



Larkswood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134178
LEA Waltham Forest LEA
Inspection number 282479
Inspection dates 12 December 2005 to 13 December 2005
Reporting inspector Christopher Grove AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Larkswood Primary School
School category	Community		New Road
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		London E4 8ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02085294979
Number on roll	571	Fax number	02085593142
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tom Gildea
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr Stephen Fisher

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Larkwood Primary is a very large primary school, formed by the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools from September 2003. It is part of a small Education Action Zone. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, and the number with learning difficulties is also below average. The percentage of children from minority ethnic groups is much higher than average, but the percentage of those who speak English as an additional language is about average. The school is being rebuilt from January 2004. As a result, it does not currently have a hall and some other accommodation, which are still being constructed.

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 rates itself as good overall and inspection evidence supports this. The quality of education provided is good, and pupils are well cared for. Parents all agree that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and behave well. All the adults know the pupils very well and provide effective support for them within an inclusive atmosphere. Hence, pupils' personal development and well-being are well promoted by the school itself, as well as through links with outside organisations. However, the school does not yet have a school council to allow formal consultation about improvements. In Reception, the quality of provision and the progress made by children are good. Pupils' progress across the school is good. Standards improve from below average on entry to above average in Year 6, notably in mathematics and science. Teaching is good. The curriculum is also good overall, but that for personal, social, health and citizenship education needs to be updated and improved. Extra-curricular activities are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and management and are good role models. Contractors have been re-building the school since January 2004. During this period, school leaders have been successful in organising the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools, and in raising pupils' achievement. Teaching has been effectively monitored, leading to improvement. Governors play an important part in the life of the school and hold it to account well. The school provides good value for money, and has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.* Formalise the curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education, so that pupils develop more systematic knowledge, skills and understanding.* Implement plans to introduce a school council.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that pupils' overall achievement is good. The attainment of children on entry to the school is below average. In Reception, pupils make good progress, although their standards remain below average. By the end of Year 2, pupils' progress continues to be good. However, overall standards are still below average. Nevertheless, results in reading, writing and mathematics all improved somewhat between 2004 and 2005. From Year 3 to Year 6, pupils' continuing good progress leads to standards which are above average. Standards in 2005 were a significant improvement on the previous year. Attainment in mathematics and science, in particular, improved significantly in comparison with 2004. A good proportion of pupils reached standards which were higher than those expected nationally. In English, good numbers of pupils reached average standards, but not as many reached the higher level as in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement in English has improved in the course of

their junior years. Across the school, pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve slightly less well than others, but pupils from other minority ethnic groups whose first language is English generally perform better than other groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Their attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. They are unanimous in their positive views about the school, and enjoy their lessons and the many extra-curricular activities. Pupils develop a good sense of social responsibility through working in groups. The Year 6 'reading squad', for instance, demonstrates maturity when they are working with Year 2 pupils. Responsibility towards the wider community is also shown through pupils' good response to charitable appeals. A school council has yet to be established to give pupils a formal voice in running their school, but this has been identified in development planning. Spiritual awareness is developed in art and music as well as in religious education. Pupils express their ideas and feelings with increasing confidence. The school's moral framework makes it an orderly community. Almost all pupils behave well and show respect for other people. They understand the school rules and work hard in lessons. Understanding of different cultures is encouraged effectively through assemblies, and in geography, art and religious education lessons. Pupils show a good understanding of personal safety. They explain the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and many take advantage of the outstanding range of sporting and musical activities. When they leave Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary school work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned carefully and cater well for the needs of pupils of different abilities. Teachers provide opportunities for small group and paired work, and this helps pupils to learn more independently. A particularly innovative opportunity was observed when Year 6 pupils in the 'reading squad' paired up with Year 2 pupils. They all thoroughly enjoyed the activity which motivated Year 2 pupils to read for pleasure. Teaching resources are well matched to pupil activities and enhance the learning which takes place. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, and as a result behaviour and attitudes in the classroom are also good. One outstanding feature of teaching is the way in which teaching assistants are organised and managed to maximise the learning opportunities for pupils. Progress made by some groups of pupils with special educational needs working with teaching assistants was outstanding. Clear procedures for assessing pupils' work are being developed. Staff plan together, deliver and review activities, setting realistic targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Practice is inconsistent at the moment, but the assessment co-ordinator is in the process of improving the use of

these targets. These practices now need to be embedded so that progress can be tracked more effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced, and is well planned. For the most part, it is organised in terms of separate subjects, but it also includes focused weeks, such as Mathematics or Art Weeks, which raise the profile of those subjects, and involves visitors who contribute to subjects such as drama or design and technology. However, the extent of curriculum innovation is limited. Weekly teaching hours at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 are typical, but are comparatively low at Key Stage 2. In Reception also, the quality of the curriculum is good. The school sees personal, social, health and citizenship education as an area for development, and inspectors agree. Resources to support the curriculum are good, but the temporary lack of large spaces during re-building has hampered developments in physical education in particular, although sports have continued to flourish. A notable aspect of the school is the range of extra-curricular provision, which is very strong, including very good opportunities to learn a wide range of musical instruments and sports. Provision to support pupils with special educational needs is good. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language, is less effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and are happy, confident and willing to learn. Staff show a high level of concern for the welfare of pupils, whom they value as individuals. Arrangements for induction into the Reception classes are good and children settle in happily. Vulnerable pupils are identified and given good support. Those pupils who join the school in other year groups are supported effectively. Teachers have a good understanding of individual progress, although a consistent system for target setting has not been fully established. Pupils with special educational needs receive a very good level of help and as a result they are fully included in lessons. Systems for child protection are robust and are clearly understood by all staff. Health and safety procedures are securely in place, and risk assessments are made of all relevant activities. Teaching about safety is thorough. For instance, Year 2 pupils can explain the key points about electrical safety or crossing roads.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. Very efficient systems have been developed which evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work. These systems then feed into the process of school development planning. There is a clear focus on achievement, but also on enjoyment and pupils' personal development. There is a very clear sense of direction in which pupils are valued as individuals. Every child really does matter. The

school is highly inclusive and equality of opportunity is evident in all areas of its work. Careful recruitment of staff ensures that pupils are well taught and protected. Arrangements for the induction of all children are robust. The monitoring of teaching is thorough. There are frequent checks by the headteacher on the quality of teaching using both formal and 'drop in' approaches. Subject leaders have a good understanding of standards and provision for their subjects. Resources to support learning are managed very well. The headteacher provides opportunities for staff to undertake improvement initiatives whilst offering support and guidance. This results in positive changes to the curriculum and teaching methods. Parents, pupils, staff and governors are all involved in planning for the school and governors talk about 'being part of the vision' for the future. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. They are committed to school development and improvement, and both support and challenge the headteacher. Finances and resourcing of the school have been handled well. The school is well placed to continue to make good improvement in the future.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	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?	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

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

Following our visit to your school, we want to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. We would like to tell you about what we found. Larkswood Primary is a good school, and you enjoy going to school.

There is a lot of good teaching. The teachers and the other school staff are also good at looking after all of you, so that you feel happy and ready to learn. You have good relationships with your teachers and teaching assistants. In your lessons and in the playground, you behave well and are responsible. You concentrate well in your lessons and are learning well. You are making good progress from Reception to Year 6. By the time you leave school, you have good knowledge and skills so that you are ready for secondary school work. Your school has also got some excellent activities for you at lunchtimes and after school, like the many different musical instruments and sports which you can learn to play. Your new school building has been put up over the last two years or so, and of course it still isn't finished. It must have been exciting for you, but it has been hard work for teachers. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have managed this very well and worked hard to make sure the new Larkswood Primary is a happy place for everybody. They and the governors have done well to make sure that you get a good education and at the same time the new school building is ready.

There are only three things that could be improved. First of all, the results in national tests at Key Stage 1 could be a bit better, especially for the good learners. Secondly, we think the school should now decide how lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education could be made even more interesting and relevant. Thirdly, you do not have a school council at the moment. We think this would benefit your school, so that you can help the headteacher and the teachers to decide how to make Larkswood Primary an even better school.

Chris Grove, Lead Inspector

Christopher Grove

Inspector