



Bygrove Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100942
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 285926
Inspection date 5 December 2006
Reporting inspector Barry Jones

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bygrove Street
School category	Community		Poplar
Age range of pupils	3–11		London E14 6DN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7538 4925
Number on roll (school)	237	Fax number	020 7538 5097
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Amanda Geary
		Headteacher	Joanna Franklin / Jeremy Iver
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of very high social disadvantage. It has higher proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is not their home language than in the great majority of schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than in most schools. A higher proportion of pupils join or leave at unusual times than in most schools. This is partly due to the close proximity of a women's refuge and temporary housing for immigrant families. Since September 2006, there have been two co-headteachers who each carry out the role for three days per week, overlapping for one day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bygrove is a good school. There is a culture of high expectations and the school has been extremely successful in creating a very cohesive 'Bygrove family'. There is a very strong commitment by all staff to shared goals and there are excellent links with other partners, agencies and schools. The school has worked exceptionally hard to involve parents and some contribute well to school life. Pupils make good progress both academically and socially. They feel safe, behave well and enjoy coming to school as shown by their positive attitudes and good attendance. This contributes to a welcoming environment and to maintaining an harmonious, multicultural, multifaith community.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. The provision has improved recently and is now good. This is because of improvements in staffing, well-targeted advisory support and better planning and assessment procedures. However, these changes are too recent to have had an impact on the progress made by all pupils. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Given the pupils' starting points this means that achievement is good. There are differences between subjects. Pupils have consistently achieved well in science over several years. Standards in writing have been too low but have improved markedly in the last year because of a sustained, whole-school approach. They are now satisfactory but it is characteristic of the school that it is seeking further improvements. Some more able pupils do not make good progress in English principally because they do not attain the highest level in writing.

Pupils make good progress generally because of the good teaching they receive. Teachers make lessons interesting and fun and this helps pupils to learn. The good quality in teaching has been maintained despite a high turnover in staffing. This stems from the high expectations of the headteacher and the rigorous monitoring programme she has established. For instance, when the monitoring identifies 'satisfactory' teaching, support and training are provided to bring the teaching up to a good standard. There are also good levels of care and the school supports a home-school worker who plays a valuable role in supporting families with difficulties. This is part of an overall plan that means that every child is included and can join in school life fully. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is coordinated well and means that they also make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. The school is very well led and the headteacher's drive and determination have underpinned the school's success and meant that changes in staffing have been managed well. The school is currently planning to deliver much of the curriculum through a series of topics. The monitoring does not yet ensure that all the subjects are taught as much as they should be but this is recognised by the school. The governors hold the school to account well. Consequently, given the improvements already made capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all children make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

- Ensure that more able pupils make good progress in English and particularly in writing.
- Check that the curriculum meets requirements for each subject.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many pupils join the school with low literacy skills and the school rightly gives a high priority to improving them. It employs a good range of successful strategies and children are now making more rapid progress in the Reception class. Reading standards have improved in the Foundation Stage as a result of a consistent approach to teaching early reading skills and this is now being usefully extended into Year 1. However, some children do not make the progress they should in physical and creative development. In the main school, 'reading corners' are well resourced and attractively presented. This contributes to making reading a pleasurable experience. Writing has been a particular focus. Standards are now satisfactory as a result of a programme of training, raising teachers' expectations and rigorous monitoring to check that agreed actions are being implemented. Pupils respond well to the practical approach to science and consistently achieve well. The results in national assessments in 2006 at Key Stages 1 and 2 show significant improvements in mathematics and English. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels are close to national averages. There are no underachieving groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The latter is addressed by the school through well-planned assemblies and special events. For instance, pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'multicultural day'. This includes dressing in national costumes, sampling foods from different countries and taking part in cultural traditions. As one pupil said, 'We enjoy it, but we also learn to understand others'. The school council is active and feels that its views are valued by the school. It has shown initiative, including interviewing the school cook about healthy dinners and raising local environmental issues with the mayor. The school recognises that many pupils are not adopting healthy lifestyles outside of school because their inner-city environment provides little scope for physical exercise. Consequently, it has given this a high priority. All pupils take frequent exercise in school and have a good understanding of why they should eat a balanced diet. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school and for being responsible members of society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The teachers manage their classes well and the good quality relationships mean that pupils can learn in a calm atmosphere. They use a good range of strategies to make lessons interesting including practical and investigative work and pupils use computers well to research topics. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers and pupils respond well to opportunities to discuss issues with their 'talk partners'. Teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities but vary in their effectiveness. Consequently, in some lessons more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Marking is conscientiously done but does not always indicate how pupils could improve further. The school has successful strategies to enable parents to help their children learn at home. These include a lending library and homework packs. Parents also work with their children during 'family learning week'. This contributes to the pupils' positive attitudes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has several strengths. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum has been reviewed and the resulting changes means that there is now a good balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for the children to develop independently through well-planned play. In the main school, themes are planned well to build on pupils' interests and to take advantage of the local environment. The curriculum reflects well the rich diversity of the pupils' backgrounds. The intention is to cover as many subjects as possible in this way. The school identifies information and communication technology (ICT) and scientific skills that cannot be covered by the chosen topics and these are taught separately. This approach is innovative but is still being developed and provision for gifted and talented pupils is not firmly established in the planning. There is good provision for pupils' personal and social development and every class has two hours of physical education a week taught by a specialist. Provision for art is good and there are excellent examples of the styles of different artists in displays around the school. There is a good range of clubs and visits including residential trips. These are attended well and valued by the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good overall. The school make outstanding use of a range of partners to deliver very good care and support. A home-school worker helps families and pupils at risk. There is additional effective support for pupils with behavioural difficulties and consequently there are very few exclusions and behaviour is good generally. Child protection procedures are good and all staff have up-to-date training. There is excellent use of partnerships with local businesses and these provide

learning partners for activities such as a modern foreign language, reading, chess and ICT. Pupils who join the school late or have little spoken English on arrival receive appropriate support and settle well. Pupils know their targets well. The school has effectively used a paper-based system for tracking pupils' progress at the individual pupil level. The school is now developing a computer-based system that has the potential to give senior managers better information about the performance of groups of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Senior managers are effective in raising achievement and in maintaining a high level of care. Monitoring of performance is very thorough and contributes to the good standards. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and uses this knowledge effectively in making improvements. It has taken robust action when it has identified weaknesses in the teaching. There is a good induction programme for new teachers and strong links with higher education institutions underpin support for newly qualified teachers. Good training programme for middle managers enables subject coordinators to carry out their role well but several are adjusting to new responsibilities following staff changes. It is too early to say whether the policy of employing two co-headteachers is adding further value to the efficiency of the management. The school has participated successfully in a project to promote effective partnerships with parents. Parental involvement is a priority for the school. As a result, parents have led on arrangements for multi-cultural days and other activities that have benefited their children. The governors have a good range of expertise and hold the school to account well.

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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	3
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

Many thanks for your help and cooperation when I inspected your school. You told me that you like coming to school and this is shown by your good attendance. You say adults in the school look after you and so you feel safe. Most of you appreciate the healthy dinners. The school gives you opportunities to do physical exercise in lessons and in after-school clubs and this is helping to make you fitter. Members of your school council told me how they had interviewed the mayor about the school environment. They feel that the school takes account of their views. I was also impressed by your good behaviour. You told me that pupils respect one another's' beliefs and cultures and that is a good thing. You spoke enthusiastically about 'multicultural day'.

My main finding is that I agree with you and your parents that Bygrove is a good school. There is a welcoming atmosphere for visitors and the school works hard to make you feel that you are part of the 'Bygrove family'. Your teachers make lessons fun and interesting and so you do well in your studies. The school is particularly good at ensuring that children who have difficulties at any time get help and can play their full part in school life. The school is well led by your headteacher. You are lucky - you now have two headteachers!

There are three ways in which I have asked the school to make things even better. I would like to see more able pupils getting higher levels in English and for the school to continue to help you improve your writing. The school is changing the way in which the subjects are taught in order to make them more interesting and to be relevant to life in Poplar. I am asking them to check that all subjects are included for enough time in this exciting project. There have been a number of improvements to the Nursery and Reception classes. I would like the school to check that these children make good progress. For your part, please ask if you do not understand and your teacher will help you.

I wish you every success in the future.

Barry Jones

Lead inspector