



Mowlem Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100914
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 285918
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mowlem Street
School category	Community		Bishops Way, Bethnal Green
Age range of pupils	3–11		London E2 9HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7364 7930
Number on roll (school)	230	Fax number	020 7364 7931
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr B Boag
		Headteacher	Ms J Burns
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007	Inspection number 285918
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Over four-fifths of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Almost all pupils are Bangladeshi, with a few pupils from other ethnic groups. Pupils come from a predominantly low socio-economic background. A much higher percentage of pupils than found nationally is entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry is significantly below expectations especially in communication and language skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mowlem Primary School provides a good education for its pupils because there is a clear and relentless focus on standards throughout the school. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has successfully inspired the staff to share her vision and goals resulting in very significant improvements in the last three years. This very well organised school is now well on its way to fulfil its aim 'to unlock, fulfil and exceed the potential of every child' by driving up pupils' levels of attainment. In particular, the strong focus on developing pupils' command of English has improved English results significantly whilst respecting and encouraging pupils to be proud of their home language.

When the children start school many do not have the skills expected for their age. Interesting activities help them to make good all-round progress in the Foundation Stage. The overall good teaching in the school helps the pupils to achieve well and effective tracking of their progress ensures that work is well focused on pupils' needs. As a result, levels of attainment have risen almost continually in recent years. Pupils' attainment by Years 2 and 6 now reaches national averages and it looks set to improve further.

The successful, well judged emphasis on improving attainment in key areas of learning has, however, meant that other areas of the curriculum are not as rich. The provision for practical subjects such as art, music and design and technology do not provide pupils with a lively depth of experiences. In mathematics, not enough is done to apply pupils' improved skills to real life settings.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is apparent in all that they do and also seen in their good attendance. They develop good levels of confidence in their abilities and regard themselves as 'intelligent children' taught by 'clever teachers'. Staff show very good levels of care and pupils have a very good awareness of how to be safe and healthy. The school prepares them thoughtfully for secondary school as well as helping them to understand simple money matters. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided. They are keen to do well. They work diligently and take responsibilities seriously developing a mature approach to life. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they are kind and thoughtful. The school's good partnership with parents has secured their whole-hearted support and parents speak highly of the school. One parent wrote 'We came to this community totally isolated and we were made very welcome through the guidance and information provided'.

This is a school that knows itself very well because of its thorough self-evaluation. Judgements based on standards reached are robust and based on a range of evidence. This feeds directly into school planning which then focuses on further improvements. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the curriculum in art, music and design technology by enriching the quality of provision in these subjects.
- Develop the use of mathematics so that pupils see its purposefulness for life.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievements are good and standards are average. Attainment on entry is significantly below expectations especially in communication skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, particularly in language development with attainment by the end of the Reception class slightly below expectations. Satisfactory progress in Year 1 accelerates to good in Year 2 and pupils often reach the expected level by the end of Year 2. In 2006, Year 2 pupils exceeded the national averages, building on the improvements of the previous two years.

The progress made by Year 6 pupils from the levels attained when they were in Year 2 has been in the top 25 per cent of schools in the country in the last two years. Inspection evidence indicates that this pattern is set to continue. Year 6 test results reach the national average and a significant percentage of pupils reach the higher level. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of the extensive support provided for them. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls over time.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They get down to work sensibly and at leisure play happily together. Playground helpers and the school council take their roles seriously and are effective in providing ideas to improve school provision such as their suggestions for playground arrangements.

Pupils feel very safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe, as when crossing roads. They respond well to the personal, social and health education programme which both serves them well and addresses their emotional development carefully. They know the importance of eating healthily and taking physical exercise regularly. Pupils' social, cultural, moral and spiritual development is good overall, but less strong in their spiritual development. They fully understand right from wrong, are generous in raising funds for charity and are accepting of different faiths and beliefs.

Pupils have a sound understanding of money, partly through a school pretend money reward scheme. They have a simple understanding of global and local environmental issues and cooperate effectively in joining in the school's re-cycling work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall but is more effective in the core subjects than in art, music and design technology. Lessons are well prepared with a clear structure assisted by the effective use of modern technology such as interactive white boards. Teachers manage the pupils well. Positive, respectful relationships foster good working attitudes so that pupils are industrious and keen to take part in lessons and to do their best. They take their learning very seriously. Teachers pace lessons well so that pupils can understand the content. The good mix of explanation and activity keeps pupils engaged. The effective use of paired pupil discussion is most helpful in developing their confidence and command of English. Work is often well matched to pupils' capabilities but occasionally mathematics activities are too difficult for the least able. Teaching assistants are often used effectively with small groups and enable those who have learning difficulties to understand their activities. Marking is up to date and frequently helps pupils to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Visits and visitors help provide experiences that enhance pupils' learning. The English National Ballet worked with Year 5 pupils and produced a ballet with them. A very good emphasis is placed on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and pupils' personal development such as living healthily and safely. However, the provision in music, design and technology and art does not result in the same good outcomes as in the more academic subjects and the time devoted to geography is not secure enough in all classes. The much improved skills in mathematics are not being applied to every day situations enough.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils who are gifted and talented have been identified and the provision for these pupils is beginning to develop, although at an early stage. Pupils were challenged recently to produce newspaper articles under real conditions at a newspaper office which supported their literacy skills effectively. Other links with industry have been very successful, such as reading helpers from a financial company.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school is rightly proud of the very good quality of care and welcome it provides for all pupils, including those with particular physical needs. The site is fully accessible for pupils with disabilities. The school's Preventative Education and Drug Intervention award highlights its successful focus on health issues. It has secure safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

The school has good links with outside agencies which help pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's progress and given helpful sessions, for example telling them about local educational opportunities and facilities they can share with their children.

Careful tracking systems enable teachers to know their pupils' abilities well and generally give them work which is at the right level. These are being developed further. Parents and pupils receive helpful advice about choosing a secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and brought about very significant improvements. She has developed a stable, confident teaching staff, including experienced learning support assistants, resulting in very good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The headteacher is well supported by an effective senior leadership team and by efficient administration. The financial situation has improved significantly - the monitoring of finances is now meticulous. Subject leadership is good overall with strengths in the Foundation Stage, English, ICT, and inclusion.

The headteacher knows exactly where further improvements are needed, to build on the good steps taken since the last inspection. The focus on developing literacy for all pupils, most of whom do not speak English as their first language, underpins much of the good teaching and learning. This reflects the school's determination to offer equal opportunities to all and to prepare pupils to transfer happily to secondary school.

The governing body's work is good. It has gained in experience and understanding of its role. It is very supportive of the headteacher, in whom it has great confidence. The expertise within the governing body, for example in finance, health and education, is particularly valuable, enabling it to ask pertinent questions with insight. The school works effectively with the local authority whose support has contributed to the good progress that the school has made.

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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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	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	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?	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.

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	2
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 for your very warm welcome when we visited your school and for talking to us about your work and what you do. We very much enjoyed our visit. You clearly enjoy what you do. We were very impressed by your attentiveness in class and your very good behaviour and hard work in lessons. The staff take very good care of you and you clearly understand the importance of keeping yourselves safe and how to live healthily. The teachers work hard so that you make good progress. We were very impressed with the improvements that have been made in your progress. Many of you do very well indeed and reach or exceed what is expected at your age.

Your headteacher is doing an excellent job in leading the school forward. As a result of the staff and governors' efforts, the school has improved greatly in the last three years. The school now provides you with a good education. It arranges some interesting visits for you to help your learning. We thought that Year 6's visit to a newspaper office to write newspaper articles was an excellent idea. Similarly we think that you could put your much improved skills in mathematics to good use in working out problems in real life. The staff provide a good range of extra opportunities for you after school and you appreciate these but we think the teachers could provide more interesting work for you in music, art and design technology and we have asked them to do that.

We wish you all well for the future and hope that you will continue to work hard to achieve your ambitions.

With very best wishes,

Mr P Sudworth

Lead inspector