



Altmore Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102709
LEA Newham LEA
Inspection number 276757
Inspection dates 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Marfleet AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Altmore Avenue
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		E6 2BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8472 3555
Number on roll	475	Fax number	020 8470 6126
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Jeremy Evans
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Rowlands

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 21 June 2006 - 22 June 2006	Inspection number 276757
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average infant school, with a large nursery. Over 95% of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with 75% from a range of South Asian backgrounds; there are small numbers of pupils from other groups. More pupils than on average are entitled to free school meals. Once children have joined the school, they usually stay here, but some join later and up to 150 children are classified as from refugee families. Nearly 90% of pupils have a first language other than English; almost all of them are at an early stage of learning English. A smaller than average proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities and none have statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges itself to be good and the inspectors agree. It provides good value for money. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good.

The fact that pupils join the school with attainment levels well below average and, mostly, with very limited English means that the progress they make by the time they leave at the end of Year 2 is good. In tests at age 7, they reach standards broadly in line with those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. A proportion similar to those in other schools reach levels above those expected at this age. This progress can be attributed to the quality of the teaching and the support they receive for their learning, based on an imaginative curriculum. However, pupils allowed to work independently during group work are sometimes insufficiently challenged by activities they choose, which is one reason why their progress is not outstanding.

The personal development of pupils is good and the school is keen to promote this in all they do. A few parents still take their children away for extended periods during term time, affecting the school's attendance figures and their children's learning. But the outstanding care, support and guidance provided by the school lead to confident youngsters ready to move on to the next stage of their education.

Good leadership and management lie behind all this. The headteacher has maintained a school ethos that promotes both enjoyment and learning; she and her senior team have the support of staff, parents and governors alike. The school has excellent links with external agencies, other schools and the local authority. Improvements made recently, particularly to the provision for care, guidance and support, are evidence of the school's capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the organisation of independent pupil-led group work in lessons to ensure that pupils are challenged sufficiently and achieve even more.
- Reinforce the message to parents that taking their children out of school for extended periods during term-time affects their progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to the school are well below average; the majority of pupils have very limited English. Although standards at the end of Reception are still below average, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, especially in speaking and listening and in their personal and social skills.

Pupils continue to progress well, some extremely well, in Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average in all areas. Results over the past few years show a rising trend in all subjects, and assessments made in 2005 slightly exceeded national averages. The school sets itself challenging targets for the expected and

higher levels, and almost all targets were met in 2005. Girls' attainment is better than boys' in writing, but the school has recently introduced strategies to improve boys' progress.

Effective support helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to make good progress against the targets in their individual plans. The vast majority of pupils have a first language other than English and they make good progress. The development of speaking and listening amongst all pupils is particularly strong, and this creates a good foundation for their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is good. Pupils relate well to each other and the adults who work with them. They behave well, are happy at school, have high levels of confidence and very positive attitudes to their learning.

Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is slightly below average because a few parents continue to take their children out of school during term time for extended holidays.

From a very young age, pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They talk confidently about who to go to in time of need and understand the differences between healthy and unhealthy foods. They feel safe and well cared for. They all take part in school events to support others and raise funds for charities. Pupils are encouraged to care and look after each other through an effective 'buddy' system, which includes pairing children who speak similar languages together. The school's work with families improves their access to education and local services.

Pupils effectively acquire and apply basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching enables pupils to learn well and make good progress. In an outstanding lesson in the Foundation Stage, an extremely effective range of strategies were used to help pupils with language difficulties acquire the skills they needed. Engaging and well informed teaching offered suitable challenge and encouraged independence.

Enjoyable learning is a result of very strong relationships. One pupil told us, 'We love our teachers and all try our best in lessons'. The few incidents of challenging behaviour are managed well by teachers. Pupils with limited English can participate fully because lessons are planned to meet their needs and often include practical tasks. Pupils work very well together in small groups, sharing the excellent resources and equipment but

they are not always clear about what they are expected to do, particularly when they are not supported by an adult and as a result they are sometimes content with lower standards. Pupils make slower progress in the satisfactory lessons because they have fewer opportunities to contribute to discussion than in good lessons, they get confused by instructions or are given tasks that are not particularly challenging.

Teaching assistants provide highly effective support for pupils who are learning English or who find work difficult, which enables them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has some very imaginative features. These start in the Foundation Stage, where a wide range of activities enable children to initiate their own learning.

This approach continues in Years 1 and 2, where some lessons are set aside entirely for pupils to choose what they will learn and how. The use of ICT is well-developed across the curriculum.

The whole day a week set aside for science encourages more focused study in this area. An effective topic-based approach in lessons other than English, mathematics and religious education allows different teachers and support staff to lead work on a variety of interesting cross-curricular themes, such as gardens, food, castles or umbrellas. A careful check ensures that all National Curriculum subjects are included, and that there are good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy. School visits, such as those to the National Gallery or the Tower of London, are tied in with these topics, as are visitors to the school.

Pupils benefit from the out of hours activities that are provided; they clearly enjoy the football that the site manager organises. Separate provision for after-school care has recently been established and families are beginning to avail themselves of this and the breakfast club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance, and support for pupils is outstanding and has a positive effect on their personal development. Personal, social and health education is provided for every year group, helping pupils learn how to be healthy and stay safe. Arrangements for risk assessments and child protection are secure.

Very thorough and rigorous assessment procedures ensure that pupils' progress is consistently monitored and that targets for learning are adjusted according to the pupils' specific needs. The support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is excellent and helps these pupils to progress as well as others. Staff familiar with children's home languages assess pupils so that those with limited English can receive high quality support and guidance. The recent joint appointment of a social inclusion

and parental liaison manager, with the local junior school, has enhanced the provision for pupils and their families significantly.

Because pupil absences are a concern, the school has put into place stringent procedures to encourage good attendance. Most parents support the school's actions to reduce the impact of long holidays on pupils' progress, but the school recognises there is more to be done.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The strong lead given by the very good headteacher, who knows her school extremely well, has a significant impact on the ethos and approach to learning. As a result, standards of care are high and all pupils, including those at an early stage of learning English, are valued and make good progress. The headteacher involves every member of staff in evaluating the school's performance and in developing its planning. Senior staff monitor performance effectively and subject leaders are capably overseeing the cross-curricular delivery of subjects.

Parents speak highly of the school and many are keen to share in the process of helping their children to learn, attending classes in school so that they can do this better. The school works extremely effectively with other agencies, including the local authority and other schools, so that pupils receive all the support they need. The governing body is well led by an experienced chair, and is very supportive of the school, although it does not yet challenge the school as much as it could - for instance over the standards being achieved.

Many improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The school is still seeking to make innovations and decisions taken recently show that they have the capacity to improve further.

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

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. A special thank you to those who talked to us. We really enjoyed looking at your work and watching you in lessons and assemblies. The inspection showed us that you go to a good school.

Why we believe your school is good:) You make good progress in your work :) You behave well, and really enjoy being at school:) You have a very good headteacher and she has a great team to help her:) You are taught plenty of useful and interesting things:) The teachers and other staff help you to learn well:) They support and look after you extremely well, too:) Your parents are very happy with the school.

What we have asked your school to do now* Help everyone to do their best, whether you are working on your own or with a teacher* Remind your parents that you must not take holidays in term-time. We wish you well in the future and hope that you will always be as happy as you are at Altmore Infant School.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Marfleet

Lead Inspector