



# Liberty School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 102656  
**Local Authority** Merton  
**Inspection number** 286451  
**Inspection dates** 29–30 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Brian Evans

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Western Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Mitcham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		CR4 3EB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8648 1450
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	441	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8646 4215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sandra Peddy
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Chris King
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Liberty is a primary school of well above average size. It is situated in an area of very high social and economic disadvantage. As a Full Service Extended (FSE) school it offers many links to the community and help for parents. Children enter the school with well below average basic skills. Around half of pupils are White British and the remainder are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above average with over 30 languages represented, the most common being Urdu and Bengali. More pupils than usual are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and with statements of special educational need are above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Liberty Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The headteacher led the school very professionally through a difficult period of reorganisation from middle to primary. His vision for a school which successfully raises pupils' self-esteem is largely realised in practice. The school is an integral part of its local community and it is clear that every child matters. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal and social skills; they respond well to opportunities provided by the school to develop these skills through a wide range of activities. Parents praise the quality of provision. One parent stated 'My daughter enjoys going to school. She always talks about the activities she does - I don't know what she would do without them'.

Children are given a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They settle in quickly and make good progress because teaching is good and learning activities are planned to meet the needs of individual children. Many achieve the expected standards by the time they start Year 1. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties make good progress. Pupils achieve satisfactorily between Years 1 and 6. In 2006 standards in reading and mathematics were below average and writing skills were well below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of basic skills but there is still much to do to raise standards in writing. There is good practice to build on, for example, a Year 6 girl, showing increasing awareness of how to improve, stated 'I am focusing on persuasive writing because I wasn't backing up my arguments well.' Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Typically classroom management and relationships are good and pupils are eager to learn. However, learning is satisfactory because the range of strategies used by the teachers is relatively narrow. Many lessons are planned to cater for the range of attainment in the class but in a few the tasks set by the teacher are not well enough matched to the pupils' needs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school has accurately identified its main priorities as improving pupils' learning and their writing skills. However, action plans for improving standards do not yet focus coherently on these priorities and so pupils generally make satisfactory rather than good progress. Given its recent track record and its good response to the key issues in the last inspection, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Day to day organisation of the school is efficient and pupils feel very safe and secure in the school. Governors are very supportive and committed but do not always challenge the school enough on the standards that pupils achieve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that strategies to improve the quality of learning are clearly identified in action plans at all levels.
- Improve standards of writing throughout the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory overall. The good quality of the care the pupils receive and their own good attitudes to learning contribute to this as well. Recent improvements in monitoring pupils' progress and identifying those who are in danger of underachieving also contribute to their achievement. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below expectations for children of this age. Progress is good through the Foundation Stage because of the strong focus on language and personal development. Attainment, however, remains below expectations, especially in communication, language and literacy. By the end of Years 2 standards are below average in reading and mathematics and well below in writing. By the end of Year 6 standards are below average but results in 2006 improved in English and mathematics. Some pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 exceeded their targets in 2006 in English, mathematics and science. However targets in writing are still too low for a significant number of pupils in all years. Pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress because of the well targeted support they receive in class and in withdrawal sessions.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that they feel safe and happy. They particularly like taking part in clubs. As one pupil said, 'I like all of the school.' Attendance is satisfactory and has improved due to the school's strong efforts to help pupils attend regularly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn respect and gain a positive self image. As a result they behave well. The school council make an effective contribution to pupils' strong sense of community. Pupils demonstrate a willingness to take on responsibilities and all contribute to making the school a pleasant and happy place to live. From the Foundation Stage upwards, children learn how to co-operate with each other. Pupils have a good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle. At break times they are active and regular involvement in sport boosts their fitness, self-esteem, confidence and teamwork skills. Pupils are confident that adults in the school will listen to their concerns. They are pleased to have the support of the learning mentor who helps them to overcome personal problems that affect their learning. Many pupils satisfactorily develop the skills they need for later life through opportunities to work collaboratively and through learning in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory although there is good practice in a number of lessons. It is good in Foundation Stage classes because teachers track children's learning well. Generally, classroom management skills and pupils' behaviour are good because discipline is firm, fair and consistent. The school accurately perceives these aspects of teaching to be good. However, the quality of learning, as judged by samples of work, tests and assessment in Years 1–6, is broadly satisfactory. The school recognises that accelerating the pace of pupils' learning, raising teachers' expectations of how much pupils can achieve and broadening the range of learning strategies are priorities that will bring further improvements. More frequent active learning has been introduced and is an increasing feature of lessons. Examples include a Year 1 class learning measuring skills through making 'play dough' and older, more able pupils studying a Shakespeare play and following this up with a visit to the Globe Theatre. Pupils are keen to learn. New resources such as interactive whiteboards help to enliven teaching. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers, make an important contribution to learning, and effectively support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The overall curriculum is satisfactory with very good enrichment activities to enhance the experiences of the pupils. Many pupils attend the wide range of after school clubs. The extended day contributes very well to these activities and to the personal development of the pupils. A number of themes and subject days are used appropriately to broaden pupils' experiences, for example, mathematics and science days and black history celebrations. Long term plans for the curriculum in each year do not identify the key skills that will be covered across subjects. This does not help pupils to build on their skills and knowledge across subjects, especially in writing. There has been good progress in developing the provision for black boys and pupils with learning difficulties, with good interventions to help these pupils. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good as many opportunities are taken to enhance the language and the personal development of the children.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Extensive risk assessments ensure that pupils are taught in a safe and welcoming environment. There are many initiatives which help pupils to understand how to stay safe and healthy. Child protection procedures are rigorous and any concerns are quickly followed up. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and effectively

supported. The school works closely with outside agencies to evaluate pupils' needs and provide support and guidance to pupils and staff. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported effectively. Assessment procedures are secure. Monitoring of pupils' progress has been strengthened with the introduction of new tracking arrangements in 2005. Target groups are now established in each class and the termly assessment of pupils identifies whether they are making appropriate progress in English, mathematics and science.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory with several good aspects. The headteacher ensures that there is very good attention given to the way pupils are cared for during the school day and through the extended day. This contributes very well to the development of pupils' self-confidence. As a result, they enjoy their experience in school and parents have positive attitudes towards the school. The school has identified key priorities for improving the achievement of the pupils in its self-evaluation. However, the school's improvement plans do not satisfactorily reflect these priorities and translate them into clear actions that can raise standards across the school, for example, in writing across the school. There is regular and systematic monitoring of classroom performance but it is not rigorous enough. Records of observations do not identify how the teaching contributes to the learning of pupils with differing prior attainment.

Governors visit the school regularly and are linked with classes so that they are supportive of and committed to the school. However, they do not ask enough challenging questions to hold the school to account for the standards it achieves. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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 making us feel so welcome when we visited you recently. We were very impressed by how attractive Liberty School looked and how friendly, helpful and polite you all were. It made our visit a very pleasant one. Yours is a satisfactory school which is making every effort to improve. The things that we particularly liked about your school were:

- Staff take good care of you and help you to feel happy at school.
- You enjoy coming to school and join in well with all the activities, clubs and visits the school offers.
- You get on well with each other and behave well.
- The school works well with the people in the community to give you extra opportunities and support those who need help.

These are things we asked the school, with your help, to do to make it even better.

- Find even more ways to help you as individuals to enjoy learning in all your subjects and make the best progress you can.
- Help you all to become better at writing.

Thank you again and best wishes for the future to all of you.

Yours sincerely

Brian EvansLead inspector