

Selwyn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102754
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	286482
Inspection date	1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Lovett HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Keeling
Headteacher	Mrs Emma Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	Cecil Road London E13 0LX
Telephone number	020 8471 6173
Fax number	020 8552 7609

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most similar schools and is situated in an area of considerable economic disadvantage. The school has recently retained 'Healthy School' status. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice that found nationally. A very high proportion of pupils speak a first language other than English. The school hosts the borough's provision for deaf pupils. The headteacher was appointed from January 2007.

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 a satisfactory and improving school. The appointment of the new headteacher has provided a real catalyst for school improvement and has rapidly accelerated a process which had already begun. Part of the reason the school has improved such a lot in a short period of time is that self evaluation has been thorough and rigorous. As a result the senior leadership team knows what the school does well and what needs to be improved. The role of middle managers such as subject leaders is less well developed and the school recognises that this is an area for improvement if standards are to rise. The school makes outstanding provision for deaf pupils. This enables them to achieve well and to make outstanding progress in their personal development.

By the time pupils leave standards are about average and pupils make satisfactory progress in their time in the school. However, standards have been falling over the past few years, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This is in part because many children enter the Nursery with English skills which are lower than one would expect. But it is also because there has not been sufficient focus on providing opportunities for pupils to speak, listen and write. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have made satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. During their time in school deaf pupils make good academic progress because work is well matched to their individual learning needs.

Pupils are enthusiastic about school, particularly the positive changes they have seen over the last few months. They speak with enthusiasm about better behaviour and attitudes to learning and more enjoyable lessons. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and, because they enjoy school, attendance and punctuality are good. One parent commented 'Selwyn is a special place', and this sentiment is shared by the overwhelming majority of pupils and parents.

Teaching is satisfactory across the school, with strengths in the provision for the more able and deaf pupils. However, monitoring by the school and local authority indicates that the quality of teaching is improving. This evaluation is supported by what inspectors saw. The quality of teaching and learning is now being rigorously monitored and useful feedback provided, which enables teachers to improve their practice. The school is rightly focussed on securing more consistently good or better teaching.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders and middle managers.
- Ensure that all teaching is as good as the best so that pupils make better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Many children enter the school with much lower than average levels of knowledge and skills. During the Foundation Stage children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development, in knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development and satisfactory progress overall.

In Years 1 and 2 standards have been broadly average but fell sharply in 2006. Indications are that in 2007 standards will rise, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Standards attained by pupils in the end of Year 6 national tests have fallen over the last five years and are broadly average.

The progress pupils make during their time in the school is satisfactory although, in 2006, pupils in Year 6 did not do as well as in previous years. Early indications are that new strategies for tracking pupils' achievement, linked to improved teaching and target setting are resulting in pupils' making better progress. The school's Gifted and Talented provision has had a positive impact on the achievement of more able pupils with most reaching the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests.

Deaf pupils achieve well. Other pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress, although those with autistic spectrum disorders and complex learning difficulties do not always do as well as they should. Pupils of minority ethnic heritage, including those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They play and work together very well. Pupils get on well with each other and speak very positively about the impact of the new 'Five C's' strategy for encouraging good behaviour and positive relationships. They are polite, friendly and welcoming. There is a good focus on healthy lifestyles through the promotion of good eating habits, a wide range of after school sports and activities and a range of workshops and presentations on health issues by visitors such as the School Nurse and Community Police Officer.

The school's focus on developing collaborative working and good relationships, together with strong links with local businesses such as Tate and Lyle and Deutsche Bank has raised pupils' aspirations and prepares them well for their future lives.

Deaf pupils are included exceptionally well in the life of the school and make outstanding progress in their personal development. The consistent use of signing and interpretation throughout the school means that they are fully integrated and grow in confidence as they move through the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

All teaching seen was at least satisfactory, much was good and some outstanding. However, the quality of teaching, while improving, is uneven over time and results in pupils making satisfactory progress. This is because systems for tracking how well pupils were doing were not sufficiently robust.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The recent introduction of the structured teaching of phonics is intended to raise standards across the curriculum but it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative. The use of assessment information is improving so that in lessons work is appropriately matched to what pupils need to learn. In some lessons this differentiation of pupils' learning is outstanding and includes a range of teaching strategies

such as role play, carefully focused questioning and supported and independent learning. The marking of pupils' work is good and is useful in telling pupils how well they are doing and how to improve their work further.

The teaching of deaf pupils is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers of the deaf and communicators have high expectations, regularly check pupils' understanding and provide varied activities that engage pupils as active learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory; recent improvements to the outdoor area have increased the opportunities for children. Children would benefit from more opportunities to write and greater promotion of communication, language and literacy skills.

In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad and balanced and is well planned to teach the basic skills. The school has particular strengths in the creative curriculum. Art work is of a high standard and is displayed to very good effect and the school is developing pupils' awareness of music well, they sing with real enjoyment. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is outstanding, with strengths in thinking skills and collaborative working. For example, in a project on angles, pupils 'discovered' Pythagoras' Theorem for themselves. The school is widely recognised as an exemplar of good practice and has received national recognition through Teachers TV, The English Speaking Union and its links with Cambridge University Debating Society.

The curriculum is matched exceptionally well to the academic and personal needs of deaf pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for. They say they are respected and valued. The School Council is very positive about the supportive nature of the school's ethos and councillors say they feel safe and secure. Checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school are appropriately robust. The academic guidance pupils receive is good. They know what their targets are and how they can improve their work.

Within mainstream classes, intensive support by specialist teachers of the deaf, communicators and teaching assistants enables them to make good progress and to undertake similar work to their peers. They make outstanding progress in signing, in developing their speaking and listening and in acquiring basic skills within highly-focused withdrawal sessions.

The school has good links with a range of outside agencies and uses these well in its support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The use of a learning mentor and the shared resource of a family worker enhance the support the school provides for pupils and its work with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The newly appointed headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team are providing very good leadership. They have already had an impact on improving the quality of education pupils receive. They have reinvigorated the whole school

community so that there is real enthusiasm, optimism and a determination to improve. Improvements in the school's ethos and commitment to improvement have been noted by staff, parents and pupils. Pupils are particularly impressed with a more positive learning culture and better relationships between pupils. Parents have also noticed improvements, with one writing; 'the current headteacher and her team have achieved so much... there are lots of positive changes happening'. The school rightly identifies improving the effectiveness of subject leaders and middle managers as an area for improvement.

Provision for deaf pupils is coordinated exceptionally well by a very experienced manager and teamwork is strong. Leadership of provision for gifted and talented pupils is also well led and coordinated. Leadership and management of provision for pupils who are acquiring English as an additional language are good.

The governing body is satisfactory. In the past they have not had sufficiently detailed knowledge about the performance of the school to enable them to provide robust challenge. This is now changing. They are being provided with detailed information about how well the school is doing and are better placed to hold it to account.

Because the school knows itself well, the learning environment is more positive and the quality of teaching and learning is improving the school has a good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ 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	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	2
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

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?	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.

Annex A

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	2
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

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Selwyn Primary School, Cecil Road, London, E13 0LX

Thank you for making my colleague and I so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We thought you were polite, friendly and confident. You told us about the many positive features of your school. In particular you told us about the ways you think your school is improving. The things you told us were really important in helping us know your school better.

We think you do as well as pupils in most other schools. The deaf pupils in your school receive lots of support and do well. You behave well in classes and listen to each other and to adults with care and respect. You say you enjoy school and that your lessons are getting better. We could see this enjoyment when we visited classes but we can also see it in the fact that attendance is good and you get to school on time.

In the past the school hasn't kept a close enough watch on how well you were doing and so didn't always set you targets which helped you do the best you can. This has now changed and you told us you like the way targets are being set and monitored. Target setting should help raise standards further, and we are asking the school to make improving standards a priority. We are also asking them to make sure all teaching is as good as it can be and this will help as well.

You were very clear about how the school had improved recently, and we agree wholeheartedly! The headteacher knows that one of the next things to do is to make sure those teachers who are responsible for subjects and other areas of the school are given the time and training to get to know their roles really well and can do their bit to help the school improve.

Good luck for the rest of the term. I look forward to hearing about how well the school is doing in the coming years.

Yours sincerely

R P Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools