

Eldon Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101988
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	286235
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Maria Coles

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Puncher
Headteacher	Mr P Bruffell
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	Eldon Road Edmonton London N9 8LG
Telephone number	020 8807 5230
Fax number	020 8887 0338

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Eldon is a very large infant school with a Nursery, organised into 5 classes in each year group. It serves a culturally and socially diverse community in an area of high deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is almost three times the national average. Most of the pupils are from different minority ethnic groups, including refugees and asylum seekers. A high proportion of the pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. High proportions of pupils join or leave the school during the course of each year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement, teaching and learning and the leadership of middle managers and governors.

Staffing problems have hindered improvements since the last inspection. Since the appointment of a new deputy head teacher and the assistant headteacher, the senior headship team has a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and now has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Many initiatives are new, but they are already beginning to have an impact on improving achievement. However, other teachers with leadership responsibilities do not have the necessary skills to support improvements. Governance is inadequate because governors do not hold the school to account well enough.

By the age of seven, the standards reached by pupils are exceptionally low and their academic achievement is inadequate. The large numbers of pupils at early stages of learning English as an additional language do not make enough progress, because provision to help them is inadequate. In the classes with the youngest pupils, in Nursery and Reception, there is not enough emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills. The impact of this persists in Years 1 and 2, where progress in English and mathematics continues to be slow.

Good relationships have been developed with parents who hold positive views of the school. One parent said, 'I feel happy that my child is enjoying a very peaceful atmosphere and environment among the other children who show good and moral behaviour'. Pastoral care is good and every effort is made to support and involve families and carers in school life. As a result, pupils are happy to come to school, behave well and form good relationships with adults and their peers.

Teaching is inadequate because it is not consistently good enough in all year groups to tackle the backlog of underachievement. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, so that lessons are not pitched at a high enough level to improve standards. Marking and assessment are not pitched at the right level for pupils and do not help teachers to understand what to teach next, or help pupils to improve.

Attendance is now satisfactory due to measures the school has taken to improve it. As a result, pupils miss less school time than they did in the past.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement throughout the school and raise standards through the use of assessment to inform teachers' planning
- Improve teaching by raising teachers' expectations, placing more emphasis on basic skills in the Foundation Stage, and improving the quality and use of assessments in planning and teaching.
- Ensure that teachers with leadership responsibilities acquire the necessary skills to be more effective, and that governors hold the school to account.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are exceptionally low and achievement is inadequate. Children enter the school with exceptionally low levels of attainment. National data shows that overall attainment at the end of Year 2 has been significantly below average for the last four years. The school has set challenging targets for the past two years but it has not met them and is unlikely to do so this year. Target setting and the introduction of a rigorous assessment system to track performance are only in their initial stages, having been introduced in January. However, already their impact is being demonstrated in some improvements in mathematics and reading.

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. The progress children make from their significantly low starting points is only satisfactory in two areas of the Early Years curriculum; physical and creative development. Their progress in basic skills is well below that expected nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and show delightful enthusiasm for their work. One pupil said 'It's a happy sort of place. They help you to learn and you know more things.' Pupils show respect for each other and so they work and play well together. They carry out responsibilities confidently and the School Council is proud of the work they do for the school.

Behaviour overall is good but some inattentive behaviour occurs where pupils are not involved in interesting work. Attendance has steadily improved over recent years and is satisfactory because the school works hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly and punctually. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and enjoy opportunities for exercise and games and after-school clubs.

Social, moral and cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures and know that people have different faiths and lifestyles from theirs. Visitors, such as Balinese dancers and local and national political figures, enhance the experiences of pupils. However, pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and science are inadequate and do not lay a firm foundation for them to lead economically secure lives in future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate overall so pupils do not make enough progress in English, mathematics and science. Teaching ranges from good to inadequate. Most of the lessons are taught to a satisfactory standard but only a few are taught well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and generally pupils behave well. In the better lessons, teachers use questioning strategies effectively, ensure the work is suitably matched to pupils' needs and, as a result, they make good progress. However, in a number of lessons the teaching is mundane and the level of challenge is incorrect. Teachers' expectations are too low and some teachers do not assess pupils' work accurately against national criteria, in order to plan the next steps.

In these lessons, the pace of learning slows and behaviour deteriorates. Pupils are not given clear targets in English and mathematics. Teaching assistants often work satisfactorily with groups or with individuals with learning difficulties and disabilities, but they are not always used to best effect while the whole class is being taught.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The leadership team recognise that the curriculum is inadequate because it is not sufficiently well matched to the needs of learners. Plans are in place to strengthen cross-curricular links and to build on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Teachers are not consistently delivering a creative and exciting curriculum to promote enjoyment and interest in learning.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is inadequate because children's basic skills in literacy and numeracy are not developed sufficiently and not enough use is made of the outdoor environment to promote the children's physical and social skills. In Years 1 and 2, basic skills are not being consolidated through other subjects and this results in inadequate achievement. The curriculum to support pupils' personal development is satisfactory and enables them to gain a good understanding of healthy living, enjoy learning and behave well. The curriculum is enhanced effectively by a good range of clubs and activities. Visits and visitors to the school help to bring learning to life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Although personal support and care for pupils are very strong, the weaknesses in academic guidance mean that care, guidance and support are only satisfactory. The school provides a very welcoming and caring haven for all. Staff know pupils well and assign a high priority to their care. Rigorous procedures for child protection and all aspects of health and safety are in place. Sensitive and well organised induction procedures ensure that new pupils settle into school well. Close supportive links are fostered with parents. The care provided by the school is extended through the good use of a range of agencies.

Tracking systems for monitoring pupils' attainment have only recently been introduced. This area of the school's work has been carefully reviewed and is being developed. Marking in pupils' books is not evaluative enough and targets, when they are set, are too general to make it very clear what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management, although inadequate overall, are improving. The newly appointed headship team is demonstrating satisfactory leadership with the potential to move this school forward. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are working together well to provide united and professional leadership, something that the headteacher has identified has been lacking in the past. As a result of their work, the school has clearer sense of direction and has called its staff to account through a new performance management system.

The school has established many new and rigorous systems for monitoring provision and tracking pupils' progress, but the impact of these on achievement is not sharp enough because it is so new. The positive impact of initiatives is already beginning to demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis. The school's middle management tier, provided by the subject leaders, is not good enough at present. They lack the subject knowledge and expertise to lead and improve standards in their subjects. There are some emerging pockets of good practice, for example in the leadership provided in English.

Governance is inadequate. Although it has been supportive, it has not sufficiently challenged nor called the school to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
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	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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	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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eldon Infant School, London, N9 8LG

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. There are lots of things we like about your school. We really like the way that you all work and play together so well. We were very impressed with how polite and friendly you were and agree with your parents that Eldon School is a happy place. We are pleased that so many of you are trying to get to school every day and be on time. This means that your school attendance rate has improved and is now the same as other schools. This is really important because your teachers cannot help you to learn if you do not come to school every day.

However, we think that there are a number of things that your school needs to do to improve. Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher know this and have already got clear plans to make this happen. To help you to do better in your work we would like your teachers to make sure that the work they give you is not too hard and not too easy but helps you to improve all the time. We would like this to happen in all classes, even in Nursery and Reception, especially in learning to speak English, in reading and writing, and in mathematics.

We would also like the teachers who are in charge of subjects and year groups to improve their skills in doing this so that they can help you to learn more.

Your school is not doing as well as it should, and we have given it a notice to improve which means inspectors will visit again to check if things are improving.

Yours Sincerely

Maria Coles Lead Inspector