



Lawdale Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100907
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 285914
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Daniel Kilborn

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Mansford Street
School category	Community		Bethnal Green
Age range of pupils	7–11		London E2 6LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7739 6258
Number on roll (school)	287	Fax number	020 7739 3477
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Anne Ambrose
		Headteacher	Mary Smalley (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school, serves a socially disadvantaged and culturally diverse community. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above average, and the school is classed as one of the most deprived schools in the country. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is above average and ten pupils have a statement of special need. Ninety percent of the pupils have English as an additional language although few are at the early stages of learning English. Over three quarters of pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage, with ten percent from white and European heritage. The deputy headteacher is currently acting-headteacher owing to the maternity leave of the headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Over the past four years the school has recovered well from a period of staffing instability and low standards. It now provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education with a good capacity for further improvement. This is due to increasingly strong and determined leadership, which has created a common sense of purpose among staff.

Standards have risen since 2004 and are now broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory for the large majority of pupils. However, there is a small minority of boys who underachieve in their academic and personal development. Standards are improving because teaching is providing consistency and greater progression in learning. Mostly good teaching was seen during the inspection but the impact of teaching on learning over time is satisfactory. Teaching meets the needs of most pupils effectively but there is some lack of challenge for the more able pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving at a good pace. Senior leaders and teachers are successfully focussed on raising standards and promoting pupils' personal development and well being. Over the past two years, better systems to track pupils' progress have been developed and used to target support where it is needed most. This is one of the key reasons for the rising standards. Analysis of data from this tracking has given the school a clearer view of where it needs to improve. It provides accurate information to enable the school to evaluate its effectiveness. Systems to monitor teaching and learning have led to some improvement. However, monitoring is not always sufficiently focussed on issues in the school development plan aimed at raising achievement and standards.

Pupils' personal and social development is good. Most learners enjoy their education and have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well and show consideration for others. They are keen to take part in all the school's activities and are proud of what they achieve. Pupils feel safe from bullying and racism and are confident in the care and support available to them. They act responsibly and understand what is likely to be dangerous. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and participate enthusiastically in physical activity. There are good relationships at all levels and these build pupils' self esteem and confidence effectively. Pupils develop satisfactory literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Together with the opportunities to work in groups and in pairs, and the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils are prepared adequately for their future economic well being.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement with particular emphasis on the small minority of boys who underachieve.
- Use the outcomes of day-to-day assessment more effectively to plan work that offers greater challenge for the more able pupils.
- Ensure monitoring of teaching and learning remains focussed on issues identified in the school development plan aimed at raising achievement and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Girls achieve well in English, mathematics and science. The majority of boys achieve satisfactorily, although a small minority underachieve and have done for the past few years. This is largely due to their low attainment on entry and more passive attitudes to learning. Various strategies to improve their achievements are having some success. For example, teachers are focussing additional support and resources on learning that meets their interests more effectively. In all subjects, there is scope to challenge the more able pupils in order to accelerate their progress. There is no significant variation in the achievements of pupils with learning difficulties and those pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Standards have improved over the past two years and are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This is because teaching is better and results in more even progress across year groups. The school exceeded its appropriately challenging targets for 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoy school. As their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, pupils behave well and the large majority has positive and determined attitudes to their learning. One boy commented: 'we come to school to learn.' Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their economic well-being. They enjoy a good range of educational visits and clubs. The good behaviour allows most pupils to concentrate well in lessons and they are confident to ask questions if they do not understand. However, a small minority of boys do not always concentrate sufficiently on their work and as a result they underachieve. Pupils know that it is important to follow the school rules because that keeps them safe. Although there is talk of bullying, pupils know that it is important to tell an adult and have every confidence in the school's ability to help them. Pupils are well aware of the need to take regular exercise and know about the benefits of healthy eating. They use resources safely and move about the building in an orderly and sensible manner. The school council members are keen, enthusiastic and proud to have been chosen to represent their classmates. They have a strong commitment to the school community and to improving school life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. This is because teachers work together effectively and have a strong commitment to improving the way pupils' learn. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to develop pupils' vocabulary well and to ask searching questions that make pupils think

more deeply. There is consistent sharing of learning intentions and so pupils know what they are expected to learn. As a consequence, pupils settle quickly to work and know whether they have succeeded. Teachers use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, effectively to add interest and enthusiasm to learning. Classroom assistants support learning effectively. Presentation and marking are good and reflect the teachers' high expectations in this aspect of learning. Whole school assessment systems support learning in most areas successfully and teachers plan to meet the needs of individual pupils. However, this is not always successful for the more able pupils who are not taken as far as they are capable. Still more needs to be done to meet the complex needs of the small minority of boys who underachieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the large majority of pupils well and has improved since the previous inspection. There are meaningful links made between subjects and this makes learning more relevant for the pupils. Year leaders plan to further strengthen these links. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills are developed in other subjects; for example, there is good use of numeracy skills in science to graph shadows over a period of a day. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and pupils at the early stages of learning English. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport and the arts, are well attended, and appreciated by both pupils and parents. Day and residential visits extend pupils' experience of the world beyond the school. This contributes positively to their self-esteem and self-confidence. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and permeates other subjects as well as through specific lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Parents trust the school to take care of their children. This is reflected in improved attendance rates and increased parental involvement in school life resulting from successful initiatives such as the 'extended school co-ordinator' project. Support for those pupils with learning or language difficulties is good. Assemblies and lessons in personal and social education give pupils opportunities to discuss problems and for staff to offer support when necessary. There are effective systems for behaviour management and procedures for child protection and health and safety are good. Outside agencies support the school well in meeting the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The academic guidance given to pupils is good. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets and say that these help them to improve. There is more scope for teachers to use day-to-day assessments of progress to match work more accurately to pupils' needs. The very good relationships between local schools enables pupils to be well prepared upon entry to school and when leaving Year 6.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. They have improved markedly over the past few years. Senior managers have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils and where improvement is needed. They are sharply focussed, for example, on the need to further improve standards and the achievement of a small minority of boys. This is reflected in the good school development plan. There is a good team spirit and a clear, shared commitment to further improve all aspects of the school's work. Staff development has a high priority and better monitoring of teaching and learning and careful analysis of pupils' performance, has led to improving standards and achievement for most pupils. However, monitoring systems for improving teaching and learning need to remain focussed on the key aspects identified in the school development plan.

The governors, led by a hardworking and perceptive chairperson, are given good information regarding the schools performance. They are developing their role as a 'critical friend' well and are increasingly holding the school to account for the quality of the education it provides.

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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 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	3

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	3
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?	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
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	3
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

I should like to thank you on behalf of the inspectors for the friendly way you welcomed us to your school. We all enjoyed talking to you during our visit and your views and opinions were very helpful. You were polite, well behaved, and worked well together in class and on the playground. It is clear that you enjoy coming to your school and are proud of it. We know that you work hard and listen to your teachers. You tell us there is always someone to help you if you have a problem. Your teachers, and visitors to school, teach you about keeping healthy and the importance of taking regular exercise. You know which foods are good for you and how to keep safe.

You are improving well with your English, mathematics and science work. You do especially well when the lessons are interesting and the work you are given is not too easy or too hard. We think that some of the boys could be doing even better and some of you could do even harder work. We have asked your teachers to help you improve further.

You tell us how much you enjoy the many clubs and activities that your teachers and visitors to school organise for you and we were pleased to see how many of you take part. You also enjoy going out of school on visits, which you say are exciting and help you to learn more about topics you are studying in class.

Your headteacher and all the staff care very much about you and want you to do well. We agree with the targets they have set to help the school to improve even more and know that you will do your best to help the school meet them.

Good luck for the future.

Mr. D.M.Kilborn
(Lead Inspector)