

Britannia Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131613
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	293795
Inspection dates	22–23 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	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev P Marsh
Headteacher	Mrs L Bingham
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001
School address	Westwood Road West Silvertown London E16 2AW
Telephone number	020 7511 5412
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is almost eight years old and was built to serve a new housing estate on the margins of the rejuvenated London Docklands. The school community is culturally diverse, with about thirty home languages spoken by pupils. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and levels of economic disadvantage are much higher than average. The estate the school serves has an oddly isolated feel, hemmed in as it is on all sides by the Royal Victoria Dock and the busy A1020 Silvertown Way. About half of all teachers are in their first year of teaching.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Following the appointment of the current headteacher and deputy headteacher and the introduction of the new senior management team the school has made significant progress. It has moved from a position where standards were very low and pupils made inadequate progress to one where standards are satisfactory overall, and sometimes good. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding so that while many children enter the Foundation Stage with very low skill levels, most now leave having achieved the standards one would expect for their age. Overall, the progress pupils make while they are in the school is outstanding. This is because teaching is consistently good and the curriculum is very well matched to pupils' learning needs. As a result of these improvements this is an outstanding school with an excellent capacity to improve further.

Teaching is good because there are effective strategies to ensure pupils know what they are expected to learn and how their progress will be measured. These strategies are consistently applied across all classes. In most lessons teaching assistants are used well to work with individuals and groups of pupils but in some they are not sufficiently involved during whole class sessions. The school has developed a particular strength in teaching phonic skills which helps children to relate letters to sounds and encourages them to develop their early skills in reading and writing and improves their confidence.

The school has developed a creative curriculum very effectively to enrich pupils' learning and provide a very powerful source of motivation. Pupils say they really enjoy school and love their lessons. As one commented; 'I like it all, it's brilliant!' This view is enthusiastically endorsed by parents, almost all of whom are very supportive and say their children enjoy school. Pupils are very well cared for and supported.

The school's partnership with others, particularly the vibrant business community of Docklands is outstanding. These links have contributed significantly to developing the physical environment and enriching the curriculum. An example is the project for a sculpture depicting dockers, which is intended to stand on the quayside outside the ExCel Centre. The art work connected to this is exceptional and would grace any gallery in London!

Middle managers know about how well individual pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Some are less secure about the use of data to track the performance of groups of pupils and how well the school is doing compared with others nationally. Governors know the school well and contribute effectively to monitoring its performance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the skills of some middle managers so that they have a better understanding of systems for tracking the achievement of groups of pupils and the use of comparative data.
- Ensure teaching assistants are able to play an active part in all parts of all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When they enter the school many children have skill levels which are very low. This is particularly true in respect of their language and social skills. Because work is very well matched to their learning needs and teaching is very good they make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage. For pupils in Year 1, standards are in line with expectations in most areas of learning.

Those pupils currently in Year 2 started from a much lower baseline. In the 2006 national assessments standards in Year 2 were below average. However, this represents real progress when compared with the previous three years when standards were exceptionally low. Indications are that standards have continued to rise and that in the 2007 national assessments they are likely to be about average, with pupils doing particularly well in mathematics.

In Years 3 to 6 standards have risen rapidly over the last three years. In the end of Year 6 tests in 2006, pupils made outstanding progress and standards overall were well above average. Standards in mathematics were very high. This was the first time in five years that standards had not been well below average. The school's tracking data suggests that in the 2007 national tests the attainment of pupils in Year 6 will be broadly average. Considering the sustained improvements across the school and the very low starting points of most pupils, this represents outstanding progress. The school has recently made its targets for pupils in Year 6 much more ambitious, and looks well placed to achieve these. All groups of pupils achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Because of many significant strengths in the care, guidance and support pupils receive, most aspects of their personal development and well-being are improving rapidly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Pupils are polite and learn much from the many cultures and traditions represented in the school. When responding to the world around them, pupils show sensitivity and concern.

They respond positively to the many exciting and enjoyable opportunities available. As a result of this, and the good teaching, children really enjoy school. Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their above average attendance and good punctuality, which has improved significantly as a result of the school's determined efforts. It is also reflected in learners' good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils' awareness of healthy living is outstanding. They learn about healthy eating, and make sensible choices at lunchtime. Pupils participate in a wide range of physical and extra-curricular activities.

Pupils make a positive contribution to wider school life and the community which extends their understanding of good citizenship. The school council plays a full role in school life and members speak enthusiastically about their many achievements, for example the building of a pond and painting of fences in order to improve the school environment. Older pupils enjoy the chance to care for the school's small flock of chickens.

As a result of their good progress whilst in school, their good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and the many opportunities for team work and working with others, pupils are well-prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons typically start with a clear introduction and a shared learning objective so that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. Teachers consistently share the success criteria for the lesson and this ensures that pupils understand how their progress is to be assessed. Lessons have good pace and are practical so that pupils are engaged, motivated and attentive. Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution,

but in some lessons they are not used sufficiently well and do not contribute as much to pupils' learning as they could. Questioning is used very well to help pupils clarify their thinking. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very effective, particularly in developing children's speaking and listening skills and is beginning to develop their confidence in writing. Throughout the school, the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is very good and enables them to reach challenging targets. Similarly, well-focused support for those in the early stages of learning English is helping them make very good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which meets pupils' needs exceptionally well. The clear focus on creativity and practical learning contributes immensely to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Children in the Foundation Stage learn very well as a result of very good first-hand experiences, both in and outdoors. Throughout the school, the curriculum is broad and balanced and very well planned. The emphasis on the creative curriculum is evident in the art work and excellent displays in classes and around the school. Music, dance and singing are also significant strengths. Provision for ICT is effective and successfully incorporated throughout the curriculum.

A wide range of educational visits and visitors add to the richness of learning. Many pupils participate in a wide variety of before and after-school activities, including music, sport, dance and drama, which further enrich their experience. The school's commitment to developing environmental awareness through the curriculum has been recognised by the award of a Silver Eco Award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All pupils are treated as individuals and have excellent relationships with adults and with each other. A strength is the work done to remove the barriers to learning that exist for many children. This has been achieved through the careful use of a wide range of strategies such as working as part of a nurture group or with a Learning Mentor. Programmes are carefully tailored to suit the needs of individual pupils and carefully monitored by a key worker who ensures that there is effective communication about the progress they make. Pupils who are learning English are very well supported and as a result are enthusiastic learners. The school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently and reward systems are effective; this has led to improved behaviour in school. The school makes very good use of outside agencies to support children and their families. Induction for children into Nursery and Reception is thoughtfully planned and provides a very positive start to school life. Child protection procedures and arrangements to ensure health and safety are well established and result in pupils feeling safe. All adults working in the school are subject to the required checks and safeguards. The progress of individual pupils is tracked closely and pupils are clear about their personal academic targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. They provide outstanding leadership. They have worked with sustained energy and commitment with the single aim of making this a better school for pupils to live and work in. As a result, standards have risen to their highest in five years and pupils say they really enjoy coming to school because of all the interesting work they do.

Middle managers have a good understanding of the progress being made by individual pupils and are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. For some, their understanding of standards and progress for groups of pupils and their skill in the interpretation of school and national data is less well developed. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for pupils learning English is good. Very effective leadership in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make outstanding progress.

The chair of governors provides committed and increasingly well informed leadership and governance is good. Governors have good links with the school and monitor progress against the school improvement plan with care. They were involved in reviewing the school's self evaluation form but less involved in its writing. They are now becoming more closely involved with self evaluation through helping to complete the school profile.

Teachers in their first year of teaching are very well supported and this support, coupled with consistent expectations, has contributed to the good teaching seen.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

7 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Britannia Village Primary School, London, E16 2AW

Thank you for making the other inspectors and me so welcome when we visited your school during Arts Week. We think you are polite, friendly and welcoming. You are rightly proud of your school and eager to tell us about all the wonderful things you do. You told us you thought your school was 'brilliant', and we are delighted to agree that yours is an outstanding school. The headteacher and senior teachers give excellent leadership and teaching is good. The curriculum is very exciting and teachers work hard to plan lots of different things for you to learn. We think you are very well cared for and you told us that behaviour has improved, (we think it's now good), and that you feel safe. We are very impressed at how neat and tidy the school buildings are and how bright and lively the classrooms and corridors are. Much of the art work on display is excellent and we were also impressed with your music, singing and dancing. However, it's also important to be able to read and write well and we were pleased to see how much your basic skills are improving. Perhaps all of these strengths are why you enjoy school so much! We were very pleased to see that attendance has improved and you almost all get to school in good time to begin lessons.

Although yours is an excellent school it is working hard to get even better. We have made two suggestions which we think will help. We would like to see your very good teaching assistants help you learn as much as you can all the time. We have also asked the school to make sure that more of your teachers know about how well you are doing compared with other schools.

I hope you have a lovely end to the term and a great summer!

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools