

Betty Layward Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131706
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	293822
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms C Stagg
Headteacher	Ms A Kriel
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001
School address	Clissold Road London N16 9EX
Telephone number	020 7249 7111
Fax number	020 7249 7444

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school that was new in 2000 and has expanded, from being an Infant and Nursery school at the last inspection, to a full two-form-entry primary as pupils have worked their way through the school. About a half of the pupils are of White British origin, with the rest coming from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. About a quarter of pupils are learning English as an additional language. Few pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. Pupils' social circumstances cover a very wide range but are broadly average overall. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above average, particularly in older classes. There has been a high turnover of teachers in the last two years.

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 with significant outstanding features. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching, good academic guidance and an outstanding curriculum. Standards are above average, and have risen over the last year at each key stage. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the consistent and positive approach of staff, which leads to excellent provision for pastoral care. The school is a thriving and harmonious multi-racial community where all pupils, regardless of their background or ability, get on very well with each other. One parent wrote that 'Betty Layward is a happy school where children respect their peers and their teachers.' Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the exciting and interesting things they get to do. Their behaviour is excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teaching is good but is variable between classes. There has been a high turnover of staff in recent years, and many teachers are relatively inexperienced. This has been a particular issue in the Foundation Stage in the last year, where overall progress and provision are satisfactory. There have been weaknesses in the range of practical experiences and in assessment procedures. These are improving under the clear direction of the deputy headteacher, but there is still some way to go. Throughout the school, classes are managed well and a calm working ethos is maintained. Teachers explain things well and often use interactive white boards to clarify things for pupils. In some lessons, work is carefully matched to the needs of different pupils. In others, pupils have the same work, so that it is too hard for some, or too easy for others. Pupils who struggle with their work generally do well because they get effective help from extra adults in the class. The school has a large number of skilled support staff but, in some lessons, full use is not made of their skills, particularly if they sit and watch the teacher for long periods. The curriculum is outstanding, with excellent use made of specialist teaching in music and physical education (PE). Spanish is taught throughout the school and there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits.

Good leadership and management support pupils' good progress and their excellent personal development. A strong emphasis on including all pupils in the life of the school is very successful. Self-evaluation is outstanding, with rigorous monitoring of teaching and clear advice to staff to help them improve their practice. This has helped maintain good teaching despite many staff changes. A close track is kept on individual pupils' progress and the school uses a good range of intervention strategies to help those who fall behind. Parents are generally very supportive of the school and appreciate how well their children are taught and cared for. The school is keen to consult and work with parents and is implementing a number of innovative strategies to widen the range of parents who are involved. However, the school is not always successful in conveying this message, and a small but significant minority of parents feel that the school does not take notice of their views or communicate with them effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage.
- Make teaching more consistent by refining teachers' use of assessment to help them plan work for pupils of different abilities, and make better use of support staff.
- Consult further with parents and work with them so that they all feel that their views are valued.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children start in the school with standards broadly in line with those expected for their age. They currently make satisfactory progress across the Nursery and Reception classes, settling in happily. Standards when they start Year 1 are in line with those found nationally. Good progress in subsequent years means standards are above average at the ends of Years 2 and 6. Standards by the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics have been above average for some years. A successful focus last year on improving writing standards means these too are now above average. Standards overall have also gone up at the end of Year 6. The school exceeded its challenging targets at each key stage.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in the light of their starting points because of the careful tracking of their needs and intervention to support them. The small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are given good support, and do well. Music is a strength of the school, with pupils in Year 6 demonstrating good skills in performing as an ensemble and a thoughtful appreciation of different styles of music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Excellent relationships mean that boys and girls from all backgrounds play and work together very well. They are friendly, thoughtful and considerate to each other, sharing equipment amicably. They have extremely good collaborative skills, illustrated when pupils in Year 5 built elaborate paper sculptures for the 'Prom in the Park'. There is a wonderful buzz to be found in assemblies, music-making and in playground games. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, work hard and participate enthusiastically in extra-curricular opportunities. They develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in class and around the school and pupils feel valued, well cared for and safe. This is exemplified by their excellent behaviour at the start of each day, when the school's very good arrangements provide a calm, orderly start to learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy living and eating, and particularly enjoy physical activities. They participate enthusiastically in raising funds for a range of charities. They are very well prepared socially and academically for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. A calm, purposeful atmosphere characterises lessons so that pupils work hard and are keen to do well. Positive relationships with staff and each other, and teachers' clear, consistent expectations of work and behaviour support this. Teachers make good use of practical activities to enthuse pupils, many of whom agreed learning was 'fun'. Good use is made of teachers' specific subject expertise to raise standards and engender particular enthusiasm, in music and Spanish, for example. There are inconsistencies in teaching, with lessons ranging from satisfactory to outstanding. Consistency is a particular issue for teachers who are relatively inexperienced. However, good support and feedback from colleagues is promoting improvement in their practice. The very skilled support staff make a significant contribution to learning, particularly of pupils who struggle with their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

One parent wrote that 'The opportunities for learning, achievement, challenge, self development, social development, fun and enjoyment are immense.' These are reflected in the school's excellent website. The curriculum is wide-ranging and meets the needs of the vast majority of pupils. All pupils learn Spanish which, like music and physical education, are taught by specialist teachers. Innovative use of local facilities has enriched the PE syllabus. Depending on their year group, pupils learn tennis, ice skating, sailing, kayaking and dance. Pupils' learning and personal development are well supported by trips, visitors and residential experiences. There are strong community links which are exemplified by the 'Prom in the Park' project, an annual performing arts event involving local schools. Pupils speak highly of the wide variety of after-school activities available to them. In addition to a range of sports, these include music, art, drama, dance and French. There is strong encouragement to learn a musical instrument.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is outstanding care, guidance and support given to all the pupils. Academic and personal development is very carefully monitored. This is a caring, inclusive school which gives high priority to the welfare of the pupils. Pupils benefit from a very effective pastoral support. Systems for safeguarding pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place and pupils say that they feel safe and secure. The staff promote a strong ethos of fairness and respect, and provide good role models. Pupils have targets for improvement that are increasingly used to hold discussions about what they need to do next. Progress is monitored against individual targets and good additional support is given if pupils look like falling behind. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress through regular meetings, newsletters and annual reports. The school has plans to extend this further next year. The school links very well with other agencies to provide very good care and support for vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Very strong leadership from the headteacher and her senior team set clear direction for the school. They have worked hard to deal with extensive staffing changes and inadequacies in the building. One parent wrote, 'They lead and manage in an outstanding way.' They are well supported by middle managers and together they have raised achievement, through excellent and accurate self-evaluation. They have created an ethos in which pupils' well-being is at the forefront of the school's work.

Teaching and learning are regularly monitored and effective use is made of assessment data to raise standards. The strong commitment that all pupils should receive equal benefit from their time in school means they receive excellent support in their academic and personal development. Managers have been particularly successful in deploying the expertise of outside agencies and visitors to support pupils' learning and personal development. The school is well placed to improve further, and the staff team is strongly committed to raising standards. The governing body provides challenge to managers, and members are well informed about the school's progress and areas for improvement. Parents who expressed an opinion were extremely

supportive of the school's work, although some felt that their views were often overlooked and said that communication was not always easy.

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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?	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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	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

26 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Betty Layward Primary School, London, N16 9EX

Thank you for all your help when we came to your school. You told us you enjoyed school, and we enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work in your lessons. We were particularly impressed by how well you all get on with each other and how well you behave.

We think Betty Layward is a good school. You make good progress because your teachers are good at explaining things to you and you work hard. Teachers keep a very careful track of how you are getting on, and try to make sure that you get work that is just right for you. Sometimes they don't quite get this right, so some children find things too hard or too easy, and we have agreed that they are going to work out how to do this better. Children really enjoy their start to school in the Nursery and Reception, but all the changes in staff have disrupted work in these classes this year. They have still done quite well, but we have agreed that the school is going to work hard to make sure they do even better next year. You get an excellent range of interesting things to do in lessons and in clubs. There are not many primary pupils who get to learn Spanish right through the school, for example.

The headteacher, other staff and governors are good at organising the school, and are particularly good at making sure that everyone gets included in what is going on. You help in this by being so friendly to each other, and helping each other when you need to.

Your parents are very pleased with how well you are getting on. However, some of them say they would like more information about what is happening in school, or to be more involved, and more chances talk to staff about things. We have asked the school to work out how they can arrange this.

Thank you again for your warm welcome, and enjoy the rest of term.

Best wishes,

Steven Hill. Lead Inspector