



Elizabeth Selby Infants' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100908
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 285915
Inspection date 17 January 2007
Reporting inspector Judith Dawson

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Old Bethnal Green Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3-7		E2 6PP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7739 6187
Number on roll (school)	262	Fax number	020 7729 8747
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr A Latif
		Headteacher	Ms C MacPherson
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This larger than average infant school serves pupils from an area of high social deprivation. Over half the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are Bangladeshi and very few are from White British households. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and attainment on entry to the nursery is low. More than a quarter of pupils are at the early stages of learning English which is much higher than would normally be found. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to that of other schools. The school participates in the Extended Schools Programme. It holds the Quality Mark from the Basic Skills Agency.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Elizabeth Selby Infants' school is outstanding. It has the idea that each individual is respected and valued at the heart of its work. As a result, pupils enjoy school and love to learn. The outstanding leadership team is committed to developing pupils' personal and social skills as well as ensuring they fulfil their full potential. Pupils' progress is tracked and individual needs or weaknesses in provision are swiftly responded to. This results in rapid improvement.

By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are slightly above the national average. This represents high achievement, given children's very low starting points when they join the Nursery. They make the most rapid progress in Year 2 because teaching is exemplary. Many children have little English when they start school and make rapid progress because of the very good intervention and support they receive. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well catered for and rapidly achieve their targets. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and by the time they join Year 1 they have made good progress. However, children make better progress in the Nursery than in the Reception Classes due to the cramped conditions. The Reception area will be extended next month.

Teaching is good overall and outstanding in Year 2, which is why pupils achieve so well by the time they leave school. The senior management team provides excellent role models and very good monitoring of teaching is improving teaching across the school, ensuring pupils make good progress overall. However, other leaders are not sufficiently involved in improving teaching and learning and in the strategic management of the school.

Some teachers do not provide younger pupils with enough information when they mark their books to help them improve. This limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning. Relationships throughout the school are outstanding and teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and hard work. Pupils respond with gusto with impeccable behaviour and eagerness to learn.

There is a good curriculum throughout the school and older pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills in meaningful situations, preparing them well for their futures. Provision for personal, social and health education is outstanding and pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and the impact of their actions on others. These pupils take care of each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and pupils show great respect for the views of others. Pupils receive exemplary care, guidance and support, enabling them to thrive. Parents highly value the school and the very good support they receive. One parent said, 'The school atmosphere is very welcoming for me and my child'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Enable teachers with additional responsibility to become more involved in the leadership of the school and in improving teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

At the time of the last inspection, standards were below average. They have recovered significantly and in 2004 and 2005 they were above average. In 2006 there was dip due to a significant number of pupils with learning difficulties in the year group. Current Year 2 pupils are achieving at least as well as pupils in 2005. The school does not rest on its laurels and additional support, including support from business partnerships, is targeting the most able pupils to ensure that they achieve as well as they can.

When children start school, many have little spoken English and their attainment in all the areas of learning is well below average. They make very good progress in learning English due to the very good support they receive and the school's outstanding commitment to inclusion. This is a school where every child matters and children know this. This develops their self-esteem and they know they can do well. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, as well as the good teaching, enable them to achieve well throughout the school. Exemplary teaching in Year 2, where pupils have a clear understanding of how they can make their work even better, lifts their achievement to new heights.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects is outstanding. This is a school that is firmly rooted in respect for everyone. Pupils use teachers' first names and delight in sharing learning with them. Year 2 pupils are confident that bullying is very rare and understand that it can be verbal as well as physical. Attendance is average and rising steadily. Pupils use their excellent understanding of how to keep healthy by insisting on healthy food at home. Pupils in Year 2 told the inspector they prefer water to fizzy drinks. They know how to keep safe at school and at home. They are knowledgeable about major religions and celebrate the diversity of cultures within school. In one lesson, pupils gave thoughtful and interesting comments about how a character in their text would feel. Pupils work together very well and, from the time they join the Nursery, learning to share ideas and resources. They support and entertain senior citizens and international charities. However, although the oldest pupils are confident and sensible, they rarely suggest or implement improvements within school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and outstanding in Year 2. All teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and make learning appear to be a shared experience.

Adults are often heard to say to each other, 'I didn't know that, did you?' As a result, pupils love to learn. The outstanding attitudes to learning, and the good and sometimes better teaching, is why pupils achieve so well. In the Nursery, children are gently taught how to work and play together, to share and take care of equipment. In Reception, teachers strive to ensure children make good progress towards their early learning goals, within the restrictions imposed by the lack of space.

Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is rigorous and precise. In one lesson, as pupils read together, the teacher swiftly intervened with the question, 'Is this 'become' or 'became'?' This is one of the reasons why pupils achieve so well. In other lessons, while teachers set work that accurately reflects pupils' abilities, enabling them to make good progress, there is less urgency and challenge to stimulate pupils to even greater effort. There are good examples of marking which make sure pupils know how to improve or extend their learning. Questions such as, 'Once you pick an apple off the tree, does it grow any more?' generate further enquiry. However, most teachers limit marking to praise and comments on how pupils have achieved the task.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and enables pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills within other subjects. It is kept under review and adjusted to meet pupils' needs. For example, a concentration on the teaching of the sounds letters make has improved pupils' reading. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to school and the support of people from industry to work with the more able pupils is helping them to achieve higher levels. The personal, social and health education curriculum is flexible and very effective.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is now good. Improvements in the accommodation for the youngest children, including a large covered outdoor area, now enable them to make the most of the good range of activities available to support their learning. The accommodation for the Reception children is very cramped and restricts opportunities for children to learn through working and playing together. It is due to be extended next month.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. There are very good systems for helping children settle into school life and parents are encouraged to support their children during the first few days. Parents are supported very well and have many opportunities to learn new skills to support their children. However, pupils could be given more opportunities to influence the life of the school. Pupils have personal targets for English and mathematics based on an accurate assessment of their learning needs. While pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also have relevant targets for improvement, guidance for pupils in the early stages of

English acquisition is more informal. Nevertheless, they receive very good support and rapidly develop their English language skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership team lead and manage the school very effectively. They have a very good, if modest, understanding of the school's strengths and ensure that the school's ethos of respect, care, high achievement and a love of learning are maintained. They identified the need to develop provision in the Foundation Stage and have enlisted the support of the local authority. As a result, provision is now good. Accurate monitoring of teaching and learning enables them to help teachers to improve. Both the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher are outstanding teachers and set high standards for the rest of the staff.

The school runs efficiently and there are very good plans for development that are based solely on pupils' needs. This ensures that the potential for future improvement is very good. Governors fulfil their duties well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff with specific responsibilities carry these out efficiently but have little involvement in whole school development. In order to ensure that the outstanding leadership and management are maintained during future leadership changes, they need to become more proactive in whole-school affairs.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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?	1
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	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?	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.

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	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

Thank you very much for your friendliness and help when I visited your school. I really enjoyed seeing how hard you work and how well you care for and respect each other. I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the happy way you approach everything you do. Your school is a very happy place where you feel safe and well cared for because of the way adults respect and care for you. Special thanks to those of you from Year 2 who left your lessons to talk to me. I was so impressed with your knowledge about how to keep yourselves healthy and the way you make sure you eat healthily at home.

You learn a great deal at school because you are taught well. Those of you in Year 2 learn very quickly because you have outstanding teachers who make learning very interesting and fun. They make sure that you know what you need to do to make your work even better. I have asked all teachers to help you improve your work when they are marking your books.

You have an outstanding school and you should be very proud to be a part of it. Your headteacher, assistant headteacher and deputy headteacher run the school outstandingly well, helping you to do as well as you can with your work and preparing you for life as a grownup. I have asked them to help other teachers to work with them to develop even more exciting ways for you to learn new things.

I am sure you will continue to enjoy your school and will make good use of the skills you have learnt in your future lives.

Best wishes

Judy Dawson (Inspector)