

Gascoigne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131775
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	293843
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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	974
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Reed
Headteacher	Mr R Garton
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001
School address	Gascoigne Road Barking IG11 7DR
Telephone number	020 8270 4291
Fax number	020 8270 4303

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large primary school serves a community of high deprivation. Half the pupils receive free school meals, which is well above average, and a further fifth are unable to claim because of their status. Mobility is very high, with about half the school population changing annually. Three quarters of the pupils have home languages other than English and the majority of these are in the early stages of learning English. There is a wide range of ethnicity within school with the largest groups being West African, Somalian and Albanian. A quarter of the pupils are believed to be refugees or asylum seekers. Although the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to most schools, because of the changing population, this varies considerably from year-to-year. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. There is a new Children's Centre on site.

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. The challenges generated by the many changes in the school population over the last few years, including a significant increase in the number of pupils, have been addressed very effectively. The school is a haven of calm within the community. Pupils and their families, especially pupils new to the school, those who have little English language and those with significant problems at home, are supported very well. Excellent systems for promoting good attendance have improved attendance considerably, and it is now in line with other schools. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in school and on the playground. They enjoy school and appreciate the wide range of additional activities provided for them. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and a tribute to the school's very good pastoral care and support.

Standards in Year 6 are below average. Given their significant challenges with mobility, language and personal circumstances, most pupils achieve well, making good progress in relation to their starting points. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well from a generally low starting point because of the good provision and stimulating environment. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those learning to speak English make good progress because the school has good systems for identifying and supporting them. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the mostly good teaching ensure that most make good progress in their lessons. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils establish a good climate for learning. Pupils are given satisfactory academic guidance. Marking is good, often giving pupils guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils have targets for English, but these are not yet firmly understood or acted upon by pupils. Although the school is establishing systems for tracking pupils' progress, these are not consistent throughout the school or rigorous enough to enable teachers to plan challenging work for pupils of all abilities. In addition, a few teachers do not expect enough of their more able pupils. The satisfactory and improving curriculum is increasingly enriching pupils' experiences through theme weeks, music and French.

Leadership and management are good. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Plans for development are rigorous and effective, successfully adapting to changing circumstances and ensuring a good potential for future improvement. Staff and resources are deployed effectively and managers are empowered to carry out their duties. Staff, including those new to teaching, and non-teaching staff feel valued and appreciated and there is a strong sense of teamwork. Governance is good. Governors support the school well and carry out their duties effectively. Several are involved in monitoring teaching and learning and actively involved in the financial management. The school is a happy place to be.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish consistent whole school systems to track pupils' progress and use the data to ensure pupils achieve well.
- Ensure all teachers have high expectations of their more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are below average which, from pupils' starting points, represents good achievement. Pupils enter the school at many different times, often having attended several schools. Many

are at very early stages of acquiring English. In Year 6, both this year and in 2006, half the pupils were not in Gascoigne School in Year 3. This makes data relating to pupils' progress from Year 2 unreliable and, during their time in school, most pupils achieve well. Although standards in English, mathematics and science are below the national average, the evidence from pupils' work and the school's assessments show that more pupils in the present Year 6 are working at expected levels than was the case in 2006. This is because teaching is now good and, as a result, pupils make good progress in lessons. Many White British pupils have significant challenges in their personal lives that impact on their work in school, in spite of the school's exemplary support. Because of this, some of these pupils are not achieving as well as they should be.

Children enter the Nursery with well below average attainment. They achieve well in all areas of learning, although few attain the expected levels by the end of their Reception Year. Standards remain well below average by Year 2. Most make good progress during their time in the school. However, some more able pupils lack the challenge to enable them to achieve as well as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy their learning and this contributes to their positive attitudes to the school as well as their significantly improved attendance. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils empathise with others and take delight in the arts and the world around them. In an assembly, for example, there were gasps of delight as the teacher showed pictures and told a story on the theme of 'Wow!' Pupils enthusiastically take up cultural opportunities such as the instrumental music tuition for Year 5. Their concern and care for each other is clear as they socialise together during breaks and in the dining room, where the small space means they have to be careful and considerate. Behaviour is exemplary as a result of the clear expectations of teachers and other adults. This results in good attitudes to learning.

Pupils' understanding of the importance of making healthy choices is good. Most are pleased with the improvements to school lunch and say that their physical education lessons and after school sports clubs help them to take more exercise. Take up of the many opportunities to contribute to the school community, for example through the school council, or representing their school in sports teams, is good. Pupils are developing the skills of working independently. They have targets for English and are beginning to take some responsibility for their learning. They are developing satisfactory skills to support them in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching and learning are good. This has improved because the monitoring of lessons has helped teachers to build on their strengths and to address weaknesses. All lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. Classroom organisation and management is good, and adults question pupils in ways that require them to think. Teachers insist pupils reply in sentences, helping those learning English to learn well. Pupils support each other well and listen attentively to their teachers and each other. Teachers' planning is generally good but a small minority of teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils. These teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to set work which

is matched to the different pupils' needs, especially the more able pupils. The school has recognised that a few teachers need to improve their subject knowledge and is supporting them well.

Teachers track pupils' progress but are still getting to grips with the challenges of the high mobility. Although pupils who have specific needs are swiftly identified and supported, the tracking does not clearly identify those pupils who, while making steady progress, could do better. Assessment systems vary through the school, making continuity difficult. Procedures are improving and the desire to enable all pupils to reach their full potential is at the heart of the school's work.

Pupils are extremely positive about their teachers. One child described the best thing about the school is that 'the teachers always stick with you.' Teaching assistants are very effective, supporting pupils well. Marking is generally good and learners are given feedback on points for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with some good features. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, giving children a good start to their education. There is a stimulating environment, enabling children to learn effectively through practical activities.

The school has made changes to the curriculum to broaden the opportunities for all pupils. These include French, taught in Years 5 and 6, and a new music programme for Years 3 to 6 using visiting specialists. This has been effective in developing pupils' self-esteem. Links with local secondary schools on information and communication technology (ICT) projects help prepare pupils for their new schools. Weeks where work is planned around a specific theme make learning interesting and relevant. The school uses visitors, and visits to local venues, well to enrich the curriculum.

The school plans opportunities for pupils to use their English and mathematics skills across the curriculum. The scheme of work for mathematics is not flexible enough to make planning for pupils' different needs straightforward and sometimes lacks challenge for more able pupils. The school is beginning to plan for pupils to use their skills to solve problems, but there is insufficient provision for extending basic skills in some classes.

There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. In Year 1, for example, many pupils, when asked what they would do to make things better, said, 'Make sure people eat healthily and play sports.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care given to pupils to ensure that the school provides a welcoming and secure place to learn is a strength of the school. New pupils are well supported and settle in quickly. Children feel safe and are very confident that adults in the school will help and support them. Procedures for safeguarding and protecting children are fully in place. Systems for rewarding pupils with excellent attendance, as well as clear procedures for follow up by the school and education welfare service, have contributed to the impressive improvement in attendance.

Pupils report that they like the fact that their teachers expect them to work hard in lessons. They receive good guidance through marking. Although pupils have targets in English, many

pupils are not clear what they are or what they need to do to improve their work. This makes it difficult for pupils to take responsibility for improving their learning or to see how they have improved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team are a well-established team that has responded to the school's increasing challenges effectively. At all times the school seeks to put the welfare of the pupils and the community at the heart of its work. Leaders have been very successful in their aim to establish a calm community where pupils feel secure and happy. This is especially important for the many pupils who have had turbulent lives. The school is now well placed to build on this good climate for learning to achieve its aim to improve pupils' academic achievement. Other challenges, such as a large deficit in the budget caused by the amalgamation of the two schools several years ago and the rapid increase in numbers, have been addressed successfully. Attendance, poor at the time of the last inspection, is now average, a significant achievement.

The management of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language or learning difficulties or disabilities is good. The school makes good use of the resources available and deploys staff effectively. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching. Because of the good leadership in the Foundation Stage, for example, both provision and pupils' achievements have improved since the last inspection. New teachers and pupils are supported very well.

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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?	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	1
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	3

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?	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?	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

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gascoigne Primary School, Barking, IG11 7DR

Thank you very much for all your help and support during our visit to your school. A special thanks to those of you who left your lessons to speak to us and the Year 5 class who entertained me with your good violin playing. We were very impressed with your friendliness to us and to each other. We think your behaviour is outstanding and you all play a very important part in making your good school a happy and calm place. We really appreciate the way you respect each other and work harmoniously together. Well done. You are all a credit to your school. We are very pleased to see that more and more of you are rarely absent from school. Keep up the good work!

Your school takes good care of you and I know you feel safe and happy in school. Teachers make sure that those of you who need it have extra help to enable you to do as well as you can. We agree with you that teaching is good and, because you work hard and listen carefully, most of you make good progress. We have asked your teachers to make sure that those of you who find your work easy are given more challenge. This will help you to achieve higher levels, especially in English and mathematics. To help your teachers to do this, we want them to make sure they have good records of your progress through the school. This will help them to spot those of you who could be learning more quickly. Please make sure you know your targets so you can help yourselves to improve your work.

We agree with your parents and carers that your school is well led and managed. Leaders cope with the many changes in school well and know just what needs to be done to make your school even better.

Best wishes

Mrs J. Dawson (lead inspector)