



Star Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102746
Local Authority Newham
Inspection number 286479
Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Williams

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Star Lane
School category	Community		Canning Town
Age range of pupils	3–11		London E16 4NH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7476 5336
Number on roll (school)	557	Fax number	020 7473 6522
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Cleon Wilson
		Headteacher	Ms Marion Rosen
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a significantly disadvantaged area and a well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The large majority are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, most of whom are at the early stages of learning English. The largest groups represented are those of White British, Black African and Bangladeshi heritage. More pupils than usual have been identified with learning difficulties. An above average proportion join or leave the school at other than the usual times. The school has Investors in People and Healthy School status and the Artmark Gold award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. A combination of good teaching, learning, leadership and management ensures that pupils, whatever their background, gender or ability, make good progress and achieve well. Most parents are very supportive of the school. As one commented, 'The school would do anything for its pupils.'

The dynamic headteacher and senior staff form a very effective team and are clearly focused on promoting pupils' academic and personal development. They have successfully created a calm and supportive environment in which all pupils are valued and are given good care and guidance. Excellent links with outside agencies enhance this provision. The support given to those identified as vulnerable is outstanding. Pupils appreciate the help they get. They behave well, work hard and have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils' enjoyment is enhanced by a broad and interesting curriculum that includes first-rate provision for the arts.

Pupils join the school with attainment that is well below average. In addition, many pupils have little English when they first start school. From these starting points, pupils achieve well to reach standards that, overall, are below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6, particularly as they become more proficient and confident in their use of English. Pupils make very good progress in English and, as a result, standards are broadly average. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and this contributes to the good progress made by these children.

A wide range of strategies have been introduced to improve pupils' literacy. These have successfully raised standards and accelerated pupils' progress. Despite work to raise standards in mathematics, the 2006 national test results for pupils in Year 6 were unexpectedly low. A thorough and rapid review of the way the subject is taught revealed weaknesses that are being tackled resolutely. The teaching of mathematical calculations has been revised, teachers' knowledge and confidence has improved, more time has been devoted to teaching the subject and a much closer check is now kept on pupils' mathematical progress. This information is used well to identify those who are underachieving and a good range of strategies have been introduced to help them catch up. As a result of this work, pupils are now learning well in mathematics, although the school is right in its view that standards could still be higher. Similarly, pupils' performance in science, whilst reflecting satisfactory progress, has lagged behind the very good progress they make in English and there are appropriate plans to deal with this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science, particularly amongst higher attainers.
- Increase further the amount of good teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' communication, language and mathematical skills are particularly weak when they first start school. Good teaching and imaginative use of the excellent Foundation Stage facilities mean that most children reach the levels expected at the end of Reception in personal, social and physical development, but they are below the expected levels in other areas. In recent years, national test results for pupils in Years 2 and 6 have been significantly below average. Taking account of pupils' starting points, the Year 6 results have, in the main, represented a good level of achievement. This is particularly so in English, where performance has been close to the national average. The results in 2006 were mixed. The gradual decline in Year 2 was halted. In Year 6, English results improved still further and a very good proportion achieved the higher Level 5. Mathematics results were unexpectedly low but considerable improvements in provision mean that pupils' progress is now good. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times are enabled to make the same progress as their peers. There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils of different background, ability or gender although, occasionally, the progress of more able pupils slows when too little is expected of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They enjoy coming to school and are proud of their work. The school works closely with parents to promote good attendance. The rate, although still just below average, is improving and the school is continuing in its efforts. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. Most behave well and relationships with adults and other pupils are positive. They feel very safe and say that rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils celebrate a wide range of religious festivals and show respect for, and value, the beliefs of others. As one pupil commented, 'Children come from all over the world to our school.' Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and they thoroughly enjoy physical activities, especially the 'sports week.' Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The school council is influential and they are proud of their contribution to instigating, for example, the 'friendship tree' in the playground. Pupils' good progress in the basic skills prepares them well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers plan well for pupils' differing needs although, occasionally, tasks for more able pupils could

be harder. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work and, in some lessons, astute questioning helps teachers to check on their understanding. In a few lessons, whilst otherwise satisfactory, progress slows when pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to motivate pupils and older pupils' learning is enhanced by the regular use of laptops. Assessments are thorough and accurate. Improved assessment in mathematics is contributing to pupils' accelerating progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and usually provide good information to help them to improve their work, but this is not consistent in all classes. Teaching assistants are well trained and play an integral part in contributing to pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum is rich, varied and stimulates pupils to do well. Good links between subjects makes learning interesting and relevant. Planning for literacy is thorough and is used imaginatively to meet pupils' differing needs. This has contributed to pupils' very good progress in English. Weaknesses in planning in mathematics are being tackled systematically. There are good opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects. Provision for the arts is outstanding. Staff and outside visitors, such as the school's writer in residence, add interest and challenge. A wide range of well-attended clubs, including sporting activities, add significantly to pupils' achievement and enjoyment. The teaching of French is well established. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes very seriously its responsibility to help pupils through the barriers many of them have to overcome before they can learn. Teachers keep a close check on pupils' personal and academic progress. They set challenging targets and ensure that pupils know what they should aim for next in their learning. An excellent range of support groups, many assisted by outside specialist agencies, is used to establish a safe, secure environment and increase pupils' confidence. This benefits all pupils but, in particular, great care is taken of those who are potentially vulnerable. Pupils who are new to learning English make good progress because they are very well supported. The identification of pupils with learning difficulties is improving and the school is continuing its work in this area. There is now a more consistent approach across the school and parents are involved at an earlier stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has forged a highly effective team with other senior staff. Together, they ensure that every effort is taken to enable pupils to learn in a safe, supportive

and attractive environment. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the adults in school. All staff, and the effective governing body, share the headteacher's commitment to raising standards. Weaknesses in the last inspection have been tackled successfully. A close check is kept on teaching and learning. A careful analysis of test and other assessment data ensures that the leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and know what needs to improve. Recent test results in mathematics were unexpectedly low, but the leaders are ensuring that pupils now make good progress, while rightly acknowledging that standards in mathematics and science could be higher. The school leaders' successes show that they have good capacity to achieve further improvement.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 the friendly way you welcomed us to your school for the recent inspection. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with us to let us know your views. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you in lessons. You have given us lots of helpful information.

Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and feel that you are doing well. We agree. Yours is a good school and your headteacher, teachers and the other adults work hard to make sure you are safe, well looked after and able to do your best. You do your bit, too, and we were pleased to see how hard you try in lessons and how well you behave. You are now attending more regularly and it is very important that this continues to improve. Your work will get better if you come to school every day. Many of you were learning English for the first time when you first joined the school. We are pleased with the way you are helped to settle in quickly.

You and your teachers have worked very hard to make your work better in English and you are doing very well. Your teachers are going to make sure that you do just as well in mathematics and science. We think there are times when some of you could try harder work, so they are going to make sure that you get it. We were pleased to see lots of good lessons when we visited. Your headteacher and other staff are going to make sure that even more of your lessons are good ones, so that you can learn even better.

You and your parents are right to be proud of your school and we know you will want to work with the staff to make it even better. We wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Williams

Lead inspector