

Ealdham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100120
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	307296
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Stevens
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Castle
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Ealdham Square Eltham London SE9 6BP
Telephone number	020 8850 5484
Fax number	020 8850 2033

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. Pupils come from a mix of social circumstances, although the majority experience much higher than average levels of socio-economic deprivation. A third of pupils have learning difficulties which is higher than average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to the national average but has increased recently. The proportion of pupils from black and minority ethnic groups has also been in line with national averages, but is also starting to increase.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 3(13) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement and to teaching and learning.

Standards are low and much lower than they should be in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is therefore inadequate even given the very low starting point of the pupils. The school's analysis shows that this unsatisfactory progress for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, has been because of weaknesses in teaching in the past, failing to target work consistently to meet the needs of the pupils and the need to implement and monitor the use of individual learning targets. This has been exacerbated by the high turnover of staffing in recent years and the long-term absence of the headteacher because of illness. The headteacher is now back in post and several new staff have been appointed.

The school has developed more effective systems to monitor, track and support pupils and ensure their needs are met. It is early days and the use to which this information is put is inconsistent. Nevertheless, improvements are being made. Behaviour is good and the number of exclusions has declined. The school is a very caring community and all adults make the care and support of the pupils their top priority. Pupils are beginning to make better progress because support is tailored more to their needs and the quality of teaching, although still inconsistent, is improving. The pace in some lessons is still too slow and work is not always well matched to need. The difficulties that pupils might encounter in their learning are not always anticipated and catered for. Teaching is better but the school is not complacent and the continuing improvement of teaching and learning in order to boost achievement and raise standards is the number one priority in the school's development plan. Significant improvements have been made in the Foundation Stage. Good provision ensures a good start for the children in all areas of learning and they make good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good, driven by the very good provision for pastoral care. All adults relate very well to the pupils and are good role models. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in improving attendance. Pupils feel very safe and secure. The school's determination to create further opportunities for parents and children to work together in the new Family Centre reflects the importance accorded by the school in supporting learning throughout the community. 'I feel that the children are well managed and the staff always have time for me even if they are very busy,' said one parent. Academic guidance is satisfactory because improved systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress have recently been put in place. However, the information gained from this tracking is not used consistently by all teachers to improve learning. Pupils do not have well focused individual learning targets or specific guidance to help them understand what they need to do in order to improve over the short term. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is good in the Foundation Stage where careful planning ensures that pupils have good access to a wide range of learning experiences.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and have been further invigorated by the return of the headteacher from a long-term absence. She has reviewed the make-up of the senior leadership team which now includes the recently appointed assistant deputy headteacher. Assessments, confirmed by the school's improvement partner, show that standards are rising

in several classes, including Year 6. This reflects the impact of recent staff changes and the improvement this has made to the overall quality of teaching. With new staff appointed, the improvement in the quality of teaching and the rigorous approach to improvement adopted by the senior management team, the school is well placed to further improve teaching, accelerate achievement and thereby raise standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The foundation stage is efficiently organised and well managed. Staff are well trained, and regular and focused observations accurately identify children's needs. A balanced timetable ensures that children are taught basic skills and have many opportunities to learn to cooperate and explore the many activities prepared for them. All adults are very good role models and provide a safe and secure environment in which the children can learn. They seize every opportunity to support the children in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that activities are planned to match the needs of the pupils closely so that they are always challenged to do their best.
- Use the information gained from monitoring pupils' progress to ensure that pupils have sharply focused individual targets and clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are low and achievement is inadequate in English, mathematics and science. However, the rate of pupils' progress is increasing because of recent improvements in the quality of teaching in some classes and higher expectations of progress year on year. Levels of attainment on entry are well below average but evidence indicates that good teaching in the Foundation Stage is beginning to raise standards on entry to Year 1. National assessments in 2007 show that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are well below average. They are worse in writing and boys perform significantly less well than girls. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are also well below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in both key stages have made inadequate progress. Staff turbulence last year, especially in Year 6, contributed to this but results have been stubbornly well below average since 2003, with minor fluctuations. The school is not complacent and the raising of standards is a priority. Several new staff have been appointed and there are clear indications that standards are beginning to rise.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of belonging to the school community and take responsibility well as school and class council representatives. Council members are particularly pleased at having secured the provision of a separate common room for Year 6 pupils. Pupils behave very well. The school has raised their awareness of bullying issues and pupils say that incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils know how to keep safe and they have a good appreciation of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy what school provides, especially the after-school clubs. Attendance rates are improving and the targets set by the local authority were met. However, attendance remains

just below the national average because of the poor attendance of a few pupils. Pupils have a clear appreciation of the part they play in the wider community. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not yet adequate enough to ensure economic success. However, the school raises their aspirations well by organising visitors from the business world and annual career weeks.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are carefully planned and teachers use resources, demonstrations and discussion activities to engage and motivate pupils and to help them learn in different ways. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) aids learning well. Assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and work is well organised for their needs. In a small number of lessons, the difficulties that pupils encountered in their learning had not been anticipated and this hampered their learning. In other classes, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language, did not achieve as much as they could because the pace of work was too relaxed or the tasks they had been given were not well matched to their abilities. Relationships are good in lessons and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Teaching is improving because senior staff systematically monitor its quality and set targets for individual teachers. However, there is more to be done in order to ensure that teaching is consistently good and enables pupils to make rapid progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum planning is thorough and the new national guidance for teaching literacy and numeracy has been introduced well. A more rigorous approach to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is helping to raise standards in reading for the very youngest children. For older children, the 'Big Write' project is helping pupils to edit and extend their writing by using interesting words and punctuation more accurately. In mathematics, pupils do plenty of work in their heads and are tackling increasingly difficult calculations, but are not yet applying what they have learned to solving problems. The development of a creative curriculum is beginning to promote cross-curricular links in Key Stage 1. ICT is used well to support learning but there are still too few opportunities for pupils to undertake research or independent work. Innovative work in art, music, drama and dance enabled the school to submit an Artsmark application. Many pupils attend the wide variety of clubs the school offers. The annual 'carnival' topic enables the school and community to work together to enrich the curriculum. Work in personal, social and health education helps pupils to understand their rights and responsibilities within the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school creates a very safe and secure environment for its pupils. Child protection procedures are rigorous and pastoral care is good. The school quickly identifies potentially vulnerable pupils and ensures that their specific needs are met. The school has developed strong links with external professional agencies. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language, are effectively included in the school's routines and support systems. They are developing positive attitudes to learning. Adults are good at building pupils' trust

and confidence and parents appreciate that their children are well cared for and safe at school. Through career weeks and work shadowing, older pupils learn about the world of work.

Sound systems for assessment and the setting of more challenging targets have recently been developed and put in place. These are helping teachers to check on progress and to gain a better understanding of what pupils' need to learn next. Some teachers do not consistently use this information to plan work to meet the needs of all pupils well but monitoring and support for these teachers is in place to effect an improvement in their planning. Pupils understand the group targets that are set for them. They are less certain about what they personally need to do to improve although marking in writing now often gives clear guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has recently returned to school after a period of absence in which the deputy head was effective in acting in her place. She has galvanised the efforts of senior teachers and other staff to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. She has harnessed the strengths of both newly appointed and experienced staff in the senior leadership team. Members of this team lead 'phase teams' that meet regularly to review standards and achievement for the relevant year groups. Regular monitoring of teaching and reviews of pupils' progress ensure that both teams have a detailed and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The role of middle managers has been reviewed and new groups established to oversee the development of areas such as the curriculum and the humanities. Teaching is monitored systematically and support offered when appropriate. However, previous staffing problems have meant that the progress made by pupils has not accelerated quickly enough. There are signs that standards are beginning to improve although it is too early to judge the long-term impact. Governors support the school well. They are gaining a better understanding of the impact of teaching and learning on standards and achievement. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve because the headteacher and deputy headteacher are firmly focused on improvement and have the support of the leadership team, an active governing body and the majority of the parents.

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Annex A

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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ealdham Primary School, London, SE9 6BP

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we recently visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to all that you had to say. You really helped us with the inspection.

There are many things about your school that you appreciate and enjoy. However, your school is not yet as good as it should be and we have given it a Notice to Improve which means that other inspectors will visit to check on progress. The school test results in English, mathematics and science are not high enough and you need more help from your teachers to ensure you do as well as you can.

Here are the things we like about your school:

- you are all very well cared for
- your teachers are working very hard to give you interesting things to do
- you behave well and have good attitudes to your work
- you enjoy school and particularly the concerts and annual carnival
- you make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

These are the things we think could be better:

- your work in English, maths and science needs to improve
- we have asked teachers to make teaching better so that the work you get is at the right level, builds on what you already know and can do, and challenges you more
- you have group targets but you need to know exactly what to do next so you can make faster progress.

Again it was good to meet you all and may I wish every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Graham Stephens

Lead inspector