

Baring Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100673
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	285840
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Gray

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Charles Linley-Adams
Headteacher	Ms Diane Brewer
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001
School address	Linchmere Road London SE12 0NB
Telephone number	020 8857 5637
Fax number	020 8857 4330

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves an area of some deprivation. More pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools, and about one in ten is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Children start school with below average skills. The school has experienced staffing difficulties in recent years. It holds the Healthy Schools' award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school is giving a satisfactory and improving standard of education with good features. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average and are rising throughout the school as a result of good leadership and management. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and is good in a few classes. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, some variations in its quality account for the differences in pupils' achievement.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and show concern for those younger or more vulnerable than themselves. 'It doesn't matter if you're different because we're all equal,' said one older pupil. 'It's important to respect others' ideas because you can learn a lot from other people,' said another. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. As a result, they say they feel safe in school and it is clear that they enjoy their learning.

Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start to their schooling. The accommodation is exciting and children are enabled to make a good range of independent choices. They progress well as a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching.

The school has developed thorough systems of assessment to track pupils' progress on an individual basis. This information is used well to give support to any who might be falling behind. This enables pupils who learn more slowly to make good progress. However, some teachers do not always make enough use of the information when planning to meet the needs of other pupils, especially the more able.

Leadership and management are good, as is demonstrated by the marked improvement in pupils' attainment and progress in reading. Though inconsistencies in teaching remain, senior managers' work with staff who need support is beginning to have an impact in those classes. The success of this can be seen in the rising standards and pupils' improving progress. This is evidence of the school's good capacity to improve further. A parent's comments sum up this process: 'My son's progress during his time at Baring has improved with each year and I am extremely happy with this school as a whole.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Achieve greater consistency between classes in the quality of teaching.
- Ensure that teachers make better use of assessment information in planning to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Staffing difficulties had led to a fall in standards a few years ago, but they are now rising. Children start in the Nursery with low levels of skill, especially in their language development. A good proportion speak little English. The school has focused much effort on improving provision in the Foundation Stage. As a result, children now make good progress and, by the time they start in Year 1, reach standards that are a broadly similar to those expected for their age.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Current standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. The current Year 6 reached above average standards when they were in Year 2 and there was some underachievement in the past, because of inconsistent teaching. This has now been rectified and the school's records show that the rate of most pupils' progress is accelerating. This is faster in some classes than in others, related to the quality of teaching. The best progress is made by pupils with learning difficulties. Some more able pupils do not make as much progress as they should because they are not always challenged sufficiently. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good support in their language development and progress at rates similar to that of their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They talk enthusiastically about visitors to the school, visits and clubs and say that these make learning more fun. Pupils understand how to stay safe and say that adults listen to them if they have any concerns. A few parents commented that there is some bullying but pupils say that this is rare and any problems are quickly dealt with. As one said, 'We don't have to feel worried about it, because there is someone we can tell.' The work of the learning mentor has been very effective in this area.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is good and they get on well together. Pupils listen attentively to each other and are respectful of others' views and feelings. As a Year 1 pupil said, 'Children are sensible and nice.' Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and contribute to making the school a pleasant and happy place. The school council are proud of their efforts to make the school a better place and pupils respond positively to the rules they decided for managing playtime activities. Pupils know which foods and physical activities will keep them healthy. Their ability to work collaboratively and progress in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers make most lessons interesting and use pupils' work well to produce good learning environments in classrooms and corridors. They make good use of modern technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to widen the resources available to pupils.

Foundation Stage learning is planned around a central theme each week, which links children's learning together and engages their interest. The theme was 'spiders' during the inspection. Children discovered for themselves that water flows down, not up, by trying to wash 'Incy-Wincy Spider' up and down a water spout, as in the poem they had learnt by heart.

In Years 1 to 6, some pupils occasionally become over-excited so that learning is less easy to direct. Teachers do not always use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning in planning for what they need to learn next. Pupils of differing abilities are sometimes given the same work, or activities which, though different, do not vary in degree of difficulty. On these occasions, the work given to more able pupils is insufficiently challenging.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good enrichment activities to enhance pupils' experiences and learning. Pupils enjoy a wide range of well attended clubs which contribute effectively to their personal development.

There is a strong focus on the development of literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. Changes to the teaching of reading and greater emphasis on practical mathematics and science activities are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Pupils who have learning difficulties are well supported to help them make good progress. There is good provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and the well managed support ensures good progress in their language skills. However, the curriculum is not as strong in offering challenge to more able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are very well cared for. Close attention is paid to catering for pupils' personal needs. Effective systems ensure that the school environment is safe and welcoming. Child protection systems are rigorous and any concerns are quickly followed up. There are many initiatives which help develop pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. One parent, who was very pleased with her child's development, wrote, 'She has grown in confidence and is so happy in school she cannot wait to get there.'

Assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science are good. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully so that pupils who need extra help quickly receive the assistance they need. This benefits lower attaining pupils well but is less effective for the more able. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and pupils who speak English as an additional language is good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is ably supported by the senior leadership team. Together, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because the process of self-evaluation is used well.

The school has coped well with the problems caused by staffing difficulties. This has led to changes of teaching staff and management teams and has slowed the pace of improvement. The senior management team rigorously evaluates the school's work. Priorities and effective action are well documented in the school development plan. Regular monitoring of pupils' progress, teaching and learning ensures that issues are quickly acted on. Effective action to provide extra support for pupils and training for teachers is bringing about improvement, but there is more to be done to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent across the school.

The school works hard to provide support for and involve parents in its work. Parents are appreciative of this and two parents made special mention of the office staff: 'So friendly and helpful' and 'We always get beautifully looked after.' The school's good links with other organisations benefit pupils well.

Governance is good. Governors are committed and supportive of the school's leadership. They are closely involved in the evaluation of the school's work and are prepared to challenge it when necessary.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Baring Primary School, London, SE12 0NB

We enjoyed meeting so many of you during the inspection and want to thank you for your polite and friendly welcome. It was good to see lots of your work in the classrooms and corridors. This showed us how much you enjoy school and how hard you try with your work.

You behave well and understand how to lead a healthy life. One child in the infants asked if we were going to look into your lunch boxes. We did not need to, because most of you know for yourselves what makes a healthy lunch. You told us that you feel safe in the school and that bullying is rare. When it happens, you know what to do because the adults work hard with you to make the school a safe place.

Baring is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. It is getting better all the time and some of your parents wrote to tell us that. By Year 6, you reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are similar to those attained by most children in the country. You make satisfactory progress, and good progress in some years. We have asked the school to try and make sure that all teachers help you to make good progress.

Teachers and classroom assistants are good at keeping an eye on how much progress you make. They are specially good at helping those of you who take more time to learn new things. We have asked them to help the quick learners to progress even faster, by giving them lots of challenging work.

Your headteacher and her staff lead the school well. They are good at seeing what needs to be improved and making sure that it happens. You and they make Baring into the happy school that it is, and I hope you go on enjoying it.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray
Lead inspector