

Sir Francis Drake Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100712
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	285854
Inspection dates	20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Berger HMI

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	5 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs K Canniffe
Headteacher	Mr C Voller
Date of previous school inspection	11 - 13 June 2001
School address	Scawen Road London SE8 5AE
Telephone number	020 8692 4321
Fax number	020 8692 6781

Age group	5 - 11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out one Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress the pupils make in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the contribution of initiatives to improving standards, gathering evidence from lesson observation, discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of work and reviewing the data the school uses to track the progress the pupils make. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Sir Francis Drake Primary School is an average sized primary school educating boys and girls between four and eleven, serving the inner city area of Deptford. Until recently it was federated with another local primary school which was facing very challenging circumstances. Three quarters of its pupils, including the 30 children in Reception, come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very high proportion, three quarters, speak English as an additional language.

Forty-nine pupils are at an early stage of learning English and these are mainly the younger pupils. When most pupils start school their knowledge of English and their social skills are much lower than expected for their age as are learning attitudes and behaviour. Number skills are average but other aspects of mathematical understanding are well below national expectations for most pupils.

The levels of deprivation in the estates around the school are severe and over half of the pupils receive free school meals, which is a very high proportion. About 10% pupils come from relatively affluent backgrounds. Their parents have made an informed choice, although they may have moved miles away. The school is oversubscribed and mobility is below average for the area, being 12.9% last year,

The school has 45 pupils on its register for special educational needs, mainly for literacy or behavioural difficulties and four pupils have statements of special educational need. These numbers are broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school is outstanding. The academic performance of the pupils in English mathematics and science is exceptional and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels is very high.

The pupils make fantastic progress in the Foundation Stage. The most able pupils, after one year in the school, are working at standards well above national expectations and most of the other pupils have made up for lost time and have reached expected levels ready to move into Key Stage 1. Improvements in this area of the school have been achieved because previous performance was reviewed rigorously. Difficult decisions were taken and they have paid off. The greater focus on exploration and play without losing the importance of acquiring good basic literacy and language skills has accelerated the pupils' progress. The school has recognized in their planning that a further rise in expectations will be possible as these pupils move through the school.

The trend set in the Foundation Stage continues in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and by the end of their time in the school the pupils reach standards well above the national average.

The sustained and highly successful leadership of the headteacher is central to ensuring that the focus on accelerating progress is always a priority. Over his 11 years as leader he has earned the respect of teachers, parents and pupils as well as other leaders in education. The senior leadership team has also proved itself to be highly effective. They led the school on a day to day basis during the three years of the federation and standards continued to rise. They bring a wealth of experience and stability to the school. The arrangements for self-evaluation are exceptionally strong and well-embedded. Teachers' general skills in planning and delivering lessons as well as their strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum are evaluated rigorously and areas for improvements are linked to performance targets and professional development opportunities. This has resulted in very consistent teaching and learning which is nearly always good and very often outstanding. They observe each other and are open and honest in their evaluations. It is to the credit of everyone that standards are so high.

Parents also expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. One parent commented, 'I am extremely pleased with my child's education. His learning has been very well supported and I receive very good feedback about how my child is doing'.

The rigorous focus on teaching and learning and rigorous assessment of the pupils' performance has led to standards rising to their current level. The feedback for parents and pupils is very detailed. Parents receive weekly reports about pupils' behaviour and learning which help them in turn to support the school. The pupils understand very well what is expected of them and the reward points help to reinforce this. The school excels in helping pupils to develop as individuals. There is an exceptional emphasis on developing language skills in the context of relationships

and as a result pupils are able to articulate their feelings. As one pupil said, 'I am given time to express my feelings so I don't bottle things up any more till I explode'. Everyone is valued and different cultures in the school are celebrated. The very few racist incidents are tackled head on and difficult issues are always discussed and resolved. The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their school and work are outstanding. They are developing a very good understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. They work very well with each other and team work is constantly emphasised. They have also made a major contribution to the schools' success by their commitment to telling staff what they like and what they would like to change. All suggestions are considered carefully and discussed.

The current curriculum is very good. It is well designed for the pupils, for example, by including a wide range of opportunities to learn about other cultures. The pupils expressed their enjoyment of their subjects, in particular the many opportunities for active learning in school and the huge variety of trips and extended residential opportunities. Art is also a great strength. However, even outstanding schools have areas which would benefit from development. The school agrees with the inspector that specialist teachers have been used to great effect where they develop and train class teachers but there remain some inconsistencies with regards to subject expertise in a few classes and the curriculum is not yet fully responsive to the needs of individual classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue with the monitoring and support for teachers in developing greater subject expertise
- Review the curriculum in the light of a larger number of pupils achieving higher levels.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	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
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

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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



June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sir Francis Drake Primary School

I really enjoyed my visit. Thank you so much for talking to us. It was really good to find that your views about what is so good about your school matched mine.

I was very impressed with the way the school helps you sort out any problems. You explain your feelings very clearly and this helps you all get on well together.

Your school is outstanding in many ways. Three of the most important are that:

- lessons are really good
- you have a chance to study lots of subjects and visit many places
- the headteacher and staff are fantastic. They think very carefully about what is best for you and take your views on board.

The school has decided to work more on the different subjects and the way you are taught them and I agree this is a good plan.

Thank you for being so open with me in our discussions. You have also made a big difference to the school by the way you tell teachers what you think. It was a great pleasure to meet you all.

Yours sincerely

Ann Berger, HMI