

Latchmere Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102571
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	286426
Inspection date	10 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Benefield
Headteacher	Mrs V Al-Jawad
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2001
School address	Latchmere Road Kingston Upon Thames KT2 5TT
Telephone number	020 8546 7181
Fax number	020 8549 9182

Age group	7-11
Inspection date	10 July 2007
Inspection number	286426

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Latchmere Junior is a larger than average serving a diverse community. Almost all its pupils come up from Latchmere Infant School but there are small numbers of children from Ministry of Defence families who may arrive and leave at other than the usual times. About a third of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds - this is above the national average. The proportion of children with English as an additional language is also above average. The school has won several national awards, including Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold and Investors in People. The school is currently undergoing a public consultation with regard to amalgamation with Latchmere Infant School. Since October 2006, the Headteacher of the junior school and a deputy from each of the schools have formed one interim leadership team for both schools. This inspection took place at the same time as that in Latchmere Infant School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in all respects. At the heart of its success lies a commitment towards educating the whole child both academically and emotionally. It succeeds overwhelmingly in both these aims. As one parent said, 'My children can't wait to get to school in the morning.' Pupils feel safe, welcomed and cared for. As a result, attendance is excellent and behaviour is exemplary.

The environment for pupils is outstanding. The well-maintained accommodation and playground provide pupils with very good opportunities to learn and play. Playground facilities, for example, include a conservation area, an 'enchanted wood', a vegetable garden and a wildlife animal hide. The Blue Room is characteristic of the Latchmere ethos. It provides an excellent facility for personal, social and health education (PSHE) activities as well as a lunchtime relaxation club for staff and pupils. Pupils describe how its soft carpets, soothing music, calming blue walls and a magnificent sunset mural, help them to learn how to cope with their worries, gain in self-confidence and be ready to learn. As one pupil explained, 'Just a simple 30 seconds can help you calm down.'

Standards are significantly above average and achievement is excellent. Teaching and learning are excellent. Pupils experience a very good range of interesting activities to help them learn, including interactive white boards and regular workshops with well-known poets and authors. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She works in close partnership with the excellent deputy head to ensure that pupils develop a deep love of learning. As a result of the focus on the whole child, pupils have very positive attitudes and thoroughly enjoy all the school has to offer through its richly creative curriculum that encourages them first and foremost to think for themselves.

The interim leadership team has made an excellent start towards amalgamating the two schools without letting standards slip and this remains a key priority for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

Although there are no substantial weaknesses, the inspector agrees with the school that in order to build on its success it should concentrate on:

- Ensuring a smooth and successful amalgamation with the infant school whilst retaining the excellent education it currently provides.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards by Year 6 are high and achievement is excellent. Almost all pupils gain at least the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and a very high proportion exceed the standards expected for their age in all three subjects. Pupils do particularly well in English, where standards are exceptional. The school has worked very hard to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting which has been a relative weakness for several years. One particular strategy is noteworthy. This is a Year 4 horror story written by the teacher in weekly chapters and used to practise handwriting. Pupils have reacted with great enthusiasm and standards in this area are improving. They also achieve extremely high standards in other areas of the curriculum, such as art and music. The art work displayed around the school is impressive. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as those with English as an additional language,

make excellent progress and the school makes sure that these pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life. Higher-attaining pupils make rapid strides in their learning. The school is well on its way to meeting its challenging targets for next year and gives its pupils a first-rate preparation for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils are very welcoming to visitors and have impeccable manners. They value one another, think about life and have an excellent appreciation of music and art. They welcome opportunities to learn about the wider world. As one parent commented, 'I believe that Latchmere reflects and embraces the multicultural society in which we live.' Pupils show a confidence and maturity far beyond their age. They contribute in many ways to the school and wider community. Members of the school council say very firmly that their views are listened to. The Friendship Squad and the peer mediators play an important part in making sure that break times are sociable occasions where pupils of all backgrounds and ages play happily together. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that any bullying is dealt with well by adults. They can explain which foods are good for you and enjoy the tasty school meals at lunchtime. They particularly enjoy their mid-morning flapjack snack and understand that oats provide slow-release energy to 'help to keep us going all morning'. Pupils participate enthusiastically in sports and show an excellent understanding of why it is important to take part in them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils learn exceptionally well because the quality of teaching is consistently high. Relationships are very good and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and good humour. The day begins and ends on a lovely note, with teachers shaking hands with every member of their class. Expectations of work and behaviour are high. As a result, pupils work hard and take pride in their achievements. There is a strong focus in every lesson on helping pupils to think for themselves, listen carefully to others and reflect on their decisions and actions. The quality of teachers' expertise is excellent. The school has several teachers whose advanced skills have been nationally accredited and, in addition, it has several specialist teachers who support other staff. As a result, pupils are constantly challenged in their learning. Marking is regular and consistent and gives very good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Teaching assistants support pupils very well. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, play a full part in lessons and other activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it provides pupils with a rich education that focuses on the whole child. PHSE is central to the ethos of the school and is one of its key strengths. As a result, pupils show very high levels of emotional maturity and self-esteem. French is taught to all pupils and the most able have additional opportunities to learn Spanish or German. The

school makes excellent use of curricular links with several local secondary schools. The school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including excellent musical and sporting opportunities. A group of children sang in 'Queen of Spades' at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, for example. The residential trips, especially those to France and Spain, develop pupils' independence and boost their self-esteem. As one pupil commented, 'Some of us had never been away from home before, a few people got homesick at first but they got over it very quickly because it was so much fun.' The school provides an excellent range of activities for gifted and talented pupils, including, for example, a Magical Science Club and sleepovers at the Science Museum. As one parent commented, 'I'm very happy with the efforts made to stimulate high-achieving children.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support, enabling pupils to make exceptional progress in their personal development. It is clear that every child matters at Latchmere. Relationships are excellent at all levels. Adults make a real effort to get to know the pupils and their families. Parents appreciate this and are very supportive of the school. Pupils are helped to settle into the school quickly, including those from Ministry of Defence families who may join the school during the school year. Child protection procedures are secure. The school runs a successful breakfast club where pupils can enjoy a nutritious meal.

Very good use is made of assessment to identify learners who need extra help or who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and support or extra challenges are provided. They know how well they are doing and have clear targets to aim for. They are becoming more actively involved in assessing their own work or that of their classmates.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because there is a clear focus on educating the whole child. As a result, academic and personal standards are high. The headteacher and the senior team provide calm and inspirational leadership which unites the staff and ensures that everyone plays an integral part in moving the school forward. The school knows itself very well and this is evident in the high quality of its self-evaluation. There are excellent systems to provide rigorous monitoring of all that goes on. The contribution of the governors is outstanding. They are very actively involved in the work of the school and challenge senior managers. The school has successfully tackled the issue for improvement from the last inspection and communication with parents has improved significantly. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel that their views are taken into account. There is a very strong commitment towards making every child feel valued. Staff, parents and pupils are rightly proud of this aspect of school life. The school is keen to improve even further and has made an impressive start towards bringing the infant and junior schools together. The success of the interim leadership period provides a clear indication of the school's excellent capacity to succeed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

19 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Latchmere Junior School, Kingston Upon Thames, KT2 5TT

I was really delighted to visit your school recently. Thank you very much for the warm welcome I received. Thank you all for taking part in the inspection of your school. Special thanks to the pupils who talked to me, showed me their work and those who took me around the school. Well done!

You all told me how special your school is and I completely agree. It is outstanding. You make excellent progress because you work very hard and because your teachers are excellent. All the staff look after you very well and make sure you are happy and safe. I think you are very lucky to have excellent facilities such as the Blue Room that help you to cope with any worries you may have and teach you useful skills like massage and meditation. You have an excellent headteacher who is helped by the rest of the staff and governors to make sure that your school always tries to improve. I was very impressed by how well you all behave and how sensible and friendly you are. The behaviour I saw was excellent.

There is very little that needs to change in your school, but I have agreed with your headteacher that everyone now needs to make sure that the joining together of your school with Latchmere Infant School goes as smoothly as possible.

I hope you all keep on enjoying school and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lynn Bappa Additional Inspector