



# Downsell Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 103044  
**LEA** Waltham Forest LEA  
**Inspection number** 276816  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Judith Dawson AI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Downsell Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		E15 2BS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02085342101
<b>Number on roll</b>	605	<b>Fax number</b>	02085197050
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Christine Mitchell
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs U Sahgal

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Downsell Primary school is larger than average. It serves a multicultural community within an economically and socially disadvantaged part of East London. About two thirds of the pupils have mother tongues other than English, and over half are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The school was formed in September 2003 by the amalgamation of the successful infant school and the junior school that was taken out of special measures in June 2002 and has just moved into its new building. The present headteacher, previously the headteacher of the infant school, ran both schools from April 2001. The school is popular and the roll has risen annually since its amalgamation. The school is an officially recognised Teacher Development Agency Teacher Training School. It is a leading Partnership Promotion School, a member of the North London Schools International Network and several other international projects developed through the European Union and British Council. It has Investors in People status and has been awarded the quality mark for achievement for the second time.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The senior management and the parents of this school see it as a good school and inspectors agree. Partnerships with other institutions to promote pupils' learning are outstanding. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are valued. Teachers are able to reflect on their own practice by supporting trainee teachers. The dynamic leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of the governors and staff ensure that the capacity for improvement is good. Both school effectiveness and the value for money are good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress and in some lessons, outstanding teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress. There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and children make good progress but standards are below average at the end of the Reception year because of the below average starting point of a significant number of children. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average. Parents are happy with the school management and pleased with the progress their children are making. The curriculum is good and there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils' personal development and well being is very good. Pupils are polite and well behaved and enjoy the part they play in the life of the school. Attendance, although improving, is below the national average.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

\* raise the quality of teaching and pupils' learning so that it consistently reflects the best practice in school\* continue to improve attendance

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are below average, especially in communication and language skills. A high proportion of pupils do not speak English or are at a very early stage of language acquisition. By the time pupils enter Year 1 standards are below average particularly in mathematics for girls. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average. There is little difference in the performance of different ethnic groups. Year 6 pupils reach the expected level in English and science based on their earlier achievements. Progress in mathematics has been slower. The school has identified this and introduced measures to improve pupils' achievements including support for higher attaining pupils. Indications are that standards in the 2005 tests fell below the very challenging targets that were set. However, all the pupils that joined the school before Year 2 gained Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils develop a very good level of social and moral awareness. Pupils have a good respect and understanding of each other's cultures and work and play together harmoniously. Spiritual development is well managed through assemblies and the creative arts. Attendance is unsatisfactory but is improving because of a programme of rewards on one hand and frequent reminders to parents of its importance on the other. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning, in many cases recognizing its importance for their future well being. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle, good food and exercise. Pupils are also made well aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example in physical education, and through discussions in circle time of how to avoid excessive risk.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of learning throughout the school is good as a result of the generally good and sometimes outstanding teaching notably by the leading teachers in mathematics and literacy, who also share good practice with other schools. Specialist teachers enhance the pupils' learning in music, physical education and French. As a result of the thorough analysis of pupils' achievements work is planned carefully to meet the needs of particular groups and individuals. The high proportion of pupils who need to learn English as a second language achieve well because of the very good programme of support they receive throughout the school. The resources for learning are well chosen and effectively used to promote interest and to motivate the pupils. Particularly where the teaching is very good the pupils enjoy learning, take pride in their work and try to do well. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, Year 4 pupils were delighted to discover the relationship between the number of sides in a regular polygon and the axes of symmetry. Where the teaching is more mundane and questioning less effective, pupils are less enthusiastic and their progress slows. In most classes marking is thorough and used to promote more effective learning. Good discussions between staff assess how well the pupils are learning to plan future work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to achieve well and make good progress. All statutory requirements are met and the curriculum reflects the multi-ethnic nature of the school. Lesson plans are adapted to suit pupils' needs and give good support to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language. Planning for all subjects is good and planning for literacy and numeracy closely follows national guidelines. The use of skills learned in information and communication technology in other subjects is satisfactory and improving. The

school makes good use of specialist teachers for music, physical education and music and to teach French to all pupils from Years 2 to 6. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sports and the arts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils in the school are very well supported by a good range of staff and adult helpers. A strength of the school is the way in which the pupils are encouraged to be supportive of one another through, for example the work of the School Council and the many less formal responsibilities within and outside the classroom. Pupils with little English who arrive in the school are provided with buddies to help them to settle quickly into the new and strange environment. As a result of these activities such pupils quickly make good progress in their learning and personal and social development. The school is a community in which pupils feel valued. Procedures for child protection are well maintained with well trained staff. Pupils are engaged in discussions about their work and understand what is expected of them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is led and managed well. Very effective systems are in place for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work and for deciding what changes are needed. This contributes strongly to the school's capacity to improve. The senior staff carry out their duties efficiently and thoroughly, inspired by the charismatic and visionary headteacher. The combining of the infant and junior schools and the move to the new building have been managed extremely effectively. Careful tracking of pupils' progress enables the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and provide additional support where necessary. Teaching is monitored rigorously and accurately but the outcomes of this monitoring do not always result in improvement. Areas for development should be clearly defined and followed up. More use could be made of the exemplary teachers to improve teaching further. Subject leaders have a good understanding of standards and provision for their subjects. Workforce reform has been carried out very successfully. Resources to support learning are managed very well. Leaders' appreciation and celebration of the rich diversity of cultures in school demonstrate a strong commitment to racial harmony and pupils' enjoyment and well-being. The school is successful in making sure that all pupils have equal opportunities, although very occasionally weaknesses in teaching result in some pupils not having enough challenge in lessons. The use of external agencies to improve pupils' achievement and personal development is a significant strength of school management. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. They are committed to school development and improvement and both support and challenge school initiatives.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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	3	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 very much indeed for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. You showed us how proud you are of the school, the new buildings and each other and how much you enjoy being at school. You told us that Downsell Primary is a good school and we agree with you.

I should like to tell you some of the things that are so good about your school. \* The school works very well with other schools, people near your school and in other countries. This helps you learn lots of interesting things\* Your school is a happy place because you are taught well, you behave well, you look after each other and work hard\* The headteacher and other leaders run the school very well, helping your teachers to provide you with the skills you need.

There are one or two things your school could do to make it even better, with your help.\* There are some very good teachers in your school who help you very well. The school needs to help all teachers to give you the best possible lessons so that you all learn as much as you can.\* Too many of you miss school. The school is working hard to encourage you to attend school all the time. We know you like coming to school and you can help by making sure that you do not stay away from school so that you do not miss important lessons.