

The Livity School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133440
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	294093
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Secrett
Headteacher	Ms G Lee
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Mandrell Road Brixton London SW2 5DW
Telephone number	020 7733 0681
Fax number	020 7738 7154

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Livity school is located in Brixton and opened in 2001 after a reorganisation of special educational needs in the local authority. On entry, all pupils are working well below the nationally expected levels. Pupils have statements of special educational need for their communication, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, including just under a half of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Pupils come from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds and currently just over half are eligible for free school meals. Over half of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being from Black African family backgrounds. Around half of pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition and there are nearly twice as many boys as girls. Currently two pupils are looked after by the local authority. The current building is to be extended and improved through a rebuilding programme, which is due to start in the summer of 2008.

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 some outstanding features ensuring a good quality education is offered to all pupils. The dedicated headteacher and deputy clearly demonstrate that pupil achievement and their care and welfare are at the centre of all decision making. Their commitment to school self-evaluation and improvement is fully supported by well-informed governors, committed teachers and excellent support staff. This results in the school knowing what it has to do to improve further. Partnerships with other support agencies and schools are excellent and ensure that there is an effective and co-ordinated approach to meeting pupil needs. The school understands that because of the increasing complex learning and medical needs of the pupils, regular monitoring of provision is vital to ensure individual needs are continually and successfully met. Staff feel confident that their views are listened to and there are excellent opportunities for further professional development to ensure that they have the skills needed to confidently support the pupils' needs. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'I have nothing but praise for all the dedication and support that all staff give to the pupils'.

Pupils' standards are well below the national average. Given their starting points and learning difficulties, the achievement and progress of children from the Foundation Stage through to Year 6 pupils is good. This is the result of excellent relationships, good teaching and the outstanding care and support they receive for their individual needs. Children in the Foundation Stage get the best possible start to their school life and make good progress overall, particularly in their communication, social and independence skills. As pupils get older they develop confidence and continue to improve their communication and personal development skills that help prepare them for secondary schooling. Pupils have a range of relevant and challenging personal targets, which most achieve successfully. Progress is monitored and recorded well and data is analysed to help identify where additional support is necessary to improve pupil achievement. The school is aware of the need to develop this area further and ensure that all teachers consistently use the information on pupils' progress in their planning and teaching. There is no difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those whose first language is not English.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have very positive attitudes, enjoy school and many understand the importance of keeping safe and leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils get on well with each other and they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour, which is good. Although attendance is only satisfactory it does not reflect a poor attitude by pupils and the school is working closely with families to encourage a stronger commitment to attending regularly. Community links are very strong and there are excellent partnerships with nearby mainstream schools. The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of most pupils. The school is aware of the need to further develop and adapt the curriculum in view of the increasing complexity of pupils' medical and learning needs. Although teaching and support is good overall, there is some excellent practice that is not being shared across the school as effectively as it might. Visits into the community and visiting specialists effectively support and stimulate pupils' learning. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to work alongside mainstream peers whenever it is seen to meet their individual needs. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. One, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'The school supports parents well, it understands our children and provides help if problems arise'. Governors are clearly aware of school developments and are involved in all aspects of monitoring and

strategic management and take an active part in the life of the school. Overall, through clear processes of self-evaluation and a dedication to improving pupil opportunities, leadership and management are having a positive impact on learning, which is helping pupils to achieve and make continued good progress. The capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment and pupil-tracking systems continue to be refined and that data is consistently used by teachers to plan their lessons.
- Ensure curriculum opportunities are developed and adapted to more effectively meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with increasing medical and complex learning needs.
- Ensure the good and outstanding practice in teaching, learning and support is more effectively shared across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well below average because of the severity of pupils' learning difficulties. Despite these difficulties, their progress and achievement are good in relation to their starting points and challenging individual targets. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress particularly in their communication and personal development skills which parents greatly appreciate. As pupils get older many improve these skills and become more confident, independent and self-aware. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and recorded and confirms that the great majority make good progress and achieve well as they move up the school. Pupils' needs are individually assessed and supported and this helps to ensure that no group or individual fares less well than any other. Information on progress could be used more consistently across the school in the planning of lessons to ensure there is always an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils' efforts and achievement are celebrated at every opportunity within class and the school community.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of themselves and others and are encouraged to make personal choices and become as independent as possible. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are confident that caring adults support their needs. A very positive and supportive learning environment ensures pupils get enjoyment from being in school and participating in all activities. Pupils' behaviour is generally good. Attendance is satisfactory and absence is primarily a result of poor health. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is supported by the curriculum, additional activities and in their day-to-day interactions with each other and adults. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community and are involved in variety of community projects. For example, they have joined other children from the local area to create an enamel mural on the side of a local house. Pupils feel safe and many understand healthy lifestyles. They appreciate the very high standard of food and social interaction opportunities at lunch times where they make choices and be as independent as possible. They acquire essential learning and personal skills that help to prepare them for when they transfer to secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning because activities are generally interesting. The very effective support for their individual needs supports their confidence and promotes improved communication and independence. The excellent adult teamwork ensures pupils' make good progress. The best practice in teaching and in support could be shared more effectively across the school. All staff are very keen to improve their skills and practice, and enthusiastically take opportunities for further professional development. Many teaching assistants are experienced and highly skilled and have a range of responsibilities. They make a significant contribution to pupils' progress and achievement. All staff including therapists and school nurse, work hard to ensure that pupils' communication, personal development, care and medical needs are fully met so they can get the best out of their learning opportunities. Resources, including information and communication technology and interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support learning. Adapting and refining curriculum planning to meet the learning needs of pupils is more successfully achieved in some lessons than others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and offers a variety of experiences that support pupils' excellent personal and good academic development. There is an appropriate emphasis in the Foundation Stage in developing independence, confidence and personal and social skills. Communication skills are emphasised throughout the school. Personal, social and health education plays an important part in supporting pupils' understanding of themselves, healthy living, and of the world around them. Displays, artefacts, visits and visitors greatly enhance pupils' learning experiences. There are good opportunities for physical activities, including swimming, and for some pupils, taking part in lessons in mainstream schools. Visits into the community provide a good range of relevant learning experiences and effectively enrich the curriculum. Due to the increasingly complex and medical conditions of pupils, and the large numbers of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, the school is aware of the need to increase the relevancy of curriculum opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils. Efficient school procedures and consistent practice keeps pupils safe and secure while encouraging them to make choices and acquiring the skills of independence. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are clear, effective and understood by all staff. Effective teamwork ensures that there are dependable approaches and support for all pupils and personal dignity is respected at all times. Pupils receive good individual guidance, based upon close monitoring and assessment ensuring they make appropriate progress in their personal and academic development. Very effective partnerships with external support agencies ensure that the specific needs of pupils are well met. The quality of the arrangements and food at lunchtimes is outstanding and fully support pupils' personal and health development. There is a close partnership with parents and the parent liaison worker maintains a good supportive link between school and home. Parents appreciate all the school does for their children and are very supportive. A parent wrote, 'The school has given me my life back. My son is making progress and I know he is in a safe place'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy work as an effective team and ensure each day is well organised for the benefit of the pupils. Self-evaluation involves the whole school and parents and there is a clear focus on improvement and pupil achievement. The impact of everyone's work is clearly reflected in the outstanding care and support and personal development of pupils and their good academic progress. An effective induction and support programme gives confidence to staff and regular monitoring ensures there is a clear awareness of where there is the best practice, although it is not yet sufficiently shared across the school. There is a clear appreciation of the dedication and skills of support staff in supporting pupils' overall progress and achievement. The school works very effectively with external agencies and consequently, the appropriate support is co-ordinated to meet pupils' specific needs. Governors are clearly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their active involvement.

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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	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	4
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	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	1
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?	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	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

28 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Livity School, London, SW2 5DW

Thank you for welcoming me into your school, I really enjoyed my two days with you. A special thank you to the Year 6 boys who showed me around and to the group of pupils who told me what they liked about the school. I noticed that you really enjoy coming to school and meeting your friends. I agree with you and your parents that your school is good. Staff look after you very well and make sure that you make good progress in your learning and personal care. Lunchtime arrangements are excellent and the food is fantastic. The school knows what it has to do to make things even better for you and you can help by 'good listening' in lessons and always behaving the best that you can. I particularly liked the fact that:

- you learn to do things for yourself and you are friendly and polite.
- you really enjoy your lessons and make good progress.
- you enjoy taking part in lessons in local primary schools.
- you learn useful skills that help to prepare you for secondary school.
- you get involved with lots of different activities in the community.
- there are very good links between the school and your parents/carers.
- the school works very well with other people to ensure you receive the support you need.
- all the staff are working hard to help you make even better progress.

There are a few things the school knows it can do better:

- they can keep a closer watch on your progress and use the information to make sure that your work in class is making you think harder.
- they can make sure that all your curriculum activities effectively meet your needs.
- they can make sure that the teaching and support continues to get better so you can carry on making good progress.

I wish you every future success.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Smith (Lead Inspector)