



Davies Lane Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103042
LEA Waltham Forest LEA
Inspection number 276815
Inspection dates 12 June 2006 to 13 June 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Howe AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Davies Lane
School category	Community		Leytonstone
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		London E11 3DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02085392466
Number on roll	373	Fax number	002089886498
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms M Labadie
Date of previous inspection	8 February 1999	Headteacher	Ms Amanda Turner

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	12 June 2006 - 13 June 2006	276815

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school with a nursery is situated in a deprived area of North East London. It was formed nearly two years ago following the amalgamation of an Infant and a Junior school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average proportion of pupils do not speak English as their first language. The headteacher was appointed in September 2005. There have been 6 changes of leadership in the past 6 years. Since the amalgamation the school spent more money than it received and staff restructuring was required. The school is currently receiving additional support from the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school rates its overall effectiveness as satisfactory. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' standards and achievement are exceptionally low. Although the school provides an acceptable standard of education, it is not effective, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and does not provide satisfactory value for money. However, because of the energetic and increasingly successful leadership of the headteacher, parents are right in believing that, as one put it, 'the school has turned the corner and is going in the right direction'.

The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Children achieve well because staff organise a good blend of enjoyable adult-led and play-based activities which are leading to improving learning. Pupils' attitudes and their personal development are good. They enjoy school and are learning how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. This is an improvement, but there is still not enough good teaching to ensure pupils' consistent progress. Teachers do not always use assessment information to ensure they challenge all pupils. Pupils enjoy school, but there are not enough exciting learning experiences to ensure pupils are motivated to do their best. The school is making appropriate efforts to improve attendance, which are beginning to have an impact, but absence remains too high.

The school's leadership, following restructuring and with the school's financial situation improved, now has the capacity to raise standards. The vision and energy of the headteacher has already led to significant improvements in the school environment, teaching and pupils' progress in some classes. The foundations have been laid for future success.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising standards in English, mathematics and science throughout Years 3 to 6, through more effective teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Raise standards in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- * Implement strategies to reduce absence, working together with parents and the wider community.
- * Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly the use of assessment, so that activities meet all pupils' needs.
- * Ensure the curriculum provides sufficiently stimulating activities to fully engage pupils' effort and imagination.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school rates pupils' standards and achievement as exceptionally low and this is confirmed by inspection evidence. Standards on entry to the nursery are below expectations. In particular, many children's skills in English are limited. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Careful adult supervision, combined with imaginative activities and thorough assessment lead to good achievement. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children's attainment is broadly in line with expectations.

Pupils go on to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. The results of the national tests in 2005 for Year 6 pupils were well below average, particularly in mathematics and science. The school set challenging targets but too many pupils failed to make sufficient progress. The school's records indicate that too many of the current Year 6 pupils have not made sufficient progress since Year 3, due to considerable disruptions to teaching caused by several changes of staff. However, there is evidence that in other year groups progress is better and standards are improving. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, due to the good quality support they receive, especially in the classes for younger pupils. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are well supported and also make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are proud of their school and are enthusiastic. They behave well in most lessons, but there are also instances where low level disruption impedes learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school fosters good awareness of different beliefs and cultures. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils work and play together well, enjoying shared experiences. They are confident and feel secure. One pupil commented that staff 'are trying to make us happy, healthy and eager to learn'. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles because the school places a positive emphasis on sport and a healthy diet. The school council involves all pupils in its decisions. As a result, improvements have been made to the playground and pupils have chosen a charity to support. During the inspection Year 6 pupils spent a day completing a business enterprise assignment which helped develop their economic understanding. Pupils' positive attitudes and ability to co-operate prepare them well for future economic well-being. Attendance is lower than the national average, particularly because parents take their children away on holiday during term time. The school has recently put measures in place to address this and as a result absence is beginning to fall. Punctuality has also improved considerably.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons in the Foundation Stage are good and children make good progress. Lessons in other classes are satisfactory, but usually little more. However, one outstanding lesson was seen. The school is aware that teaching needs to be better if it is to make up the deficit in pupils' achievements. Senior staff have begun a process of close monitoring of lessons, and there is evidence that this is bringing some improvement, now that staffing is more stable. Improvements can be seen, for example, when teachers' questioning provides more opportunities for extended speaking, encouraging pupils to justify an opinion, or express reasoned disagreement. Teachers provide clear objectives for lessons and most manage pupils effectively. Relationships are good so that pupils want to work hard in most lessons. Teachers' explanations are clear and the pace of most lessons is satisfactory.

Too often though, lessons are unexciting in content. They do not capture pupils' interest or imagination, or secure the intense concentration that leads to learning in depth. A few lessons take too little account of the learning needs of individual pupils. Marking is inconsistent. There are examples of good, positive marking that identifies the strong points in a pupil's work, and gives a clear lead on how it could be improved, but in some pupils' books, opportunities for improving learning are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities both within lessons, and through additional activities. Children in the Foundation Stage have an interesting, varied and practical programme, and consequently make good progress in their learning. Imaginative outdoor activities are a particularly strong feature of the provision.

The school rightly focuses on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy. In both subjects, the learning experiences provided are sometimes unimaginative. Resources for some subjects are limited and lessons do not always stimulate pupils to give of their best. The information and communication technology (ICT) programme however is improving, and pupils are beginning to use computers for research in other subjects. The particular needs of pupils with learning difficulties, or learning English as an additional language, are addressed satisfactorily especially in the classes for younger children where they receive a lot of additional support. The school has identified a group of gifted and talented pupils, and provides some extra challenges for them. Visitors enrich the curriculum. Trips to places of educational importance such as the Science Museum, and the school's ambitious Year 5 residential trip, help make learning enjoyable.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils, and gives good support when needed. Parents are very appreciative of this aspect of the school's provision, noting especially how well it handles the anxieties that arise when pupils join the school. One told inspectors 'I couldn't wish for a better start to my son's schooling'. Staff are careful to identify any possible safety risks, both in school and when pupils go out on visits. Child protection procedures are secure. There is active encouragement for safe and healthy activities such as the Walk to School project. The school is constantly alert to the possibility of racial harassment or bullying, and these are very rare. Unhappy pupils are noticed quickly, and good support provided through learning mentors. Contacts with parents are made quickly, and referrals made to additional support agencies, such as art therapy. Teachers track pupils' achievement frequently and accurately, although more remains to be done to make sure the information this provides is fully acted upon in class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher faced many significant challenges on taking up the post less than a year ago. She has a very clear grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has acted promptly and energetically to make significant improvements. These have made a real difference to the quality of teaching, which is now satisfactory, to the learning environment and to pupils' progress, notably in Year 5 and in the Foundation Stage. Very recently, she has restructured the senior management team so that leaders are more clearly focused on raising standards and teaching and learning. Parents are very supportive of recent improvements. One commented 'I can only say the changes over the past year have been for the best'.

There are some good procedures in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, in common with a number of reforms they are too recent to have had a significant impact on how well pupils are doing. The school's improvement plan has been effective in making a number of significant improvements, for example making assessment procedures more reliable. However, the school is aware that its improvement plan must focus even more clearly on raising standards, including quantifiable targets.

The governing body has been through a turbulent time since the amalgamation of the two schools. However, governors now have confidence in the headteacher and wish to work in partnership to raise standards. They fulfil their legal obligations but are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring the school's work or planning its strategic development. The support of an external adviser is helping everyone focus on the most effective ways of achieving this.

Although some pupils are underachieving and the school's effectiveness is currently inadequate, there is a great deal of evidence that the new headteacher has the energy,

commitment and skills to bring about the necessary improvement. A number of difficult problems have been confronted and resolved and the school is now well placed to raise standards.

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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?	4	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	2	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	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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?	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?	2	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	3	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	4	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

Pupils

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you, and we promised to let you know what we decided after our visit. We think Davies Lane Primary School provides an acceptable standard of education but needs to improve.

These are some of the best things about your school: * You have good attitudes to learning. You work and play together well. * The school looks after you well. Teachers keep a good check on how well you are learning. * The youngest children make a good start to school. * Your teaching assistants give you lots of help, especially those of you who find learning hard or who do not speak English at home. * The headteacher and the other staff work are working hard together to make the school better. They are starting to make a difference.

There are some things that could be better, though: * Too many of the older pupils do not make enough progress in English, mathematics and science. * Too many pupils miss school for no good reason. This means some of you miss important learning. We are asking your parents and the school to work together to make sure you go to school every day. * Your teachers could improve some of their lessons, so that they are more interesting and they meet your needs better. Davies Lane Primary School has some real strengths, but could be better. If you work really hard, come to school every day and the older pupils start to make more progress, I am sure it will improve.

Good wishes for the future

Andrew Howe

Lead Inspector