



Castlebar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101966
LEA Ealing LEA
Inspection number 276623
Inspection dates 9 May 2006 to 10 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Hathaway Gardens
School category	Community		Ealing
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		London W13 0DH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02089983135
Number on roll	97	Fax number	02088107597
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Mary Delger
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Paul Adair

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Castlebar is a maintained local authority day special school in a very multi-cultural borough. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. A significant group of pupils come from the Asian community. Almost half of pupils receive free schools meals and a third has English as an additional language. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. These needs include low moderate, or severe learning difficulties, as well as autism, hearing impairment and challenging behaviour. There are almost twice as many boys as girls on roll.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Castlebar is an inclusive school that provides an excellent education for all its pupils. It has a positive learning environment where all pupils are challenged to achieve their best, and where they make good progress. There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and although they arrive with very low ability, they make good progress. The school meets its aims including 'to encourage mutual respect and an appreciation of the worth of others within a multicultural community'. The school modestly judged its own effectiveness as good. The inspection found the school to be outstanding in many areas and its capacity to further improve is excellent. Team work is a strength and significantly contributes towards the pupils' outstanding care, guidance, support, welfare and personal development.

The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and is effectively supported by a very able deputy and a hard working team. Parents are overwhelming positive about the school and the progress their children make. One parent wrote, 'I am very happy with my son's increased confidence and attainment in all areas.' Teaching is good overall with some examples of excellence. Teaching and learning are carefully monitored, although the very best practice is not shared widely enough across the school. The good curriculum is relevant to pupils' needs and interests and is well supported by additional activities. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

andmiddot; Share the outstanding practice in teaching and learning more effectively across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good, but standards are very low because of pupils' particular learning difficulties. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and meet their challenging targets relating to communication, basic skills and personal development. One parent said, 'I am very, very happy with his progress. His speech, understanding and reading skills have progressed, and his concentration is much better.' The pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress, particularly in their social and communication skills and developing their self-awareness and enjoyment for learning. Pupils build successfully on this good start during the rest of their time in the school. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and those with severe learning needs make good progress in communicating and in developing their social skills, helping them towards independence in learning.

The school has successfully developed its own rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress and achievement which makes target setting more effective. Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make. One parent's comment was typical of

many, 'The school has not only helped our son to settle emotionally, but has also brought about great improvements in reading, writing, maths and social skills. We cannot praise the school enough.'

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils love coming to school and parents say their children eagerly await the transport which takes them there. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils particularly like to use the splendid outside play facilities. One boy remarked that he could not wait until lunchtime to play football everyday with the visiting pupils from the local primary school. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities which take place in the community. They value praise and rewards when they have tried hard and, consequently, their behaviour is excellent.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils express their feelings and think of others less fortunate than themselves in response to strong encouragement from staff. Pupils enjoy celebrating the rich diversity of cultures within the school and wider community through festivals, art, music and food. They show real spiritual awareness when taking part in African drumming. Pupils increase their independence and self-confidence, particularly through opportunities to attend residential visits. They are very good at keeping themselves safe and are very well equipped for the future because of the good skills they develop in response to good teaching. The school council, besides being involved in a number of projects, are also 'helpers' or 'buddies' who look out for the welfare of others. Pupils show outstanding enthusiasm in the way they take up healthy eating habits and participate in physical and sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good across the school with some examples of excellence. Pupils do well in their lessons as all staff work as an effective team to ensure that work is well matched to their learning needs. Personal targets are challenging, ensuring good progress. Relationships are excellent, and staff ensure that pupils are confident and happy. Staff have worked hard to sharpen their skills in meeting the learning needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and those with severe learning needs. This shows in the imaginative approach to planning and in the provision of adapted materials and methods. The effective partnership with therapists is helping pupils to communicate more successfully. There is good use of signs and symbols to support pupils' progress in communication. One parent said, 'My son is starting to say more words now and he is saying them more clearly.' There is regular monitoring of lessons by senior staff who give supportive feedback to help teachers improve.

The outstanding features in a number of lessons observed are not shared widely enough across the school. In the best lessons, teachers enthusiastically provide a wide range of stimulating and motivating activities with very effective use of supportive resources, including the interactive white board. Support is effectively deployed, pupils' needs are met, and there is effective monitoring and recording of pupils' progress which is integrated into further planning. There is a positive reward and celebration ethos in lessons where learning is made fun and it is made very clear to pupils how they may improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides relevant experiences for all pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good because of its strong focus on developing pupils' competence in relating to and communicating with others. The emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills across the school contributes very effectively to their progress. One parent said of her son, 'His vocabulary is improving and he can understand better now and hold conversations with others'. The emphasis on personal and social development means that pupils make great progress in learning to follow instructions, improving their concentration and working well with each other, and alone, when required.

Pupils have good opportunities to develop self-confidence and enterprise skills, for example, classes cooking scones and muffins for the coming school fete. There is also an appropriate emphasis on pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils' experiences are further enhanced by visitors coming to the school and visits by pupils into the community. Football coaches run an after school club and other opportunities, such as swimming and access to adventure playgrounds, enrich pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is outstanding, ensuring that pupils work in a positive and secure environment. Staff know pupils really well and effectively support their physical and emotional needs. One pupil said, 'I get all the help I need and the school looks after me'. Staff encourage pupils to develop awareness of keeping themselves safe and healthy. The arrangements for child protection are very well managed and all assessments of risk are carefully considered. Individual education plans (IEPs) include clear, challenging, but achievable targets. This information is shared with parents, whose own support for their children is written into the plans. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored, assessed and recorded and parents are very complimentary about the information they receive. One parent said, 'The staff have shown great patience with my child and this has clearly contributed to his progress in spite of his learning difficulties.' Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of everything the school does.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff effectively promote the well-being of all pupils through the excellent care and good education they provide. Teamwork is of a high quality and staff create a positive environment that encourages pupils' confidence. The inspirational headteacher has high expectations of his deputy and leadership team, who are all committed to continued school improvement.

Innovation and personal development are encouraged. School self-evaluation processes are very well established and the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for further development. Monitoring procedures are in place to assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning but the outstanding practice is not shared widely enough. The school fully consults with the parents, governors and a range of external providers about its work. It is actively involved in external initiatives to improve the opportunities for learners. Governance of the school is excellent. Governors know the school well and take a full and active part in its strategic management. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection and overall, the school is an exciting and dynamic place for pupils to thrive. The leadership and management continue to provide the school with an excellent capacity to improve.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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

Pupils

I really enjoyed visiting your school and I would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome. I would particularly like to thank the school council for telling me all about their activities. There were lots of things I like about your outstanding school:

* You, and your parents and carers are right to think that you go to a very good school.* You work really hard and learn about important things, like how to talk to each other, be kind and behave well.* You enjoy your work in lessons and you are getting better at reading, counting and working on computers.* Your teachers and support staff work very hard. They know you really well and help you to learn as well as looking after you.* Your headteacher runs the school very well and has helped to improve lots of things that make your life in school so enjoyable.* Your school knows what it is good at and how it can improve even more.

There is one important thing the school can do to make it even better:* The excellent teaching in many of your lessons should be shared between teachers more effectively.Once again, thank you for your help and making my visit such a pleasant one.

Yours sincerely

M.J Smith

Lead Inspector