



Alexandra Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130358
Local Authority Haringey
Inspection number 293636
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Western Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		N22 6UH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02088889771
Number on roll (school)	216	Fax number	02088929776
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Joel Brookfield
		Headteacher	Ms Johanna Hall
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006	Inspection number 293636
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average and serves an area of high deprivation. The vast majority of pupils come from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds. Over 68% of pupils have English as an additional language which is more than in the great majority of schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than usually found. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties is just above average but the percentage with a statement of educational need is below average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is also high. Children start school with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Alexandra Primary is a good school, where pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. Parents overwhelmingly support the school and say that they are pleased with the progress their children make and that any concerns are handled sensitively and efficiently.

Pupils' attainment overall is currently below average but standards are improving and, given their starting points, achievement is good. Mathematics paints a particularly encouraging picture and shows pupils reaching average standards and making excellent progress. They also reach average levels in information and communication technology (ICT). These skills prepare pupils appropriately for future learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they make good progress which is a fine start to their education.

Pupils develop good personal skills. They behave extremely well and show mature and caring attitudes to each other. During paired and group work, pupils were observed motivating and helping each other so that they produced work of which they were justly proud. Pupils are given ample opportunity to develop skills which contribute to the community. The 'gardening club' has had a major impact on improving the school grounds and pupils are very pleased with their striking displays of plants and flowers. Other clubs and activities are keenly supported and the contribution of the school council is valued by other pupils. Attendance has greatly improved since the last inspection because of the school's continued vigilance, but still remains below average.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. Improvements in teaching have led to improved standards and achievement. Teachers' relationships with their pupils are good so they are keen to learn. Good use is made of skilled teaching assistants, particularly in helping pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Effective use is made of the school's very good assessment procedures to support this. However, the opportunity to use and apply literacy skills to produce writing of high quality in other subjects, apart from English, is too infrequent. Approaches to the teaching of important investigative skills are inconsistent and are less well developed in science than in mathematics.

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good and help them to grow into responsible young people. Pupils feel safe, relationships are good and they know where they can turn to if they need support.

The school is successful because it is well led. The headteacher gives clear direction to the work of the school and is very effective in monitoring what it does. She keeps the school 'on course' by watching the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement and changing those actions as necessary. Capacity to improve is therefore good. In the main, she is ably supported by her senior and middle managers. The governing body do a good job but are currently under-manned. Much has been done to improve the learning environment for pupils, but there is still much to do. Parts of the playground surface are unsafe and some areas of the school are in need of serious refurbishment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, particularly writing, and science to match those attained in mathematics.
- Take immediate action to improve the learning environment for the pupils and to make it safe.
- Ensure that the improvement in attendance is maintained.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment overall is currently below average but standards are improving. The results of pupils in the end of Year 2 assessments are getting better year-on-year. The preliminary results for 2006 show significant improvement overall and are approaching national averages in mathematics. In 2005, pupils in Year 6 reached average standards in mathematics and the percentage achieving the highest level was above average. However, although standards are still below average in English and science they are improving at a greater rate than nationally. The school is rightly continuing to focus its efforts on raising standards in writing.

Pupils make good progress including those for whom English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with exceptionally low standards particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress because of good teaching and receive a positive start to their education. A rigorous system for tracking the individual progress of all pupils identifies those where additional support will be most beneficial. This ensures that pupils continue to achieve as well as they can throughout the rest of their time in the school. Progress in mathematics is excellent and in 2005 Alexandra Primary was in the top 1% of schools nationally when compared to other similar schools.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Although many pupils start school with under-developed skills, they enjoy school, take their education seriously and mature into confident learners. Their behaviour is excellent at all times, they are courteous and friendly and exclusions are rare. Attendance, although below average, is markedly improved due to the school's persistent efforts.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils speak confidently about the beliefs people hold in our society and have good understanding of right and wrong. They have respect for each other and enjoy the wide range of cultural opportunities provided.

For their age, pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe and know the benefits of a good diet and exercise. Many pupils boost their fitness and self-esteem through the many sporting activities on offer. Most know how to take greater

responsibility for their own safety and participate in a wide range of community activities. Good financial and team working skills, satisfactory literacy, numeracy and computer skills contribute well to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school considers teaching to be satisfactory, but it is actually good. This is because teaching is rigorously monitored which ensures consistent quality throughout the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning because teachers set them interesting work which is 'good fun'. For example, Year 2 participated enthusiastically in a word bingo game. Teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding and to make them think more carefully. As a result pupils develop the ability to think for themselves and work more independently. All these elements, combined with the pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour, helps them to make good progress. Teaching assistants are skilled and offer good support which contributes to pupils' achievement. The school's focus on improving writing has brought about some improvement but opportunities for developing writing through other subjects are missed. There has also been a focus on the achievement of higher attaining pupils. This has had some impact, but some teachers do not always plan sufficiently for this group of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum helps pupils' to achieve well and enjoy school to the full. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy although there are insufficient opportunities to extend and develop writing across all subjects. Also, in science, the school does not have a coherent plan for the systematic development of investigative skills. The computer suites are used well and as a result pupils ICT skills are in line with those found nationally. The well-balanced, rich and lively curriculum in the Foundation Stage promotes effective learning and develops children's personal skills well. Good opportunities are provided to help pupils to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle. Pupils relish the many clubs provided, visits and visitors to the school who help enhance the curriculum and broaden their interests and horizons. One girl said 'seeing the Nutcracker ballet was a joy'. Pupils speak positively about the half a day a week which is set aside to provide opportunities for gardening, music, dance, sewing and other enrichment activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Every child matters in this school. Good care, especially pastoral care, support and guidance help pupils feel safe, do well and look forward to the future. One Year 6 pupil said 'I like the way I am being helped to get ready for secondary school'. Pupils

new to the school are quickly made to feel at home. Child protection procedures are rigorous as are those for health and safety.

Pupils say 'Our teachers want us to do well and give us the help and support we need'. Good tracking of pupils' progress ensures teachers pitch learning at the right level and ensure pupils get the support they need. This works particularly well for pupils who are new to the school, might be falling behind or need more specialist support. Pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language are very well supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have created a happy school in which pupils can flourish and give of their best. Standards, teaching, behaviour and attendance have all improved since the last inspection. This is down to the very clear direction set by the headteacher, a well-formulated development plan, good monitoring of teaching and accurate tracking of pupils' progress. Most members of the senior management team provide a strong drive for improvement but responsibilities are not evenly distributed. On the whole, subject leadership is strong. However, this good practice is not consistently used to raise standards of leadership in the remaining weaker areas. Current priorities include the need to implement further strategies for strengthening writing. Teachers use display well to brighten their classrooms but the accommodation still needs improving particularly pupils' toilets, the playground and decoration in parts of the school. The influential governing body discharges its responsibilities well and has had a major impact in bringing about the conditions for 'all pupils to succeed'. Parents are pleased with the school and say 'any problems are sorted out quickly'.

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?	2
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?	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	1
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

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 very much for the warm welcome you gave to us this week when we visited your school. We were very impressed by how polite and helpful you were. We talked to some of you and were pleased with how much you enjoy coming to your school and all the clubs and activities you are involved with. We were particularly surprised to learn that it was members of the gardening club that had planted and cared for the beautiful flowers in the school grounds! What a credit to the school you are! You do lots of good work in the community too, such as raising money for charity and your school council has a good influence on what happens in your playground.

Alexandra Primary is a good school and it has got a lot better than when it was inspected before. This is because your headteacher and her governors have worked very hard to make things better for you. She knows just what to do next because she keeps a close eye on everything that happens in your school. The teachers in your school do a good job and teach you well. You help them to do this because you are so very well behaved.

Even in a good school like yours, there are a few things which could be even better. We have asked your headteacher and your teachers to help you do better in your writing and in science. We have asked them to give you more chances to practise writing in different subjects. We hope you will try hard to improve your writing this year. In science we would like your teachers to help you investigate things for yourself and do your own experiments. Some parts of your school are very nice, but you told us that some other parts, like the toilets and some other areas need to be repaired and made to look as good as the best parts. We have asked your headteacher and the governors to do this for you. Finally, we are pleased with the way most of you come to school every day, but there are still some of you who don't come to school as often as you should. We have asked the school to keep a close eye on this.

We wish you all the success you deserve!

Glyn Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector