



Alderbrook Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100995
Local Authority Wandsworth
Inspection number 285935
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Lily Evans

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oldridge Road
School category	Community		Balham
Age range of pupils	3–11		London SW12 8PP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02086734913
Number on roll (school)	208	Fax number	02086758866
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Helen Haddon
		Headteacher	Mrs Jean Inwood
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006	Inspection number 285935
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized inner city primary serving a diverse community. Many younger pupils come from a minority ethnic group and many are at an early stage of learning English. The proportions eligible for free school meals, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are higher than average. The number of pupils who leave or join the school part-way through their education is much higher than usual.

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 provides a good quality of education for its pupils and has made good improvement since the last inspection. Achievement and standards, teaching and learning, the school's curriculum and leadership and management have all improved so that the school no longer has serious weaknesses. Standards are currently average and achievement is good. The trend since 2004 has been of gradual improvement. In 2006 Year 6 national tests, pupils who had been below average in Year 2, attained above average standards in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards on entry to Foundation Stage are low. The good quality of provision enables the pupils to make good progress. When they enter Year 1, their standards are below average, especially in language development. By the end of Year 2, standards fluctuate and remain below average.

Leadership and management of the head teacher and senior management team are now good. Senior managers are highly committed to improving the school's performance through tracking pupils and taking effective action to improve their learning. They still have further to go, but are now in a strong position to make necessary improvements. The school has good links with, and support from, outside professionals and local education establishments with the exception of sustained support for improving attendance. There is good improvement in governance which is well led and is satisfactory overall, half of governors being new in post. They are more closely involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Personal development is overall satisfactory because there are a few pupils whose behaviour remains unacceptable, especially where the pace of learning is slow and class management is weaker. School strategies to reward and encourage good behaviour are having a good impact and the school is supporting teachers to make better use of these. Learning and behaviour mentors are effective in supporting the few more challenging pupils. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they enjoy their lessons. Pupils take responsibility seriously and make valuable contributions to the school and global community. Punctuality has improved although attendance is below average. Pupils are enthusiastic about playground games 'The best bit about school.' They know how to be healthy and the importance of exercise.

The recently reviewed curriculum is focused on improving pupils' enjoyment. It is soundly founded on developing basic skills and preparation for citizenship. It has suitable balance and breadth. The transitional curriculum for those pupils entering Year 1 with below average attainment is at an early stage of development. Teachers are now making good use of assessment to plan in the core subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Raise the quality of teaching and learning, focusing particularly on improving classroom management and the pace of pupils' learning.
- * Consistently apply school strategies to eliminate the unsatisfactory behaviour of a few pupils

* Improve attendance to the national average

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have improved steadily over the last three years and achievement is good relative to starting points. Although standards were above average this year, the present cohort contains a higher proportion of less able pupils and pupils who are not yet fluent in English. Nevertheless, these pupils are progressing as well as they can towards challenging targets. Following successfully raising reading, mathematics and science standards, writing is an appropriate current whole school focus for improvement. Tracking data identifies pupils who are making less than expected progress and well directed support ensures they progress well. Although there is no significant underachievement, occasionally pupils at early stages of learning English made only satisfactory achievement because tasks were not sufficiently matched to their previous attainment. In order to raise standards and achievement at Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, the school has recently introduced systematic teaching of phonic skills, focusing on speaking and listening skills and additional support for pupils learning English. Early indications are that phonic skills are improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with strong features. Their good basic skills are equipping them well for the next stage of their education. Most pupils behave responsibly, listen carefully and work well cooperatively. Pupils when asked, say 'We enjoy learning!'. A minority of pupils lack concentration in lessons and shout out. Attendance is below the national average despite the schools' best efforts to pursue absentees. Racial harmony is good and any incidents of name calling are followed rigorously. Pupils feel safe and know that they can talk to staff if they have concerns. Pupils are proud of having a 'voice' in the school through the elected school council. They adopt healthy eating in school and enjoy active playground team games. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is fostered well and cultural development is outstanding. Special features are links to a Ghanaian school and fundraising for the Third World. Opportunities to discuss personal and social issues in circle times prepare them well to become good citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good; most pupils work hard and have good relationships with teachers. Pupils know what they are learning and have good opportunities to evaluate learning towards their targets. Teachers use resources including interactive

white boards well to explain tasks and to clarify their thinking. In a few classes, where the pace of learning is slow, a few pupils with poor concentration and listening skills become distracted which detracts from their learning. Where this is the case, teachers' management of behaviour is weaker. The school is providing support for those teachers. Groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils learning English mostly achieve well in lessons because they have good support and teaching. Where achievement is only satisfactory teachers are too ambitious in planning learning in lessons for the few pupils at the early stages of acquiring English. Teachers' use of assessment is increasingly effective in planning lessons. The best use is not always made of teaching assistants in recording pupils' progress, for example, towards learning targets. In most lessons, questioning challenges pupils well and learning is stimulating. In mathematics, the use of assessment is exemplary. Weekly mental mathematics assessment on Fridays enables teachers to plan work at the right levels for groups in the following week.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The revised curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, effectively adapting to be more creative and relevant to pupils' academic and personal development needs. Planning is good and focused on improving pupils' enjoyment and relating skills across subject boundaries; for example, writing World War II diaries, and opportunities for Year 4 to play guitar. It is too early to measure its impact on improving standards and achievement particularly in the foundation subjects. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and it is being extended into Year 1 to improve continuity and meet the needs of below average pupils. Pupils have opportunities to participate in a suitable range of enrichment activities. After school clubs including sporting clubs, extend the curriculum. Visitors to school, such as story tellers, drama and dance groups, bring the curriculum to life. Visits to museums, art galleries and theatres make the curriculum stimulating and extend pupils' life experiences; for example, a recent ballet workshop culminated in a theatre visit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support, provided for pupils are good. Staff, governors and the school council are keenly aware of health and safety issues. There are robust procedures for child protection and assessing and dealing with risks. This ensures that pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, feel secure. Pastoral care has been strengthened by the work of learning and behaviour mentors. New school and class rules reward good behaviour and pupils are eager to gain this recognition. The school works hard to involve parents and provides workshops to help parents assist with their children's learning. Parents appreciate the careful support their children receive. One commented 'My son came to this school with special needs. He has made good progress and is no longer special needs.' Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, progress similarly to others, because

of the support they are given. The procedures for tracking individual pupils' progress and setting targets to improve achievement and standards are good. All pupils have curricular targets recorded in books and on classroom walls. Many pupils cannot recall them but Year 6 pupils know them well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The head teacher and senior management team provide effective leadership with appropriate goals for improvement. They are successfully working to promote high standards of education and care for pupils. Roles and responsibilities are well defined, and middle managers are successfully developing the curriculum. Everyone is working to achieve the priorities in the school improvement plan and has a realistic view of the school. The quality of teaching and learning has improved rapidly and is now good overall. Regular monitoring of teaching identifies training needs and there is good support for new and inexperienced staff. Whole school professional development is contributing towards the rising standards. In monitoring the quality of teaching, too much weight is placed on what the teacher is doing rather than on how well pupils are learning.

Managers know they have more to do in improving attendance and behaviour. They have introduced a variety of initiatives to support pupils' emotional and social development. As a result, pupils' behaviour has improved significantly in both the playground and classes. Unacceptable behaviour is confined to a few. Governors are now well-informed and balance expenditure, such as on interactive whiteboards, against learning outcomes. Attendance is an area of frustration, since the school has had little professional external support. The school has good capacity to improve as shown by its track record of improved standards, teaching, curriculum and behaviour. Its own evaluation of achievement and standards is accurate and thorough.

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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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	3
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	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

Following our visit to your school, Mrs Singh and I would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for the help you gave us during the inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and are pleased to hear that you like learning in lessons. We think Alderbrook School is a good school.

These are the things we most liked:

- * The head teacher and other managers lead your school well
- * You feel safe and happy in school
- * You get a good start in the Foundation Stage
- * You are successful in national tests at the end of Year 6
- * You understand the importance of exercise and eating the right things. (You think playground games are the best thing about your school!)
- * You help the school well through the school council

We have asked your teachers to:

- * Make all your lessons interesting and fun so that you learn more. Why not tell them when you have enjoyed a lesson to give them some encouragement!
- * To help the people who behave badly or do not get on with their work. You can all make sure that you behave really well.
- * Encourage you not to miss school unless you are ill because this can stop you from learning as well as you could.

Please try to be there every day and take your holidays only when school is on holiday.

Yours sincerely

Lily Evans

Lead inspector