



Arnhem Wharf Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130352
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 293635
Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	1 Arnhem Place
School category	Community		Isle of Dogs
Age range of pupils	3–11		London E14 3RP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7515 4310
Number on roll (school)	436	Fax number	020 7538 4344
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Thomas Mossiman
		Headteacher	Ms Sara Haynes
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006	Inspection number 293635
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average primary school is steadily growing in numbers. Two thirds of pupils are eligible for free school meals, an exceptionally high figure, which reflects the high levels of social deprivation in the area the school serves. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. More than four out of five pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being Bangladeshi. Two thirds of pupils have a first language other than English and there are thirty different languages spoken in the school. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school outside normal times is very high. There has also been a high turnover of staff including senior leaders. The school is part of an education action zone, belongs to a network of local schools and has close links with a nearby investment bank.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This improving school has some good features and provides a satisfactory level of education. As one parent commented, 'It has a lot going for it!' The headteacher and deputy head have made decisive changes in the past eighteen months that have improved behaviour and attendance, raised standards and united staff. They give clear direction to the school and their effective leadership means that pupils are now learning better and making faster progress. Achievement is satisfactory from very low starting points. In the past academic year many pupils achieved well although standards are below average by the end of Year 6. The school has rightly focused on raising achievement in English and mathematics, with notable success. The same rigorous approach has not yet been applied to science, and standards here are well below average because teachers' subject knowledge is less secure.

Pupils behave well and their personal development and well being are good. This is because all staff work very hard to create an atmosphere where pupils are included and valued, and because managers have put in place clear structures and procedures to deal with behaviour and attendance. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and provide a lively mix of exciting activities to interest and engage them.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but has improved considerably under the new leadership team. Teaching is now good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have responded well to the improvements, and enjoy school more, shown by much improved attendance and their enthusiastic responses. One child said, 'I like the way the staff help us to learn'. In some classes, pupils of different abilities are given the same work to do, which slows progress. Marking is inconsistent, so that pupils are not clear how to improve.

Leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well because there is an effective programme of monitoring, and strategic planning is good. The leadership team is well supported by an enthusiastic and highly skilled governing body, which draws its members from local corporate businesses as well as the community. The headteacher and deputy head are ably supported by the assistant heads, but the work of phase leaders and subject coordinators is at an early stage of development. The school saw a period of uncertainty following its last inspection, but has made good progress under its present leadership, who have given it increased stability and raised morale. Their many achievements mean that the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that work is planned to suit all abilities. Improve teachers' subject knowledge in science.
- Ensure that the marking policy is applied consistently across the school.
- Actively involve middle managers in monitoring and evaluating the work in their areas so that they take a leading role in raising achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with very low skills and abilities, especially in language and communication and social development. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching and an effective curriculum, although standards are slightly below average by the end of Year 2. Few pupils attain the higher levels because of their very low starting points. Historically, achievement dipped between Years 3 and 5, but in the past eighteen months changes to the way pupils are grouped and the introduction of a new English curriculum have reversed this trend. Most pupils now meet or exceed challenging targets and achievement is at least satisfactory in every year group. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6 and well below in science. Teachers rely too heavily upon worksheets to cover the science curriculum, and this limits the progress some pupils make. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's values underpin all its work and are reinforced in assemblies and in displays. Pupils' attendance is improving as a result of the many steps the school is taking. They clearly enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. This year there have been no exclusions, a sign that behaviour has improved markedly and is now good in and around the school. Pupils mix amicably and play well together. As one child quoted from a poem 'A circle is round - it has no end, that's how long I'm going to be your friend'. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy. They get plenty of exercise. They say they feel safe and are not troubled by bullying or rough play. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community, for example in working with parents in the school's community garden. They learn from the good role models of the many volunteers from a local investment bank and this raises their aspirations. They make satisfactory progress in their basic skills in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage have a good start to school life because of good teaching and learning. Teachers help them to develop their language skills and give them many opportunities to become more independent. Teaching is also good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils progress well. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are satisfactory but with some good features, particularly in English and mathematics in Year 6. New

technology is used well to support learning. Teachers make clear what is to be learned. Their questioning skills are good and this stimulates and motivates the pupils' interest and thirst for knowledge. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are included well in lessons. There are, however, pockets of inadequate teaching in Years 3–5. This is where the pace is too slow. Work does not always challenge the pupils because the planning is not matched to the needs of the individual pupil or differing ability groups rigorously enough. Because pupils' work is not marked consistently, pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve. The teaching of science has weaknesses because in some cases teachers' subject knowledge is not strong enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is enriched significantly by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, ICT, arts and musical activities. A well-supported Year 6 residential visit enables pupils to learn new skills such as archery, rock-climbing and shelter building. There is a strong focus on the creative curriculum. One pupil said, 'when I do art I concentrate well' while absorbed in her painting. Their work results in exciting and stimulating wall displays across the school. For example, high quality tiles made by Year 5 pupils of observational drawings of flowers enhance the school environment significantly. These aspects strongly support pupils' enjoyment of learning and promote their personal development through social skills. ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning in different subjects. The science curriculum relies too heavily on commercial worksheets and does not give pupils enough scope to extend their own learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. It enables pupils to develop their academic and personal skills through stimulating and relevant learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel well cared for. One said, 'Teachers are always there for me if I'm upset'. Pupil progress is tracked carefully to highlight underachievement, with termly reviews between senior leaders and class teachers. Booster groups and changes to teaching groups have resulted in higher standards. A system where pupils record how well they feel they have understood learning at the end of each lesson is proving effective. The school recognises the need to consistently develop individual targets for all pupils in addition to those who are learning English or who have learning difficulties. Pupils' particular needs are identified promptly and the right care and support are put in place, involving outside agencies and parents well. Detailed and thorough records of these pupils are kept.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy head form a successful team. They have used their good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses to make changes that have improved the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. For example, they identified that mixed age sets were confusing for pupils and did not hold teachers sufficiently accountable. All pupils are now taught in mixed ability classes of similar ages, and their progress is monitored very closely. Leaders have a good strategic view of the school, and planning for improvement is effective. The assistant heads lead their respective areas well and have a positive influence on the work of the school. Phase leaders and subject coordinators are mainly newly appointed, and are not yet having a great impact on standards and achievement. Currently, much of the analysis of data and drive for improvement comes from senior leaders. The governing body makes good use of individual governors' expertise to support the school. Under its new chairman it has become more efficient and effective and now holds the school to account well.

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.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	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	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	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	3

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?	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?	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	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 very much for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed visiting and meeting you all. We think that your school provides a satisfactory level of education and is getting better all the time. These are some of the things that are good about your school.

- You behave well and are kind to one another.
- You enjoy your lessons and find the work interesting.
- You feel safe and have an adult to turn to if you are worried.
- The youngest children and those in Years 1 and 2 make good progress.
- The school cares for you well and helps you to improve your work.
- You have lots of exciting things to do in clubs and on visits.
- The headteacher and deputy head lead the school well.

We think that standards could be higher in English, mathematics and science. We know you enjoy your science lessons, but we feel you could do better. At the moment you have a lot of worksheets to fill in and we think that you could do your work in other ways as well. Marking does not always show you how you can improve, so we think your teachers should all agree to mark your books in the same way. We know they are interested to find out how well you think you are doing at school. Sometimes the work is too easy or too difficult for you, but we want the teachers to make sure that it is just right. The headteacher and deputy head know exactly what's going on. We believe some of the other teachers, especially those who are in charge of different subjects or groups of classes, could become more involved in finding out about how well you are doing as well.

Many thanks again for your help. We send you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. N. Butt, Lead Inspector.