



Northbury Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101196
LEA Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number 285991
Inspection dates 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006
Reporting inspector Robert Lovett

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	North Street
School category	Community		Barking
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		IG11 8JA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8270 4750
Number on roll	358	Fax number	020 8270 4433
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Brian Cooper
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2001	Headteacher	Mr Nick Munns

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Northbury Junior School is bigger than most. It is housed in an imposing, well maintained Victorian building, which it shares with Northbury Infant School. While some pupils travel from further afield, the majority come from the surrounding wards which are more economically disadvantaged than most. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost three times the national average. A very high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and many speak a first language other than English, mainly Urdu and Panjabi. While the school's population has been fairly stable in the past there are increasing numbers of pupils joining and leaving other than at the beginning and end of the key stage.

The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is higher than average as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs, (SEN).

The acting headteacher has been in post for about a year.

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 believes its overall effectiveness is satisfactory but inspectors judge this to be modest. Northbury Junior is a good school with a number of outstanding features.

Pupils are overwhelmingly positive in their views on the school and are particularly enthusiastic about recent changes. They really enjoy learning and as a result behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.

Overall, leadership and management are good and the acting headteacher provides outstanding leadership. The school is inclusive and consulted widely on its school improvement plan. While this is good overall, it could be improved further by making the links between the school's actions and their impact on standards clearer.

During their time in the school pupils make good progress. While this is true of all groups, those speaking a first language other than English do particularly well. Pupils are generally well supported and the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is good because very good relationships enable teachers to engage pupils positively in their learning. However, in some lessons planning does not ensure more able pupils are sufficiently challenged. The recently introduced pupil targets in English are beginning to be used well to promote learning but have yet to impact on achievement. While marking is generally good and tells pupils how well they are doing, it does not always tell them how to improve their work.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and demonstrates good capacity to improve further. Because it uses resources well and achievement is good the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- the school improvement plan so that links between the school's actions and their impact on standards are clearer
- ensuring teaching provides consistent challenge for more able pupils
- marking so that it tells pupils how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with standards which are below average. Because of the good teaching they receive pupils make good progress and leave at the end of Year 6 having attained standards which are broadly average. Over time, pupils have achieved equally well in English, mathematics and science although in the 2005 national tests they did best in science.

The school has set challenging targets for 2006, particularly at Level 5 and data provided by the school assessment leader suggest it is well placed to achieve these. As well as these published targets, individual learning targets are set for all pupils in

English and for Year 6 pupils in mathematics. While this recent development is intended to raise standards it is too soon to see the impact.

Progress for all groups of pupils has, over the last two years, been at least average and often significantly above average. Those pupils who speak a first language other than English make particularly good progress. This is because they are well supported in the classroom, both by teaching assistants and the co-ordinator, and the curriculum is carefully planned to meet their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are outstanding, and major strengths of the school. All pupils have very positive relationships with adults in the school and show consideration towards each other at all times. Pupils are justifiably very proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about what it offers them and how it has improved.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. In an assembly the pupils listened carefully to an explanation of the Sikh festival of Baisakhi and then sensitively watched a short play presented by a group of pupils. They have a very strong sense of right and wrong and their class rules show a good understanding of working together as a community and the need to respect others' views and beliefs.

The School Council take their responsibilities very seriously and understand that their actions have an impact on the life of the school. They have initiated the purchase of playground equipment to enhance playtimes, expressed views with regard to learning resources such as interactive white boards and raised money for a variety of charities. That their voice is listened to and acted on enhances pupils' understanding of good citizenship.

Attendance is satisfactory but there are excellent procedures now in place to monitor pupils' absence and their punctuality to school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judges the quality of teaching and learning as satisfactory but because of the good progress pupils make, and because of the effective teaching observed, inspectors judge it to be good overall and sometimes it is outstanding.

This good teaching is characterised by learning that is well planned to meet the needs of learners. However, teaching in some lessons could better extend more able pupils through planning more carefully for their needs. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very positive so that they listen to adults and to each other with care and respect. They are eager to answer and participate fully in lessons. Because expectations are clear and are shared by all members of the school community,

behaviour is outstanding. Lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils work with sustained concentration. In the best lessons good use is made of partner and group working, enabling pupils to discuss their work and consolidate and extend their learning. In many lessons interactive whiteboards are used well to enliven teaching and engage the attention of pupils. In a good information and communication technology lesson the 'Today's Task' icon provided good guidance for pupils who were able to demonstrate very effective independent learning skills.

Pupils with additional learning needs are appropriately supported. Work is well matched to their needs resulting in satisfactory progress.

While marking is generally good, it does not consistently tell pupils how improve their work. The recently introduced pupil targets in English are beginning to be used well to promote learning but have yet to impact on achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad curriculum, which develops pupils' skills and interests well. For example, basic skills such as writing are being developed across the curriculum and this is helping pupils make good progress. The newly upgraded computer suite is well used to develop skills and enhance independent and group working. All pupils keenly engage in their learning across the range of subjects. However in some lessons the most able are not challenged sufficiently by the work they are offered. Additional interesting learning opportunities are provided through visitors to the school and at least one opportunity each term for all pupils to make an educational visit. A wide range of lunchtime and after school activities, including sports, creative arts and reading are offered. These are well supported and give those pupils who attend opportunities to enjoy additional learning in their social time.

Pupils' understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe are very good. The way that pupils work together and share ideas in a collaborative way prepares them very well for their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and supported by teachers and other adults, who are mindful of their safety and well-being. Pupils feel safe in the school and know that there is at least one trusted adult to whom they can turn. A learning mentor has been appointed who is providing very good targeted support for a vulnerable pupil. She is also beginning to develop a wider role by working with pupils who find it difficult to make or keep friends by further developing their self-esteem and social skills. Teaching assistants are used well. They contribute to planning for pupils with learning difficulties and as a result their support matches well with pupils' targets. Pupils are well supported in their work by the feedback they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. This helps pupils to make appropriate learning choices and contributes to the good progress they make.

Effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress are in place and most know their learning targets. Procedures for identifying pupils for whom English is an additional language are good. This enables the school to quickly put an appropriate curriculum and learning support in place.

Child protection procedures are fully in place, and are well understood and followed by staff. Poor attendance is consistently followed up through first day contact with parents and carers if pupils are absent and there is rigorous monitoring of punctuality. This has contributed substantially to the improvement in attendance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher is providing outstanding leadership for the school and he is very well supported by the deputy headteacher.

The headteacher works with energy and determination to help the school move forward. He enjoys the enthusiastic support of the leadership team, school staff and pupils, who share his sense of pride, urgency and purpose. The leadership team has implemented a rigorous programme of lesson observations and these are having a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The chair of governors provides committed leadership so that governance is satisfactory overall. While the governor's role is developing well, the limited information provided in recent years has prevented them from fully holding the school to account.

The school consulted widely as part of its self-evaluation and included parents, governors, staff and pupils. As a result it knows its strengths and weaknesses well. It has produced a good school improvement plan, but this could be enhanced by showing clearly how the impact of planned changes on standards will be measured. Because the school knows what it needs to do better it has a good capacity to continue to improve. Resources, including staff and the newly upgraded computer suite, are well used so that the school provides good value for money. Issues from the last inspection have been effectively addressed resulting in good progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

I must begin by thanking you for making us feel so very welcome when we inspected your school. We listened carefully to what you had to say and as a result we feel we got to know the school well. Many of you told us how proud you are of your school and we agree that you have a school to be proud of.

Northbury Junior is a good school, and lots of things about it are outstanding. We think your behaviour is outstanding; you were always polite, friendly and helpful. You get on really well with each other and with the adults who work at the school. We think the way the school helps you learn to live healthy lives and helps you develop as people is excellent. We also think the quality of teaching you receive is consistently good and sometimes it is outstanding. This good teaching helps you learn well and make good progress. Lots of you told us you feel the school listens to your views and you gave us many examples of this, such as the buying of new playground equipment and benches. You also told us you thought the school was improving, and had improved a lot over the last year. You thought this was because the leadership of the school was good. We agree with you and think the headteacher is outstanding.

As well as identifying things the school does well inspection also suggests ways we think your school could be even better. We have suggested the school looks again at its plans for improvement to see how they will affect standards. We think teachers mark your books well and are very encouraging. It would be useful if marking more often told you how you can improve your work. We also think that those of you who are more able could be doing better. We have asked the school to consider how it can help make sure you do. Because the headteacher and others in the school know it well, and because you all work so hard, we are confident it will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett

Her Majesty's Inspector