



Seven Sisters Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132253
Local Authority Haringey
Inspection number 294005
Inspection dates 27–28 November 2006
Reporting inspector Pritiben Patel

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	South Grove
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		N15 5QE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0208 802 6670
Number on roll (school)	498	Fax number	0208 880 1158
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Julie Davies
		Headteacher	Mrs Denise Patrick
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 27–28 November 2006	Inspection number 294005
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Seven Sisters is much bigger than most primary schools. The large majority of pupils are of Black African or African Caribbean heritage. Among its wide ethnic mix of pupils, including Kurdish and East European, the proportion from Asian backgrounds is well above the national average. There are above average proportions of pupils with English as an additional language and with learning difficulties and disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average. An above average proportion of pupils either joins or leaves the school during the course of each year, at other than the normal times.

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 and improving school. Leadership and management of the school are good and the headteacher's leadership is strong. Good teaching and learning ensure that pupils achieve well.

The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge. The headteacher and deputy head, supported by all the staff, place a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development. All pupils feel valued, and the rich cultural diversity of the school is celebrated. The school truly reaches out to parents and provides an outstanding level of support for them. It encourages them to take an active part in their children's education in a wide variety of ways, such as the 'Share classes'. As one parent stated, 'Support services are excellent' and 'Every interaction with the school be it teaching staff, support staff or the head has been positive'. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and present good role models for them to follow. The majority of pupils rise to this challenge. Pupils behave well, enjoy school and are eager to learn. This has a positive impact on the progress they make. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and they make a positive contribution to the school and wider community.

The rate of improvement in standards is often slowed by the constant flow of a high number of pupils in and out of the school. Many new arrivals have very little experience of school or of school in this country. Despite the school providing a good level of support when pupils first start school, this inevitably has an effect on the rate of progress. Overall standards in the school are below average. An exception is the quality of writing by more able pupils at the end of Year 6, which is above average.

The monitoring of teaching and learning, combined with good tracking systems, ensures that pupils make good progress. Teachers use tracking information well to plan lessons. They take good account of pupils' needs, particularly for pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) or pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). However, the needs of higher attaining pupils in science are not met and this slows their progress. The teaching of scientific enquiry is also at the early stage of development. Individual targets are set for writing but not in other curriculum areas and, consequently, pupils do not always know how to improve their work.

The school has made writing a key focus and consequently good achievement is reflected in the clear improvement in writing, as reflected in the national tests for 2006. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which links subjects well. Given the school leaders' successful track record, they have good capacity to secure further improvement. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress from a low base.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that, in science, all teachers address the needs of the more able learners and give more emphasis to teaching investigations.

- Ensure that all pupils have individual targets and that they know what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are below average because most pupils' attainment is very low when they start. Pupils achieve well in the light of their starting points. This is because the school has worked hard to address the individual needs of pupils. Progress is most marked in English, particularly writing, which has been a priority for the school and standards in writing for the more able pupils are above the national average by Year 6. Good provision in the Foundation Stage means that children achieve well in personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development. However, in language and mathematical development, standards are below those expected nationally.

Although standards in English overall, are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 there has been an improving trend, year on year as a direct result of the school's effective language intervention strategies, particularly at the end Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science are also below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and recent results show a dip, particularly for more able pupils in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. This is a happy and secure school enabling excellent relationships to flourish. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to discuss their work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know about other faiths, cooperate well in groups and respect the opinions of others. Bullying and racist incidents are rare and the pupils said 'Any incidents are dealt with promptly'. Behaviour is good with examples of excellence in some lessons and assemblies. Parents confirm that their children enjoy. Attendance has risen and is now satisfactory due to the hard work of all staff and outside agencies. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and know about foods that keep them healthy.

Pupils value the opportunity to serve on the school council and are pleased to have their say about improving the school. The peer mediators take their responsibilities very seriously in the playground where they support pupils who are lonely or have a problem. Good provision is made for pupils to work together in teams, and this is good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning are key factors in pupils' good progress. Relationships between teaching staff and pupils are strong and help to keep pupils well motivated and focused. Clear expectations of attitudes and behaviour, combined with the focus on basic writing skills, have been important factors in improving standards and achievement in English. However, the teaching of scientific enquiry is at an early stage of development and, consequently, teaching in science is just satisfactory overall.

Good teaching in the Foundation Stage inspires confidence and well crafted questions encourage children who have very limited English.

Pupils with specific needs, benefit from well tailored support. This helps them play a full part in lessons and make strong gains in learning. However, more able pupils, particularly in science, are not always provided with enough challenge and consequently do not attain the higher levels, of which they are capable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and extra-curricular provision is strong. There is a wide range of visits, activities and clubs on offer such as dance, sewing, Kung Fu and drama. The school stages a good range of dramatic events. The curriculum maintains a strong creative focus and this ensures that pupils enjoy their lessons. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of pupils and reflects the cultural diversity of the school through provision such as 'Black History Month' and the 'Israeli Dance Club'. The school makes good, specific provision to help pupils with particular needs, including bilingual pupils and those who have learning difficulties or disabilities. However, the needs of the more able pupils are not addressed in science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well. They say that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns or problems. Systems to support bilingual pupils, those new to the school, and those who struggle with learning are good and very well managed. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school. There are good whole school systems to track pupils' progress in literacy, mathematics and science and the school provides additional support where needed. However, individual pupils' targets are not set and shared with pupils. As a result, they do not know what they need to do to improve. The school meets requirements for health and safety, including regular risk assessments. Child protection arrangements are good and the school works very well with other agencies, including parents and carers to support vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership and fosters a good level of teamwork amongst all staff. Self-evaluation is good. Subject managers share responsibility for monitoring the work in the areas they lead. They do so diligently and this contributes to pupils' good progress. A close check is kept on the work in lessons and areas for improvement are identified and dealt with. Work to raise standards in writing has ensured that achievement is good. The school had rightly identified target setting and science as areas that required addressing. Governors make a good contribution to the development of the school and play an active role in the school's self evaluation. Resources are deployed well. The headteacher's systematic approach to all aspects of management has provided a solid foundation for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

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

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work.

We think that you go to a good school, and this is why:

- you behave well and get on well with each other
- you make good progress because you are taught well
- there are lots of extra things for you to do that help to make your learning more interesting
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are safe and are well looked after
- your headteacher and deputy headteacher, the staff and the governors are doing a good job.

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be even better. So, we think what needs to be done next is that teachers need to set you targets in different curriculum areas so that you know how to improve your work.

We also think your teachers can help you even more by setting you harder work in science. I'm sure that you are ready for this challenge!

With best wishes for your future success,

Pritiben Patel Lead Inspector