



Olga Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100916
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 285920
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lanfranc Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bow
Age range of pupils	3–11		London E3 5DN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8981 7127
Number on roll (school)	222	Fax number	020 8980 5018
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Gavin Stewart
		Headteacher	Ms Gill Havard
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Olga Primary is a smaller than an average school. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with White British and Bangladeshi being the largest groups. About 40 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is just above average. The school serves an area of social disadvantage and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Children enter the Nursery with well below expected levels of knowledge and skills. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal starting and leaving points is high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Olga Primary School's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school has clear strengths in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 but there are inconsistencies in provision in Years 3 to 6. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their academic and personal development.

Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum in the Nursery and Reception years enable children to get off to a good start and make good progress in all areas of learning. Because of their low starting point many children do not reach the expected standards on entering Year 1. The effective teaching and a well matched curriculum in Years 1 and 2 ensures that this good progress continues. As a result, standards are generally average in reading and mathematics by Year 2 but attainment in writing is lower. Effective leadership of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 contribute to these positive outcomes for pupils. As one parent of a Year 2 pupil commented, 'My child is very happy at school and has made excellent progress since she started in the Nursery.' Standards in Year 2 have improved from below average to average during the past three years.

Changes of teaching staff and inconsistencies in teaching, in Years 3 to 6, means that pupils' good progress is not always maintained. Pupils achieve satisfactorily from Years 3 to 6. The tasks they are given in Years 3 to 6 are not always pitched at the right level. As a result, pupils are not always suitably challenged and the rate of learning slows. Standards in Year 6 can fluctuate from year to year due to the higher than average proportion of pupils who join the school. Some of these pupils arrive with learning difficulties or have limited skills in English. Standards in writing were well below average in Year 6 last year. They were below average in mathematics and science. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average overall. The school is taking steps to raise achievement in writing by extending opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and in different subjects.

Overall, care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory and contribute to their satisfactory personal development and well-being. These are good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Attendance levels are below average but the school works hard to monitor and promote good attendance. Most pupils enjoy their learning particularly the younger ones. Behaviour is generally good but there are a few pupils, mainly boys, with challenging behaviour. While this behaviour is usually managed well, there are occasions when it hinders pupils' learning in lessons. Pupils are acquiring a sound understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. They are adequately prepared for their next school.

Parents are generally satisfied with the education provided. They rightly praise the provision in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. A few have expressed concerns about the behaviour of some pupils and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6. These concerns are justified.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a clear understanding of its performance and has identified the pressing need to improve the consistency

of teaching and raise achievement in writing. There are appropriate action plans to bring about improvements, but the criteria for measuring the success of the plans are not always sharp enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing across the school by providing a wider range of opportunities to write in different styles and for different purposes.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 by ensuring that all lessons maintain a brisk pace and the tasks are well matched to pupils' needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Good progress in the Foundation Stage means that, by the end of Reception, children are well prepared for the next stage in learning. The assessment of pupils' needs is sharp and thorough in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Assessment data is used well to match support and work to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in Years 1 and 2. The more able pupils also make good progress as they are challenged with more demanding work. However, in Years 3 to 6, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the assessment of pupils' needs results in pupils achieving satisfactorily, with writing being a weaker area. Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to discuss their work, usually in pairs, and this develops speaking and listening well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy coming to school despite the below average attendance. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behaviour is generally good, but this is not always the case with a few boys in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles through regular exercise and healthy diets. They feel the school is a secure place, and develop a sense of community through a range of fundraising activities and visits from members of the local community. The school council allows pupils to take on responsibility. As one pupil commented, 'We are always thinking how to improve the school to make it safe and fun'. Pupils are suitably equipped with the basic skills necessary for future years.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. From the Nursery to Year 2 teaching and learning are consistently good and this contributes to the good progress made in these age groups. Nursery and Reception teaching provides a good blend of direct instruction and opportunities for children to explore. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan lessons well and make them interesting. This motivates and inspires the pupils. Planning takes good account of pupils' learning needs and tasks are well-matched to their levels of understanding. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged, interested and make good progress.

Teaching and learning are less consistent in Years 3 to 6 and are, therefore, satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6 and pupils made better progress. When tasks are not matched well to pupils' abilities, the pace of learning slows. Time is sometimes lost while members of staff deal with the challenging behaviour of a few boys. This can hinder the pace and flow of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A satisfactory curriculum is provided which is enriched with a range of clubs, visits and visitors. Children in the Foundation Stage are given a wide range of interesting activities which make learning fun. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, and this contributes to their good progress. The curriculum for Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Planning in Years 3 to 6, including the links made between subjects, is not as well developed. The English curriculum is well structured and steps are being taken to extend opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and in different subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are effective procedures to help ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Induction procedures for new pupils are sound and enable them to settle into their new school. Good links with outside agencies provide appropriate support to pupils with learning needs, including those most vulnerable.

Effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are used well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 to guide pupils' learning. Due to changes in the teaching staff, assessment is less consistent in Years 3 to 6. Information is used adequately in planning pupils' learning and in setting individual learning targets. The teachers' marking of pupils' work is thorough. They give praise for good work and guidance to help pupils improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership has been successful in promoting good provision and good achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. With a more settled teaching force in Years 3 to 6 and a new leader of this phase, the school is now in a better position to address the inconsistencies in achievement and provision.

The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate, and it has a clear overview of its current performance. Development planning contains the right priorities including improving the consistency of teaching and learning, raising achievement in writing and improving consistency in the use of assessments. The plans set out the action to be taken to bring about improvements but the indicators used to evaluate the success of the plan are not always sharp enough or measurable.

The governors are committed, supportive, and have a realistic overview of the strengths and development needs. The improvements in standards in Year 2 through effective assessment and high quality teaching show the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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

Thank you so much for welcoming your inspectors into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found out. We think that Olga is a satisfactory school.

These things are particularly good:

- Most of you enjoy school.
- Children in Nursery and Reception are making good progress.
- Pupils in Year 1 and 2 also make good progress.
- You have a good range of clubs and activities which you enjoy.
- Behaviour is usually good, but a few boys can let you down.
- You get on very well with other pupils and adults.
- Staff make sure that you are cared for, helped, and safe.

These are few things that could be improved:

- To help you to make more progress in writing, your teachers are working on giving you more opportunities to write in different styles and in different subjects.
- In a few lessons in Years 3 to 6, teachers should ensure the work set for you is not too easy or too hard and that you learn at a brisk pace.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts

Lead inspector