

Orchard Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100234
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307332
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	John Collins

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	383
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	79
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms L Tritton
Headteacher	Ms V Fraher
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Holcroft Road Hackney E9 7BB
Telephone number	020 8985 7785
Fax number	020 8986 3748

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school has pupils from many ethnic and social backgrounds. The largest ethnic groups are Black African, Bangladeshi, White British and other White backgrounds. Just over half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, well above the national average. Pupils speak 26 different languages and about two-thirds, a high proportion, are learning English as an additional language. More than one-third of pupils have moderate learning difficulties or statements of special educational need, well above average. The proportion of pupils starting and leaving the school at other than the usual times is high. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in the Nursery admits children in the autumn and spring terms of the year in which they are five. The school has the Sportsmark award and Healthy Schools Award.

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. One parent wrote to say, 'I can recommend this school to anybody, anytime, any day!' This echoed the feelings of many. Since the last inspection, provision and leadership have improved and are now good. Consequently, achievement is now good for all pupils, regardless of gender, ability or background. Good assessment and tracking procedures enable the school to identify quickly those groups at risk of underachievement and provide them with the good support they need to achieve as well as others. Although the make-up of pupils in each year varies considerably throughout the school, standards have risen and in English, mathematics and science are now broadly average by the end of Year 6. Target setting is increasingly effective in raising the achievement of particular groups of pupils. However, the school recognises that more remains to be done in setting targets for individual pupils. Currently, they have an inconsistent understanding about the next steps in their learning, and consequently their progress slows, particularly in English and mathematics.

Children's attainment on entry to Nursery is much lower than that found normally. More than half are at an early stage of learning English and many arrive with little or no English. Good teaching and provision in the EYFS give children a good start although, by the end of Reception, their skills in language and mathematics are still well below those usually found. The school leaders have worked effectively with staff to increase the proportion of good or outstanding lessons. Monitoring has made the school aware of the need to be more consistent in challenging its more able pupils to achieve their best. However, teachers have successfully dealt with the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Through targeted support from teaching assistants, these pupils are able to achieve as well as others.

The school has a high profile in the local community. It has the support of the great majority of parents and carers, who are particularly pleased with the new uniform and the care given to their children at the start of the day. One parent wrote that, 'This is a school for a child to be proud of'. The pupils themselves say they feel safe and are proud of the contribution they are making to the school. Relationships are good, reflecting the strong ethos of inclusion. Partnership links with other agencies such as the Learning Trust and the Kid's Company (a support agency for pupils with emotional and behavioural problems) are outstanding. They make a significant contribution to overcoming barriers to learning and to the academic and personal development of all pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities such as the 'International Day' celebrate the cultural diversity of the school. The school promotes cultural cohesion well. This helps pupils to develop a strong sense of respect for themselves and others. They have a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles and recognize the effects of lack of exercise and poor diet.

Successful changes since the last inspection, the accurate picture the management has of the school, the very effective way in which the school tackles barriers to learning, and rising pupil achievement levels provide ample evidence that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a positive start in school because of good teaching and provision. Relationships are positive and the children enjoy coming to school and are relaxed, happy and ready to learn. A well-planned outdoor area provides children with a range of positive experiences that supports their learning well. The EYFS leader provides good leadership and management and has been a driving force in the development of this outdoor area. Children develop confidence, independence and respect for others because staff are skilled at providing a good balance of adult-led activities and giving children the freedom to make their own choices. Staff know the children's needs well as a consequence of parents being encouraged to come into school and to share information about their children. This is used as the basis of a good system for documenting the achievements of children. Regular assessments track individual progress and help future planning by building on children's previous learning. Good teaching ensures that from low starting points most children make good progress, particularly in their social skills and physical well-being. At the end of Reception achievements are still short of the expected goals for children of that age, particularly in communication, language, literacy and number.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and progress by extending the use of target setting so that pupils know what they have to do in order to improve.
- Ensure more able pupils are challenged consistently to achieve as well as they should.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Levels of skills are significantly below those expected when children start school in the Nursery. Consistently good teaching enables progress to accelerate and pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is good. This includes those from different ethnic groups. Pupils with, language and speech problems are able to achieve well because of the good support they receive throughout the school.

Standards have fluctuated over time. A whole school focus on writing has been successful in improving standards, which by the end of Year 2 are now average. A particular success has been the above average numbers of pupils attaining the higher grades. This has not been the case in mathematics where the high proportions of pupils with limited English find difficulties in clearly understanding mathematical vocabulary.

Standards for more able pupils remain below average because they are not challenged consistently in some lessons. However, current test and assessment data and lesson observations show that standards in English, mathematics and science, by the end of Year 6, are now closer to the national average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's enjoyment of school shows in their good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. They say they feel secure and know how to stay safe. Attendance is broadly average, an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. As one member of the school council put it, 'We comfort each other'. Pupils

think it a good thing that they are in a school where so many families come from different countries because they believe they learn from each other. The older ones enjoy the responsibilities of looking after other children and younger ones are looking forward to being playground leaders. Pupils say they feel valued by adults and talk enthusiastically about the contribution they make to the school. For instance, they are proud of their new school uniform and the apple on the emblem, which were designed by children. They say, 'We look as if we love nature!' The school is seeking to improve the standards of basic skills. These, together with the positive relationships existing between different ethnic groups help to prepare pupils satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

As a result of the monitoring and support for staff there are many aspects of teaching that are now consistently good. Lessons are well planned and managed so that pupils know the purpose of their learning. In class discussions, pupils are confident speakers and show a good awareness of the importance of listening to others. Teaching is lively and resources such as interactive whiteboards are used well to make learning interesting. The great majority pupils want to learn because they are well motivated and speak of enjoying their lessons because teachers made them fun. Nevertheless, in some classes the challenge for more able pupils does not always enable them to achieve as well as they should, and progress slows. Teaching assistants and the learning mentor give very good support to pupils with moderate learning difficulties, those with statements of special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. As a result, these groups are fully included in learning and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum provides what one member of staff described as 'an extra layer', that makes learning more interesting and enjoyable for pupils. The curriculum is enhanced considerably by a rich variety of visitors, visits and residential visits for Years 5 and 6. Pupils are able to attend a range of after school clubs providing opportunities for healthy exercise. Working independently or in pairs or small groups contributes well to their social development. Pupils are proud of the delightful playground, which they designed. This provides for a range of activities from sport to quiet areas. Work with the London Children Flower Society means that the garden is restocked annually. Last year the whole school was involved in the 'China project'. This encouraged everyone to work together and culminated in Years 5 and 6 taking part in an opera performance at the Hackney Empire Theatre. This enhanced the pupils social and musical skills well. Discussions in lessons are helping to develop speaking and listening skills but more opportunities could be provided for pupils to practice their literacy and mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The strong partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies result in pupils being extremely well cared for. The learning mentor in particular plays a significant role in establishing such relationships and providing opportunities for pupils to

engage in varied activities to boost their confidence and self-esteem. Other agencies, such as Kids Company, also contribute strongly to pupils' personal development and enjoyment by offering activities such as dance, drama and art classes. Child protection procedures, risk assessments and health and safety procedures are firmly in place enabling pupils to feel safe. Assessment and monitoring of progress is rigorous. Marking in pupils' written work gives good, clear guidance for improving their writing skills but individual pupils lack clear overall targets to raise their standards in English, mathematics and science. The school is now developing its current target setting system to provide pupils with individual as well as group targets, particularly in English and mathematics. All children in the Nursery and Reception have a home school visit and there are good links with local secondary schools to help the transfer process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at all levels are now good and have been a major factor in the trend of rising standards and improved achievement. The governing body gives good support and is clear in its understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is strengthening its role in focusing on raising standards. Monitoring and evaluation systems are well embedded. Consequently, subject leaders now have a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility and are managing these subject developments effectively. The focus on writing, for example, has improved standards particularly in Key Stage 1. The introduction of key stage leaders has distributed management responsibilities well, and enables a broader picture of strengths and areas for development to be identified. Effective self-evaluation ensures that appropriate and clear improvement plans are developed. The focus continues to be on improving teaching still further. The new headteacher, ably supported by an active and challenging governing body and the Learning Trust advisor, is building on this to provide the impetus to take the school forward.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchard Primary School, Hackney, E9 7BB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told us you like your teachers and that Orchard Primary is a good school and we agree.

Here are some of the things the school does well.

- Many of you are now reaching higher standards and making good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher, teachers and governors are doing a good job in running the school.
- You get on very well together and your behaviour is good.
- The school takes very good care of you.
- The Kids Company and other groups provide outstanding support for your personal and academic development.

Here are a couple of things the school could do better.

- Raise standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science even more by setting you targets to help you improve.
- Teaching would be even better if those pupils who find learning easy are challenged all the time in lessons.

You can help by trying hard to do your best and continue to enjoy your time at school. Remember to ask your teachers if you need help.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Collins

Lead Inspector