



Viking Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101908
Local Authority Ealing
Inspection number 286216
Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Schenk HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Radcliffe Way
School category	Community		Yeading Lane
Age range of pupils	3–11		Northolt UB5 6HW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02088453186
Number on roll (school)	214	Fax number	02088451289
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Amanda Hancock
		Headteacher	Mrs Susan Townson
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves a deprived area of West London. Three fifths of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) and this high proportion is three and a half times the national figure, putting the school into the top 4% of schools for FSM. Nearly three quarters of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, about four and a half times the national figure. They come from many different cultural backgrounds and no single group predominates. Around half the pupils speak English as an additional language, about five and a half times the national figure. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is just above the national figure. There is a high turnover of pupils, more so than in 95% of schools nationally. The school is part of a small Education Action Zone, associated with an Excellence in Cities cluster.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an improving school where the overall effectiveness is satisfactory, with some good features. The strong commitment to equality of opportunity results in a high degree of racial harmony with pupils from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds working and playing together well, and respecting and valuing their differences. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour and attitudes which are now good. There are other good aspects of the pupils' personal development and well-being, for example they know how to be healthy and they make a positive contribution to the community.

There has also been some improvement in the pupils' achievement, which is now satisfactory, but there has not been a sufficiently sharp focus on the need to raise standards, which remain low. Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are very low; the provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some good features and the standards attained at the end of the Foundation Stage have recently risen, making the pupils' progress satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment in English and mathematics of those pupils who have been at the school for at least four years is only a little below average and demonstrates that some pupils make good progress from low starting points.

The school's self-evaluation is too optimistic and the data from tests and assessments have not been used with sufficient rigour to highlight the need to raise standards and to identify ways in which this can be done. There are now good procedures in place for tracking the progress of individual pupils, who know their targets, particularly in literacy and mathematics, but there is still inconsistency in the way these targets are set, recorded and assessed.

There is some good teaching in the school, supported by effective marking that tells the pupils how they can improve. However, this good practice is not sufficiently widespread: there is too much variation in the quality of teaching and marking and in the expectations that teachers have of their pupils. The leadership and management are satisfactory and there are systems in place for regular monitoring and evaluation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve self-evaluation in order to focus sharply on raising standards and achievement.
- Share good practice and raise expectations to make the teaching and marking consistently good.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are low, but achievement is improving and is now satisfactory. When pupils enter the nursery at around the age of three many do not have the skills expected for their age. In addition, around half of them are at an early stage in learning English. They make satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage and the standards

attained by the end of Reception have risen considerably this year. Nevertheless, there are a number of pupils who do not reach all of their early learning goals. During Key Stage 1, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress, but by the end of Year 2 their attainments are still well below average: they were exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics in 2005, though there was a modest improvement in 2006. The picture is much the same in Key Stage 2. Again, overall progress is satisfactory, though there is too much variation between year groups. The standards attained in 2005 were exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science but there was some improvement in all three subjects in 2006. The task faced by the school is made more difficult by the very high turnover of pupils. Of the 29 pupils in Year 6 last year, only 18 had been at the school throughout Key Stage 2. The attainment of these pupils in English and mathematics is significantly higher than the overall attainment of the class. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make steady progress as a result of careful identification of their needs and the effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features, in particular the pupils' pride in their own cultural heritage and respect for different cultures. This leads to a high degree of racial harmony, a considerable achievement in the very diverse and rapidly changing area that the school serves. One Year 6 pupil confidently asserted: 'There is no racism here'. A class-mate realistically corrected her, saying 'Well, there is a little, but it gets dealt with straightaway.'

Behaviour has improved and is now good, as a result of the effective systems to reward good behaviour and to support pupils who find it difficult to control their emotions. The improvement in behaviour is reflected in the considerable decrease in exclusions: there has been only one fixed term exclusion so far this academic year. Attendance has also improved and is now around average. Again, this is a result of good strategies, including the employment of an attendance officer. The pupils' enjoyment of their learning is evident in the positive attitudes they show in lessons.

Pupils know how to be healthy. They are aware of the importance of a balanced diet and of regular exercise. They are enthusiastic about the range of sporting activities now available in clubs which include table tennis, tae kwon do, street dance and football. They take on responsibilities willingly. For example, Year 6 pupils give support and friendship at playtimes to younger pupils who need it. The members of the school council are proud of the contribution they have made to improvements in the playground. Pupils make a contribution to the wider community, for example through fund raising events. Their preparation for their future economic well-being is helped by their involvement in mini- enterprise schemes such as the Year 6 Viking Cafand;eacute; and links with a village in India. However, this aspect of their personal development is no more than satisfactory because their basic skills are not yet high enough.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching is rarely less than satisfactory and sometimes good. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of their pupils' ability to think for themselves, tasks are well matched to the different levels of attainment within the class and the lessons proceed at a good pace. In many lessons that are satisfactory overall there are weaknesses in the use of time. Too much time is spent on whole class teaching with the result that there is not enough time for group activities matched to different levels. The school has identified the need to improve the match of work so that all pupils are given suitable levels of challenge. The planning format expects teachers to identify different tasks for pupils at three or four levels of attainment, but in practice this is not always done. In a small proportion of lessons, the teaching is inadequate when pupils are not given enough to do and as a result make little or no progress.

The quality of marking is too variable. There are examples of good marking in which pupils are given encouragement and clear indications of how to improve their work further. In some classes, however, while encouragement and praise are given, there are not enough suggestions to move the pupils on to the next stage in their learning. In one class, the marking is poor and too negative in tone.

The pupils have good attitudes and are eager to learn. Even when the teaching is no more than satisfactory they stay on task and co-operate together well. The teaching assistants give good support to individuals and small groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is planned using national materials to ensure coverage of requirements. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and some links are made between subjects, for example using a scientific starting point to develop literacy skills. A healthy life style is encouraged by the emphasis given to physical education and through the good range of sporting activities available in lunch-time and after-school clubs. These clubs, which include musical as well as sporting activities, a girls' computer club and a homework club, are well attended and much enjoyed by the pupils. One teacher has recently begun to teach some German to older pupils. The school needs to consult its partner secondary schools before deciding how to take forward this pilot project.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and all members of staff share a commitment to ensuring that pupils are safe and healthy. There is an effective induction programme for pupils joining the school which includes peer support

and helps pupils to feel valued as part of their new community. There are clear child protection procedures. The designated child protection officer is fully trained and carefully monitors vulnerable pupils.

Academic guidance is helped by the system that has been put in place for setting targets and tracking the pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. However, there is too much variation in the way that individual teachers use the system and in the way in which targets are set out, made known to pupils and regularly reviewed. As a result, the tracking procedures have yet to have a significant impact on raising standards.

The support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Progress is carefully monitored through focused individual education plans. There are effective links with outside agencies, including educational psychologists and speech and language therapists, though the limited amount of support available makes it difficult to meet the needs of all the pupils. The decision to use the school's own resources to employ a counsellor for one day a week gives valuable additional support, particularly for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Those who have been excluded in the past have been well supported back into school by working with parents honestly yet sensitively. Satisfactory support is given in lessons to pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, the support needs to be better co-ordinated. There is not enough assessment and tracking of progress to target the limited additional resources efficiently.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head teacher, well supported by the two assistant heads, has created a positive ethos in which all members of staff share a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities. The composition of the staff reflects the richly diverse community and differences are respected and celebrated. There have been significant improvements to the fabric and environment of the school and to the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. There have also been some improvements to standards and achievement. The improvements already made demonstrate that the school has some capacity for further improvement. However, the school's self-evaluation is over-optimistic and as a result the vital message, that standards and achievement need to be raised further, has not been put across with sufficient urgency. While the school improvement plan correctly identifies specific areas for development, it now needs to be more closely linked with a revised, accurate and honest self-evaluation.

There are systems for regular monitoring and evaluation by the senior leadership team and by teachers with responsibilities for phases or subjects, who provide reports to the head. Governors are aware of the need to raise standards and to become more actively involved so that they can call the school to account when necessary. There is a commitment to recruiting governors from minority ethnic groups so that the governing body can reflect the local community more fully.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
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	4
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
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	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 for your welcome when we visited your school. We are particularly grateful to the members of the school council and to the Year 6 pupils who met us at lunch-time and told us about the school.

We think that you behave well in lessons and around the school and that you have good attitudes and are keen to learn. We are particularly impressed by the way you take pride in who you are, know about and respect cultures other than your own and value and celebrate your differences.

We are pleased that you are making progress in your learning and that the standards reached in your school have improved a little recently. But we think that you could and should be doing even better. We have talked to your head teacher and some of the other teachers and asked them to do everything they can to help you to make better progress so that you reach higher standards. We think that some of the teaching that you are getting is good and that you are being given the right level of challenge. We like the way that some of the marking in your books helps you to know what you need to do next to improve. We would like all of the teaching and all of the marking to be as good as this.

You can help your teachers to do the things we have asked them to by continuing to behave well, to work hard and to help each other.

With best wishes

Christopher Schenk

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools