

Gospel Oak Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100025
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	307277
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Barry Jones

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	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Fiona Millar
Headteacher	Mr Alan Seymour
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Mansfield Road London NW3 2JB
Telephone number	020 7485 7435
Fax number	020 7267 1683

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Inspection number	307277

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- What is the current progress of pupils, particularly in mathematics?
- How well does the school cater for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and how well do they progress?
- What are the outstanding elements of the curriculum and care, guidance and support?

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, a governor and pupils also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Gospel Oak is an oversubscribed inner city school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language are higher than in most schools. More than 10% of the pupils are at the early stages of learning English. About one third of the pupils are White British. The larger minority ethnic groups are Kosovan/Albanian, Bangladeshi and Black African. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than normally found. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average; they have a broad range of needs. The school has Healthy Schools status and Activemark gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gospel Oak is a good, improving school. Teaching is good and consequently pupils achieve well. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result of the excellent care and support they receive. The school rightly prides itself on being very inclusive. The excellent leadership of the headteacher is a significant driving force for the school. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school's efforts. They say the school has been turned around since he joined. As one parent said, 'The school has a history. The headteacher has turned things around and there has been an amazing change.'

Children get off to a flying start as a result of the outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are broadly average. Given their low starting points, their achievement is good. Teachers manage their classes well and there is a very positive climate for learning in classrooms. They share the objectives for lessons with the pupils, which means that they know what they are expected to learn. They also make effective use of information and communication technology which adds interest to the lessons and enables pupils to acquire good computer skills. The school gives an appropriately high priority to developing literacy skills. Pupils make most rapid progress throughout the school in reading. Standards in Key Stage 2 in writing and mathematics lag behind those for reading. In these aspects, some pupils, particularly lower attaining ones, make slower progress over Key Stage 2. More able pupils continue to make good progress. Teachers have met together to agree assessments of pupils' work in English and pupils have been given individual targets in writing. The school's monitoring shows that these initiatives are leading to improvements but they have not yet been extended to mathematics. This means that in mathematics, pupils are not always clear about how they can improve further.

Pupils express pride in their school. They very much enjoy coming to school and feel very safe there. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are excellent. Rights and responsibilities are taught very well through the curriculum and through projects such as 'junior citizenship' in Year 6. The school council takes its role seriously, has its own budget and feels that its views are valued. The improvement in pupils' attitudes and involvement in school is shown by the significant improvement in their attendance. From a low base, attendance is now close to average as a result of strenuous efforts by the school. There is an outstanding curriculum and modern foreign languages and physical education are particular strengths. The high quality of teaching in these subjects is recognised by the local authority and is shared with other schools. There is a high priority given to developing pupils' practical and investigative skills in science and pupils achieve well throughout the school. The school has correctly identified the need to provide more opportunities to develop these skills in mathematics. Extra-curricular activities are outstanding. Last year, 'Teachers TV' made a programme about the school's extended provision because of its exceptional quality, particularly for music. The school has two brass bands (including one that performed at the Albert Hall) and an orchestra. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy-living issues and the school enjoys a high reputation for its sporting achievements.

Care and support are outstanding. The governors added to the learning mentor team and the placement of two student social workers in the school enables the school to be particularly proactive in meeting the needs of its most vulnerable children. The provision of music therapy for the few pupils with particular emotional needs is a notable feature of the provision. The school has very strong links with other agencies that contribute to the excellent care. The

support for pupils who are new to English is targeted well. Consequently, these pupils acquire the language skills that enable them to make good progress in their other subjects too. The school knows its pupils well but is at an early stage in using individual targets to raise standards further. There is extensive data collected on each pupil. The school has recently adopted a new computer program to help track pupils' progress. It uses this to analyse the data for different minority ethnic groups and this shows that none is underachieving. It is developing other analyses to identify further patterns and trends.

There is a very strong management team. The school is successfully developing other staff to take on roles of responsibility. Subject leaders are effective and carry out their role well. The school has been effective in maintaining excellent progress in the Foundation Stage. Results at Key Stage 1 improved significantly in 2007 and these results reflected good progress by pupils in reading, mathematics and science. Senior management have ensured that other areas are also developed and, for example, geography was a priority last year. This is indicative of the strong resolve to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum while recognising the importance of pupils' basic skills. There is still some work to do, particularly in Key Stage 2, but the school's track record shows that it has excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter Nursery or Reception with lower skills than those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress although in 2007, about one fifth still had below average skills in writing, linking sounds and letters and mathematical calculations on leaving Reception. Significant reasons for the school's success are the stimulating curriculum and the very effective teamwork. The adult-to-child ratio is high and enables children's individual needs to be met well. Support staff are exceptionally well briefed so that they know how to enhance the learning. They also make assessments of each child's attainment which informs the planning of future work and accelerates progress. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and children learning through well-planned play. Management of this key stage is excellent. As a result, by the end of Reception most children reach the early learning goals expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils, particularly lower attaining ones, make good progress in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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

01 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gospel Oak Primary School, London, NW3 2JB

Thank you for your help and cooperation when I inspected your school recently. You told me that you enjoy school very much and feel very safe there. I congratulate class 5 on their brass band performance - they have come a long way in a short time. Some of your school council members told me that their views are valued. They have been involved in selecting playground equipment, for example. They were thrilled to visit the Houses of Parliament and to step inside No 10 and No 11! I agree with you that you go to a good school and in some ways it is 'brilliant' as you describe. Other pupils told me how you are looking after the environment and their ideas for recycling materials. These are the things I liked particularly:

- you make a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes
- you all get along very well together
- you develop into mature, considerate young people
- you do particularly well in reading and science
- there are a wealth of clubs and other activities that you can take part in
- the teachers look after you well and make the lessons interesting
- the school is excellently led by the headteacher, helped by the staff and the governors.

The school is not complacent and is always keen to do even better. I have asked that the school finds way for you to do as well in writing and mathematics as you do in science and reading.

You are fine ambassadors for your school and so keep up the good work!

I wish you continuing success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Jones

Lead Inspector