



Christchurch CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100944
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 285927
Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006
Reporting inspector Lynn Bappa

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	47a Brick Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Spitalfields
Age range of pupils	3–11		London E1 6PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7247 0792
Number on roll (school)	138	Fax number	020 7247 6818
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Andy Rider
		Headteacher	Mrs Judith Hammill
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves an area of significant disadvantage, in one of the most deprived areas of East London. Almost all pupils are of Bangladeshi origin and have English as an additional language. Many speak no English when they join the Nursery. The main home languages are Sylheti and Bengali. Mobility rates are high and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The school was put into serious weaknesses in 2004, a month after the current headteacher was appointed. A visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in March 2005 judged the school to have made reasonable progress overall, with good capacity to improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies.

This is a good school that enables its pupils to achieve well. Great headway has been made since the school was put into serious weaknesses. It is a happy, harmonious and safe place. As a result, pupils are developing well as individuals. The environment for pupils is good. Classrooms are bright and attractive and the well-used accommodation and playground provide pupils with good opportunities to learn and play, though they do not have enough voice in the running of the school.

The headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, plays a pivotal role in moving the school forward. She has led the school well through a difficult period, successfully promoting a common sense of purpose and a shared determination to improve. The school is ambitious for its pupils and there is a commendable commitment to ensuring that they feel valued and do as well as they can.

The school is doing a good job in improving standards in a challenging situation. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Most children enter the school with little or no English. Good emphasis is placed on developing their communication, language and literacy skills. Pupils' standards are well below average by Year 2. This represents good achievement, given their low standards on entry. Standards in the Year 6 tests in 2005 were well below average. To some extent this reflected weaknesses in the teaching in previous years. The quality of teaching has improved considerably during the last two years. As a result, there was an increase in the number of pupils reaching the expected levels in 2006 and the current Year 6 pupils are on course to do even better. Overall standards are below average. This means that, although it is not yet fully apparent in national tests, achievement is now good.

Teaching is good. Teachers manage behaviour well, so there is little disruption to learning, although they do not always ensure that pupils listen attentively enough in lessons. Great attention is given to helping pupils develop and improve their fluency and confidence in using English. The school has also introduced English classes for mothers to encourage them to play a more active part in their children's education. These are very successful. As one mother said, 'We are very happy to have English classes; we look forward to them every day'.

Pupils' personal and social development is good. They behave well and are enthusiastic in lessons. This enthusiasm is engendered because the school provides a good curriculum where subjects are taught in an interesting manner. Pupils are happy because of the excellent care they receive and the way in which all staff support them, both in and out of lessons.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' listening skills.
- Provide pupils with a platform for making their views heard so that they have a greater say in the running of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. When children enter the Nursery class their standards are much lower than those seen in most schools. Most speak little or no English and many have restricted experiences and skills that represent significant disadvantages. Despite this, they grow rapidly in confidence and make good progress. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average. Taking account of the pupils' low starting points, and their limited English, this represents good achievement.

National test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2005 were well below average but standards are slowly rising and are below average overall. At the time of the last inspection, there was significant under-achievement in Years 3 to 6. The school acted successfully to tackle this problem and achievement in lessons is now good. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified early and they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils speak glowingly of all the school does for them, and their personal development and well-being are good as a result. They enjoy school, as shown in the improved attendance rates which are now in line with those seen nationally. Pupils' excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen in the ways in which they value one another and welcome opportunities to learn about the wider world. They enjoy assemblies and benefit from good opportunities to reflect and think about life. They express concern for the needs of others and show a good understanding of what it means to live in multicultural Britain as well as the wider world. Pupils were very keen, for example, to talk about the recent work they did to celebrate Black History Month. Behaviour is good and pupils say, 'If anyone is unkind to you just tell your teacher and it will get sorted'. Pupils are developing a good awareness of how to be healthy and stay safe. As one pupil commented, 'Our teachers really care for us because they let us have lots of fresh air so we can concentrate'.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to exercise responsibility. There is no school council, however, although senior leaders are working on ways to ensure that pupils are given formal opportunities to have their views heard and acted upon. Pupils' positive attitudes and satisfactory achievement in basic skills prepare them soundly for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their education and they develop good working habits. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of the good support provided by teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when this aspect was inadequate. Teachers work hard to provide a happy and supportive atmosphere which results in children settling in quickly and learning successfully. This is especially important when almost all of them start school with little or no English. Lessons are well organised and teachers present them in a stimulating manner, often using new technology, such as interactive white boards, to interest and motivate pupils. They manage behaviour sensitively, so there is little disruption to learning, although teachers do not always ensure that pupils listen well enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, a weakness when the school was last inspected, is now good and meets the needs of all pupils. Recent improvements to planning in mathematics, English and science are reflected in improving standards. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Pupils in Year 4, for example, are involved in a local authority animation project looking at various aspects of London's history. This will be shown in a local cinema next year. Regular visits provide first hand learning experiences and promote pupils' social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of pastoral care is excellent and enables pupils to make very good progress in their personal development. The school is a very welcoming place for children. As one member of the support staff commented, 'I see children arrive with a smile on their face and they leave school at the end of the day smiling'. Adults make a real effort to get to know the children and their families. Parents appreciate this and are very supportive of the school. These very positive relationships with parents and the good levels of support from outside agencies contribute significantly to pupils' good progress. A local architectural firm, for example, provides reading volunteers for a targeted group of pupils. A similar scheme links mathematics students at university with under-achieving pupils. Vulnerable pupils are very well supported. There are good procedures for child protection. The induction of children into the nursery is thoughtfully planned, as is the support given to those pupils who arrive later in their education. As a result, children settle quickly. As one parent commented, 'We are happy'.

Academic guidance is good. Pupils' progress is tracked well and those whose progress is above or below expectations are noted and action taken to meet their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when these aspects were judged to be inadequate. The school's views of its strengths and weaknesses are accurate and honest. The headteacher has a clear focus on raising standards and ensuring that pupils do as well as they can. There is a tangible sense of determination to do better. A real strength of the school is the high quality of teamwork and commitment which ensure that everyone, including support staff, the lunch time supervisors and office staff, play an integral part in moving the school forward.

The work of the governing body is good. Governors know the school well and ask pertinent and challenging questions. The school is aware that it needs to do more to improve some of its administrative procedures and also that it needs to give pupils more of a say in how things are run. The school works well with a wide range of partners, including local businesses, universities and the church. Links with parents are excellent.

Given the great strides made since both the last inspection and the more recent HMI visit, the school has a good 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?	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	1
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	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?	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?	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

Not long ago I came to your school to see how you were getting on and whether there was anything I could suggest that would make the school better. You made me feel very welcome and I enjoyed meeting you. Thank you and well done! I was with you for two days. That was long enough for me to realise that your school is a good school. I have also decided that it no longer needs to be called a school with serious weaknesses. This is because it has improved so much over the last two years. Congratulations!

I enjoyed seeing how well you get on together and how hard you are working in lessons. I think that the school does a wonderful job in caring for you. All the adults work hard to ensure that you feel happy and safe. You told me that there is always an adult to turn to if you have a problem. As far as your school work goes, many of you have had some catching up to do but I can see that you are improving and you make good progress with your learning. You will continue to improve if you always try your best. I think that too many of you chatter in lessons when you should be listening to each other or to the teacher - you can help your teachers by trying to listen more carefully so that you don't miss anything important.

Your headteacher and the other staff work hard together to make the school better. The governors are good: they know exactly what goes on in school and work hard to make sure everyone does their best. I agree with your headteacher that you would like to have more of a chance to show how responsible you are by having a greater say in how your school is run. I have asked the headteacher to look at ways of doing this.

Christchurch is a good school. If you continue to work as hard, and behave as well as you do now, it could become even better.

Good wishes for the future,

Dr Lynn Bappa

Lead Inspector