

Grinling Gibbons Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100685
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	285844
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Gordon Ewing

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Howard Morrall
Headteacher	Mrs Cynthia Eubank
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001
School address	Clyde Street Deptford London SE8 5LW
Telephone number	020 8692 4907
Fax number	020 8694 2231

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Grinling Gibbons is a smaller than average primary school. There is a diverse mix of Black African, Black Caribbean, Black British and Chinese pupils representing more than four fifths of the school population. This is exceptionally high. Half of the pupils have a first language other than English and this represents a gradual increase over the last four years. There are twenty-two different languages spoken in the school.

Almost half of all pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average reflecting the high levels of social deprivation in the area the school serves. Attainment on entry is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average. Pupil mobility is low but is increasing. Though staffing is stable overall, in recent years some classes have experienced significant staffing turnover.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Grinling Gibbons Primary School provides pupils with a good education, which has several outstanding elements. A very strong focus on every individual pupil and high quality care permeates all that the school does. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As one pupil said, 'I love this school. I'm helped a lot.' The vast majority of parents agree that it is a good school and that pupils very much enjoy the wide range of lessons and activities provided.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with below average attainment in most areas of learning, especially in social and emotional development and number calculations. They make good progress due to effective teaching focussed on close tracking of their needs and development. Pupils make good progress across Years 1 to 6 as a result of their very positive attitudes and good quality teaching. Standards have varied in recent years but are now above average in reading, mathematics and science. However, pupils' performance in writing lags well behind. Weaknesses exist in developing sentence structure, use of punctuation and linking the purpose of writing across the curriculum. The tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous and robust and has triggered additional resources to ensure that pupils make consistent progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well.

Pupils are clearly very happy in their work and play. One pupil said, 'I love this school because I love learning'. They are confident speakers and they know that they are valued and safe at school. Their personal development and well-being are excellent. They get on well with each other, displaying good levels of cooperation and teamwork. Their behaviour is excellent and attendance is outstanding. Exclusions, racist incidents and bullying are very rare. Pupils respond well to the exciting environment around them and impressive displays celebrate the diverse and vibrant curriculum on offer. The curriculum, enhanced by specialist teaching, is outstanding and contributes very positively to pupils' self-esteem and personal development. Pupils and parents greatly appreciate the many clubs, visits to places of interest and stimulating visitors provided.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's vision, drive and high expectations filter throughout the school creating a culture of achievement and partnership that engages all stakeholders. She has tackled some difficult issues robustly in order to ensure that pupils receive effective teaching and thus make good progress. These actions are now clearly bearing fruit. Leadership and management at all levels have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, though this is sometimes too modest, and a challenging agenda has been set for future improvement. The weaknesses in writing have been recognised by the school and appropriate strategies are now in place to raise standards further, although it is too early to judge their impact. Governors provide very effective challenge to the school's leadership and are very focussed on improving outcomes for pupils and teachers. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good, overall, and appropriate strategies are now in place to ensure greater consistency. Improvement since the last inspection is good and, based on its track record the school has a very strong capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing skills so that they achieve levels similar to those reached in reading, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of skills below that expected nationally. They make good progress both in the Nursery and Reception classes as their needs are ably met by all staff. Consequently, by the end of Reception, most pupils achieve the expected learning goals, though some weaknesses remain in reading and number calculations.

In 2006 standards, by the end of Year 2, were above average reflecting the good progress pupils make over time. Currently, Year 2 pupils are on target to reach similar standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In contrast, pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 in 2006 was more variable and, as a result, standards have fluctuated in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. Concerns about staff turnover, inaccurate teacher assessment and increasing pupil mobility have been swiftly addressed and most of the current Year 6 pupils are making good progress in relation to their starting points, though standards in writing lag behind those achieved in reading, mathematics and science because teachers' knowledge and understanding of the teaching of writing are inconsistent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are a major strength. They have very positive relationships with adults and show consideration towards each other. They are clearly proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about the teachers and what the school offers. One pupil commented, 'Our school is brilliant because we don't have any bullies'. In a moving assembly, pupils listened carefully and respectfully as Year 6 pupils led activities conveying the message that words can hurt or give pleasure. Present day issues were shared, including links with some Bible stories. Pupils sang and spoke clearly with confidence and enthusiasm.

Pupils' understanding of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe is very good. They have a very strong sense of responsibility and a good understanding of working together as a community and in respecting the views of others. The school council is well aware of the importance of its role and can demonstrate ways in which pupils' views are acted upon. They have initiated the purchase of playground equipment to support initiatives to develop healthy lifestyles and improve playground behaviour. The whole school is actively involved in raising funds for a range of charitable projects. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure attendance and punctuality remain at high levels. The way that pupils work together and share ideas in a collaborative way prepares them well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan their work carefully, overall. The best lessons make use of a wide range of resources, including information communication technology (ICT), are well paced and provide engaging activities. As a result, pupils are well motivated and work hard. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the teaching of writing are inconsistent and, consequently, pupils' writing skills are under-developed. Teaching in a few lessons could better extend more able pupils through activities that are more challenging. Relationships with pupils and adults are very positive so that pupils listen well and show care and respect to others. They

are eager to answer and participate fully in lessons. Teachers' expectations are clear and, therefore, pupils behave very well, overall. Lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils work with sustained concentration. Good use is made of partner and group activities enabling pupils to discuss their work positively. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress, particularly for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The broad, balanced and exciting curriculum enables pupils to flourish. It is enriched by an impressive programme of extra-curricular activities throughout the school, adding to the pupils' learning and enjoyment. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, keenly engage in their learning.

The youngest children benefit from a stimulating and effective Foundation Stage curriculum. Interesting learning opportunities are provided from visitors to the school and educational visits. For example, the Arethusa visit and the Year 6 visit to Cornwall. There are excellent examples of curriculum events including arts and science weeks, 'Smoothies' days and Black History Month. These have a very positive impact on pupils' cultural awareness and understanding. Excellent displays throughout school ably celebrate the quality and range of pupils' work. Specialist teaching in art, music, ICT and sports enhance considerably pupils' creative and personal development. The curriculum provides effectively for pupils to contribute to their school and local communities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely well cared for. Procedures to protect them are excellent. Staff and governors are highly effective in ensuring that regular and systematic risk assessments and health and safety checks are carried out effectively. Parents feel welcome and they trust the staff to take care of their children. They judge that they are very well informed about their children's work and progress. The school has developed very strong links with health professionals and outside agencies. Staff actively promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem and are very effective in identifying pupils who need additional support with learning, behaviour and social skills. This is truly an inclusive school. Academic guidance provided through teachers' marking and individual target setting are good, overall, but need to be more consistent and robust to ensure that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the school's actions clearly demonstrate that, at Grinling Gibbons, every child matters. One parent commented, 'My son joining the school has been the best thing I ever did'. The strong ethos of teamwork and shared responsibility pervades the school. The headteacher is very well supported by her leadership team, who work hard to raise standards of teaching and learning through careful monitoring of pupils' progress. Inconsistencies in teaching are being rigorously addressed and, consequently, pupils' progress in reading, mathematics and science is now good. Governors provide a very

effective challenge to the school's leadership, ably bringing the school to account to ensure positive outcomes for pupils and staff. They are greatly involved in the school's self-evaluation and speak, with confidence and knowledge, about the school's agenda for improvement. They have also taken decisive action to involve pupils in the decision making process of the school. Although modest, at times, the school self-evaluation process creates a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	1

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	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grinling Gibbons Primary School, London, SE8 5LW

You will remember that two inspectors visited your school recently to see how well you are doing. We would like to thank you greatly for making us feel very welcome. We enjoyed talking with you and to observing you at work and play. Your school is good and has several excellent features. What we were particularly impressed about your school include:

- Mrs Eubank is an outstanding headteacher and she is very well supported by a dedicated team of staff.
- The staff work very hard to help you learn and as a result you make good progress.
- You get on very well together and you really respect each other's views and cultures.
- Your attendance is excellent.
- Your school council takes its responsibilities seriously and, with the help of staff and governors, is helping to make your school even better.
- All staff look after you extremely well and make sure that you are very happy and safe at school.

Although your school is really good we have agreed with the staff that more work needs to be done to help improve your writing skills so that you make even greater progress in your lessons and to help you in your future life.

You can help Mrs Eubank and the staff by continuing to have very positive attitudes to learning and to working even harder.

Best wishes

Gordon Ewing Lead inspector