



The Alderton Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114861
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279459
Inspection dates 10 October 2005 to 11 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Peter Lewis LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Alderton Hall Lane
School category	Community		IG10 3HE
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02085082521
Number on roll	286	Fax number	01815320662
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Jeremy Wisenfeld
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Judith Lunn

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average junior school situated in a post-war housing estate in Loughton. Children come from a range of social and economic backgrounds and most start school with standards that are average. The large majority are of White British origin, although a small proportion of children come from minority ethnic backgrounds, none of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is similar to the majority of schools nationally. The proportion of children who have learning or physical difficulties is slightly above average.

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 an improving school that provides children with a satisfactory education and which looks after their personal well-being effectively. The school views itself as good although inspection findings show that, because planned initiatives have yet to make their full impact on children's learning, most aspects of the school's work are satisfactory. Parents and children think the school is doing a good job and, as a result, the school's popularity in the community is strong. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory; the school has tackled all the issues from the previous report. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Most children, including those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, make satisfactory progress and attain standards that are broadly average. Teaching is mostly satisfactory and teachers provide a suitable range of activities for most children. However, there are inconsistencies in, for example, teachers' use of assessment to provide more able children with sufficient challenge. As a result, children do not always make as much progress as they could, particularly in writing and mathematics. The atmosphere in the school is very positive and all staff work hard to make every child feel valued. As a result, children's personal development is good and a strength of the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Although the school has accurately recognised areas that require improvement and has put in place initiatives that have begun to make a difference, senior managers have yet to ensure that these are applied consistently across the school. The school works effectively with other local schools and organisations, and the scope for further improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify the faster learners and provide them with tasks that are more challenging so that they attain higher standards in writing and mathematics. - Improve the effectiveness of the senior management team in raising the quality and consistency of teaching and learning across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children attain average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is confirmed by the school's performance in national tests for children in Year 6 in 2004, where results were broadly average. Children, including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Although all groups attain average standards, the faster learners are not always provided with sufficiently challenging targets. This is reflected in the national tests in which the proportion of children who attain the higher Level 5 standard was below average in 2004. In 2005, the proportion who attained Level 5 in English fell further but it improved slightly in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. They are very well behaved. They are willing workers and are eager to please their teachers. They enjoy their lessons. Attendance is satisfactory. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They work and play happily together and make sure that nobody is left out of playground activities. They have a keen sense of justice and fair play. Children report that they cannot recall any incidents of bullying. Children know that a balanced diet and regular exercise helps them to stay healthy. They know about the misuse of drugs and that they should be wary of strangers. They appreciate that they are all valued members of the school community and they take their responsibilities seriously. Children have well-developed basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) that provide a solid foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory, with much that is good. In the best lessons, teachers make skilled use of questioning and discussion to develop children's self-confidence and to stretch their understanding at all levels. Teachers manage children's behaviour well, allowing all children to learn well. However, in some lessons insufficient demands are made upon some of the more able children and they don't always make the progress of which they are capable. The school has worked hard to develop consistent, high quality planning and some teachers are beginning to make good use of this in providing activities that excite and challenge children. Those of lower attainment and those who have learning difficulties and disabilities are appropriately supported, although the challenge provided for the more able children is too often insufficient, resulting in slower progress. In a similar way, in some classes there is an over reliance on worksheets that demand too little of children. Throughout the school, teachers have begun to use assessments of children's learning well when planning subsequent work. Teachers encourage children to be aware of how well they are doing and in spotting where they need to improve. Unfortunately, this level of assessment is not applied consistently in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a broad and varied curriculum that is relevant to children's needs. There is a strong emphasis on teaching basic skills, including ICT. While the curriculum is effectively planned to match the abilities of average and lower-attaining children, inconsistencies in assessment mean that planning for more able children is often lacks sufficient challenge, particularly in writing and mathematics, and this slows the progress

that they are able to make. The provision for personal and social education is good; strategies to encourage the well-being of children have been carefully woven into the curriculum. The school has a good range of additional physical activities and there is a suitable range of well-supported, extra-curricular activities during the lunch period and after school. Day and residential visits enrich the curriculum and make a positive contribution to children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Children are cared for well. They have good relationships with staff and know that they will be listened to if they are worried or are having problems. Children have targets that help them to understand how they can improve their work in literacy and numeracy. However, children do not always have a complete understanding of what the targets mean, and the time allocated to reach the targets is too long and sometimes stops them being sufficiently demanding, especially for the more able children. Child protection procedures are in place and good attention is paid to ensuring children's health and safety. Children report that they feel safe and secure in school. Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are identified rapidly and good support is provided. Teachers share information with parents about children's progress and parents are pleased to support their children's learning, especially in helping them to practise reading.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory because, while raising the standards achieved by children and creating an environment in which everyone feels cared for and appreciated, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. The school has satisfactory systems for checking how well it is doing. Although its recorded evaluations focus more on what has been done than on the impact of actions, the school development plan correctly identifies key priorities for development. However, the school has yet to ensure that these plans, such as those concerned with improving assessment, are followed at the same high level by all staff. The school works effectively in partnership with local schools and with support agencies to ensure that all children are given equal opportunities and are appropriately supported. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are appropriately involved in helping the school to maintain its improvement. Financial management is effective and suitable care is taken to ensure that the money available is allocated to the areas identified as priorities. The headteacher has appointed an enthusiastic and hard working staff, most of whom operate well as a team and who work hard to make the school an interesting and stimulating learning environment for the children.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	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	3	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?	3	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	3	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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school last week. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, looking at your work and finding out about the things that you enjoy most in school. We thought you all behave and get on very well together and were really impressed with the very polite and grown-up way that you talked to us about your school. We think you are lucky to go to such a safe and caring school, especially as all the staff and governors are interested in what you do and know you well. We have asked your teachers to work hard on finding new ways to make your lessons even more interesting and in providing work that is more challenging for some of you. It was good to find out that so many of you were happy at school, and that your parents said you were happy there as well. We hope you continue to enjoy life in your school and we wish you well for the future.