

Fitzjohn's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100026
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	285703
Inspection date	2 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Deborah Townsend
Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Joyner
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	86A Fitzjohn's Avenue London NW3 6NP
Telephone number	020 7435 9797
Fax number	020 7431 9605

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	2 July 2007
Inspection number	285703

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils at this one-form entry school come from a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. A large percentage of the pupils speak a language other than English as their first language but very few are at an early stage of learning English, and almost all of these are in the Foundation Stage. The vast majority are bilingual. A smaller percentage of pupils than in most schools have learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features, such as pupils' personal development and the school's well deserved reputation for its choir and orchestra. Children enter the Foundation Stage with a wealth of background experiences and are bursting to learn. The Foundation Stage gives them that opportunity. Pupils' friendliness and confidence prosper in the happy school environment. Their maturity is used positively for school improvement. For example, pupils' views about their learning are consulted during monitoring reviews of teaching and learning. Pupils are happy in this inclusive school that values linguistic and cultural diversity. They get on very well together as a result and show very good levels of respect for each other and for the staff. Pupils regard their education as 'serious but fun.' They understand safe and healthy living. They make a very good contribution to sustaining the well ordered school environment and engaging with the local community. Good social occasions foster a lively culture of friendship across different classes in the school. They have high ambitions for themselves.

Achievement and standards are good. Good teaching and learning help pupils achieve well in their work throughout the school and standards are above average. Some teaching is outstanding. Pupils show good skills when they write creatively. Year 6 pupils wrote a detective story with a chilling atmosphere: 'And soon a dark head appeared contrasting with the golden flame.' A Year 2 pupil described silence as 'A virus invading someone's blood red body.' However, their formal writing, punctuation, handwriting and spelling are not as good as they might be because these aspects do not get a sufficient focus.

Good links with parents support pupils' education effectively. Parents work hard to support the school. Most are happy with the education that their children receive. One parent writes: 'We are very happy at Fitzjohn's. It has a wonderful atmosphere, confident and friendly children and a beautiful environment.' A small but significant minority of parents are less positive about aspects of the school. The inspection does not confirm all their worries but does agree that some aspects of care, such as the consistency and detail in recording accidents are not rigorous enough.

The curriculum is good and developing further as better links are made between subjects. There is a good emphasis on the creative aspect which ensures that pupils receive a well rounded education. The school has certainly benefited from the new, spacious buildings and external layout and is beginning to develop best use of them.

Staff have a genuine concern for individual children. Teachers track pupils' progress very carefully enabling them to take speedy action if pupils are falling behind with their work. Leadership and management are good. Monitoring procedures are effective and support the school's understanding of its strengths and its priorities for further development.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and shows a good capacity for further improvement. This is a school that has high expectations of its pupils and is clearly determined to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' formal writing, punctuation, handwriting and spelling.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and all groups of pupils achieve well. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is above that usually seen at this age. Foundation Stage children draw on a wealth of experiences that help them with their work and their communication skills are particularly good. They achieve well and by the end of Reception attainment is above expectations in the areas of learning. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2 and attainment is above average. Assessment information indicates that pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well in Years 3 -6. The trend of attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science and this looks likely to continue this year. However, the quality of handwriting is inconsistent. Some pupils' lack of care with grammatical structures and punctuation lessens the overall quality of their writing despite its often very sensitive and creative content. Formal writing, such as purposeful letter writing, is less securely developed. Speaking and listening skills are a particular strength throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils behave very well and display very good manners. They say 'pupils are kind to each other.' They support others who are less fortunate than themselves and raise money for them through their own efforts. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and supported most effectively by the creative aspects of the curriculum and very meaningful assemblies. Almost all pupils really enjoy school and take part enthusiastically in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Attendance is broadly average and the school is working hard to improve this. They undertake their class and school responsibilities very seriously, sensitively helping others with their worries. Older pupils look after the younger ones very well enhancing the school as one big family. The school council is very effective and seeks the views of other children. Changes have resulted in the organisation of the playground as a consequence. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, such as keeping in small groups, and know that exercise and a balanced diet are important aspects of healthy living. They are very well prepared for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan effectively to meet different needs and this is reflected in pupils' good progress. They make good use of interactive whiteboards, which add a good pace to lessons, and also pupils' own whiteboards helping pupils' engagement in learning. Paired pupil work is used effectively. This enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills. Year 6 pupils, for example, reported back succinctly their partner's views following a focused discussion about ideas for a story plot.

Teachers' encourage pupils successfully to reflect on their work. A Reception class child analysed with his teacher the improvements between two pieces of his written work very accurately. Marking is satisfactory with good features. It is up to date and often very helpful to pupils. However, the often very detailed comments on written work do not include enough references to grammar and punctuation. This is reflected in a comparative weakness in these aspects when

viewed against the often very stimulating content. The impact of marking is further lessened when teachers do not ensure that some pupils follow up their written comments or draw attention to unsatisfactory handwriting quality.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good including the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and English as an additional language. Sufficient time is spent on different subjects and includes French for Year 3 pupils. The good attention to creative subjects contributes to talented pupils' interest in music and art, particularly for older pupils. The provision for extra-curricular activities is wide ranging. Sporting activities support a healthy life style. Links between subjects are satisfactory overall with some good features, such as those between control technology and the operation of their model fairground roundabouts. The school recognises the need to widen the links between different subjects to deepen pupils' learning experiences further. Teachers make good use of the rich resource of museums and galleries to support pupils' studies. The provision for personal, social and health education is being developed further in order to make the content more meaningful for older pupils. High expectations support the good provision for Foundation Stage children. Nursery children, for example, discussed and compared perceptively the pattern, colour and shape of sea objects using a large magnifying lens.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff work successfully to create a very supportive environment. Playground 'buddies' are effective in supporting younger children and help them feel confident in the school. Child protection arrangements are good and the school ensures that the environment is safe. Staff take good care of the pupils, but procedures for recording accidents are not rigorous enough and risk assessments for visits are sometimes too reliant on outside bodies.

The regular reviews to track pupils' progress are very thorough. They enable staff to identify quickly groups of pupils or individuals who are not making expected progress and to put intervention programmes in place which improve performance. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from targets which indicate clearly what each pupil has to do in order to improve and also from the school's good links with external agencies. More generally pupils are aware of their improvement targets in literacy. However, they appreciate less well how they can improve in mathematics because targets in the subject are not used consistently across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's shared monitoring of teaching and learning is perceptive and supports its good quality. Subject leaders have a good understanding of standards reached. However, they have as yet had few opportunities to influence teaching and learning by observing lessons.

Governance is good. Governors' links with different subjects and other aspects of the school's work, and visits to the school enable them to know its strengths and areas for development and to be the 'critical friend'. The school's well established systems for self-evaluation are

robust and consultative. It takes good account of the views of parents, pupils and governors in determining priorities for the school improvement plan so that these are the correct ones. Progress of the plan is reviewed regularly, although the plan does not identify clearly enough how the success of the different initiatives will be measured.

The headteacher is caring and committed and creates a warm atmosphere in the school which is conducive to effective learning. Senior leadership focuses strongly on pupil achievement and the promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being. The school rightly identified boys' writing as an issue and is resolving this successfully by devising work which appeals more to boys' interests, such as composing detective stories. It does, however, recognise that aspects of writing, such as formal writing and grammar, need further attention.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
--	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fitzjohn's Primary School, London, NW3 6NP

Thank you for talking to me about your school and for discussing your work with me. I enjoyed my visit very much. Thank you also to the choir for your most beautiful singing. I will remember it for a long time to come.

Your development as young people is outstanding. You enjoy school and you work conscientiously. You behave very well and are most polite. You look after one another and show respect for your teachers and appreciate what they do for you. Teaching and learning in the school are good. Staff take good care of you and track your progress effectively so that they can help those of you who find the work a little more difficult.

You make good progress and attain standards above those expected for your age. I was very impressed with your story writing. You have some very imaginative ideas. Maybe there is another J K Rowling amongst you! However, whilst clearly your imaginations and use of vocabulary are very good, many of you could improve your handwriting, and use of grammar so that your writing is of a higher quality still.

You enjoy your class and school duties and carry these out conscientiously. You clearly have a voice in the running of the school and I was very impressed with the way your headteacher seeks your views about what you do in different classes. The headteacher leads the school well and has the good support of the deputy headteacher, your parents, the governors and other staff. I am sure that you will be sorry to see your headteacher retire after her long service at the school. However, I am sure you will give your very good support to the deputy headteacher who, as you know, is taking over the leadership of the school in September.

I wish you all well for the future and hope that you achieve the ambitions that some of you spoke about. Keep on working hard.

All good wishes,

Peter Sudworth Lead inspector