be done to encourage punctuality. Opportunities for spiritual development are limited and this hinders development in this important area. Recently the school has introduced opportunities for pupils to reflect and write in quiet, candlelit rooms and this is clearly enjoyed by all and is beginning to result in better quality work. Pupils are capable of using their initiative, as was seen when a group of older pupils eagerly assisted a younger child on the corridor whose drinks container has burst. However, not enough opportunities are given in lessons for pupils to develop independence in their learning and make decisions about what they do and how they might do it.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good practice across the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is a strength with a wide range of stimulating and lively learning opportunities provided for the children. Classroom organisation and preparation across the school are thorough and good relationships with pupils encourages them to try hard and confidently contribute their thoughts. Teachers' insistence that pupils respond in full sentences and the use of 'talking partners' for pupils to clarify their ideas is having a positive

impact upon the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and pupils respond appropriately. Expectations for the quality and presentation of pupils' work are less consistently high. Classroom assistants are generally well deployed, provide effective support for less able pupils and encourage them to be independent. There is some over reliance on published schemes and worksheets. This limits opportunities for first hand learning and sometimes lessons are not as lively and interesting as they might be. There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils and not enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to be more involved and active in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and meets the needs of its learners well. The curriculum for Years 1–6 is satisfactory overall with appropriate emphasis given to pupils' personal, social and health education. Priority is given to developing essential skills in literacy and numeracy and there is evidence to show that the 'big writing' initiative is having a positive impact on raising standards and motivating the pupils. Pupils receive only an hour each week of Physical Education, which is half that recommended, although there are opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities at lunchtime and after school. Visiting speakers and theme weeks provide some enrichment and vibrancy to the curriculum each term, there is less evidence of this on a day to day basis. The curriculum does not always provide enough challenge for more able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some strengths in the aspects of care and support. In the Foundation Stage, care, guidance and support is outstanding and there are good systems for safeguarding pupils, child protection and health and safety across the school. Good supervision ensures that pupils are safe when moving around school and at break times. The few occurrences of inappropriate behaviour are quickly and efficiently dealt with. Induction arrangements for new pupils are good and children are supported and well prepared for the transfer to secondary school. Academic progress is closely monitored and effective programmes implemented to support pupils with learning difficulties. The school is at an early stage of involving pupils in assessing their own work but the introduction of pupil targets in writing is beginning to prove successful. Marking is thorough and encouraging but does not help pupils in knowing what they could do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and two of the assistant heads have only been in post for a term. However, they have made a good start and there are early indications that the initiatives they have put into place are helping to raise standards. This is evident, for example, in how well boys develop writing skills. Several strengths have already emerged. The headteacher's clear vision and strong focus on raising standards is shared by other staff thanks to the strong lines of communication. Close links between the school's monitoring, self evaluation, improvement planning and performance management of staff are focusing efforts to improve provision and the standards achieved. Effective systems are in place

to gather and analyse assessment information to make sure that pupils in danger of falling behind are identified quickly and well supported, but not enough attention is given to ensuring that the needs of more able pupils are equally well met or that all pupils have enough opportunities to develop independence and enjoyment in their learning.

There is a strong emphasis on making sure the school is a safe, harmonious community where pupils and adults get on well and want to spend time together. Partnerships with parents are good and parents express overwhelming confidence in the leadership team.

The governing body supports the school well and shows a strong commitment to improving its own effectiveness by undertaking regular training. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and areas where improvement is needed. However, the involvement of governors in the school's self evaluation process is underdeveloped and their arrangements for monitoring the work of the school are not rigorous or systematic enough.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know I visited your school recently with other inspectors to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us. One of the youngest children asked me if I was a 'respector'. Well I'm an inspector but I think your school is full of 'respectors'; that is people who respect each other and get on well together.

Your school is satisfactory. It is getting better and from what we saw we are confident that it can carry on improving until it becomes a really good school.

Some things are good already:

- For example, children in the nursery and reception classes get off to a good start because the teachers make sure they have lots of interesting, exciting things to do. They also make sure that the children learn to get on well together.
- Your behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is good. When things do go wrong and people behave badly you told us that the grown ups deal with it quickly and fairly. Sometimes you are able to sort it out yourselves. Well done!
- Your school is a place where all the adults care for you and put your safety first.

Your headteacher and the other adults are determined to make sure that you reach high standards in your work and they are making improvements already to help you do better, particularly in writing. At the moment standards are still a bit low in Key Stage 1 and a bit up and down in Key stage 2 but they are beginning to rise.

We have asked your school to do the following two things:

- Expect you to do even better, especially some of you who sometimes find the work a bit easy, and make sure that there is enough challenge in lessons so that you do as well as you possibly can.
- Liven up some more of your lessons with exciting activities, real life problems to solve and opportunities for you to work independently and use your initiative.

Thank you again for helping to make our time in your school so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely, Sheena Mac Donald HMI