

Queensbridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100235
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307333
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Lynn Altass
Headteacher	Ms Sarah Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Albion Drive Dalston Hackney London E8 4ET
Telephone number	020 7254 1186
Fax number	020 7249 4666

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school with a Nursery lies in the inner city. It shares a building with a professional development centre and is undergoing improvements to its fabric. Almost 90% of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest being Black Caribbean. Over two fifths of pupils speak an additional language to English, a high proportion. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties. Many pupils join and leave the school outside normal times. The school has awards for promoting inclusion and physical education. It is part of an education action zone that provides additional resources for curriculum enrichment. There is only one year's data for Year 6 pupils since the school changed from being an infant school to an all-through primary in September 2003.

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 outstanding aspects to its work. The headteacher's dynamic leadership inspires and unites the whole school community and generates a real excitement about learning. A parent spoke for many when she said, 'The atmosphere of inclusion and encouragement is wonderful'. Pupils love coming to school and take full advantage of the excellent extra-curricular activities. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They show one another great respect and work and play together harmoniously. Achievement is good. Most pupils reach nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6, from very low starting points in the Nursery. Not enough pupils attain the higher levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Some pupils struggle to use and apply their knowledge in different contexts, and lack the sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical skills required to reach these levels.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers bring learning to life through interesting lessons that involve and engage pupils well. They share what they want pupils to learn and how they can measure their success. Pupils are all included well and have good opportunities to discuss their ideas together. Teaching assistants support pupils well, including those who have moderate learning difficulties, so that they make good progress. The good curriculum emphasises the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and topic work meets the diversity of pupils' needs well. The school is developing how it fully incorporates non-core subjects through this creative approach.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life, and enjoy a wide range of sports. Many take advantage of the school's extended day. One pupil said, 'We have breakfast, lunch and dinner here - it's like we live here!' Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning and enjoy their lessons greatly. A pupil commented, 'We get to do lots of tricky and hard work and get our brains going.' They feel safe and say they trust adults to help them sort out any problems. The school council is influential in making things better for pupils, and there are very strong links with the wider community. Pupils have many opportunities to discover and experience the world of work, and to become confident and independent learners. The school prepares them well for the move to secondary school.

Care, guidance and support of pupils are good, with particular strength in the pastoral help they receive. Pupils know their targets for improvement and receive some useful advice through talking with adults about their work. Marking is variable and does not always show pupils the next steps in their learning.

The school is led and managed well, with the deputy head providing very good support for the headteacher. Rigorous monitoring ensures leaders form an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop, and strategic plans reflect this clarity of vision. Subject leaders bring energy and enthusiasm to their role, and are beginning to provide strategic direction for their areas. The governing body is effective, with a very experienced chair, and holds the school to account well. The school has made rapid progress under its present headteacher, who has brought stability to staff and raised everybody's expectations. It has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

There are excellent procedures to settle children into the Nursery, with the home visiting teacher playing a crucial role in working with families so that children feel safe and secure. A wealth of high quality learning experiences harnesses children's natural curiosity and gets them off to an outstanding start. Teachers rightly focus on developing children's personal and social skills and their proficiency in language, as in these areas they are weakest. There is a very good balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Children's progress is tracked meticulously and the information gained used rigorously to improve achievement. Children make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage, but still fall short of the expected early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1, because their skills and abilities upon entry are so low.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Improve the consistency of marking to match that of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In 2007, standards were exceptionally low by the end of Year 2 because of the high number of pupils with learning difficulties in the small cohort. This year, standards in Year 2 are much better, although a little below average. The high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language makes it harder for them to attain the higher levels in reading and writing, even though their achievement is good. In Years 3 to 6, pupils, including those with English as an additional language, continue to achieve well, and standards are average by the time pupils leave the school. Too few pupils attain the higher levels in mathematics and science because they find it difficult to use their skills and knowledge in new situations. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make good progress against the targets on their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and use various techniques to resolve peacefully any disputes that may arise between them. They celebrate one another's cultural diversity and learn about their different faiths and traditions. The school council's concern for good hygiene led them to ensure cutlery was kept spotlessly clean for dinners. Pupils take part in a wide range of playground games and support sports' clubs energetically. Their attendance is good, reflecting their great enjoyment of school. They are involved in artistic projects with the National Theatre and the London Symphony Orchestra, and support campaigns to curb street crime. Through 'work week' pupils gained an understanding of different occupations, and Year 4 pupils worked in a local hotel for a day. Pupils leave the school with the expected basic skills, and have a love of learning that equips them well for secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A pupil said, 'You can imagine yourself in your own little world in the classroom', recalling the pleasure of creative writing. The teaching fires pupils' enthusiasm and gives them a hunger for learning. Another pupil said, 'I like to push myself to the next level'. Teachers have high expectations and explain well the focus of the lesson. They use an effective range of strategies to involve pupils in their own learning. A pupil said, 'We swap knowledge about what we're learning'. Pupils play an active role in assessing their own and their classmates' work, and gain a good understanding of what makes an effective piece of writing. Year 5 pupils were editing persuasive essays arguing against banning playtimes using specific criteria to assist them. In some classes, the pace of learning slows when teachers spend too long explaining what they want pupils to do, or give them too long to do group work. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties benefit from effective teaching that includes them well in lessons, and values their contribution.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the differing needs of pupils effectively, and provides well for developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The school has begun to make the curriculum more creative through introducing a topic-based approach, and this is proving successful, especially for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Staff recognise that there is more to do in making relevant links, especially across the non-core subjects. Some innovative and exciting work captures pupils' imaginations, such as the interactive animations of life cycles by Year 4 using the latest technology. There is outstanding enrichment of the curriculum through a plethora of clubs and numerous visits and visitors. The architects of the Beijing Olympic stadium visited the school, for example, which inspired a cross-curricular project tracing the history of Olympic stadia back through time. Pupils produced a range of high quality models from different eras.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides its pupils with good academic guidance and support through tracking their progress carefully and sharing with them curriculum targets for improvement. However, marking does not show pupils consistently what next steps in their learning they need to take. Pastoral care is outstanding, as staff know pupils very well as individuals and do all they can to help them thrive. A parent commented, 'The school is a happy, safe and secure environment for my child.' The learning mentor makes a valuable contribution when working with individuals and their families. There is good provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and any concerns are picked up early. The school involves parents very well in supporting their children, and has good links with outside agencies for additional advice and guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The impact of leadership and management on standards and achievement is good, with robust monitoring and tracking systems introduced that enable staff to analyse the school's effectiveness in depth. The headteacher's infectious enthusiasm brings out the best in parents, pupils and teachers alike. One parent said, 'The head inspires the children in a really positive way'. Staff lead by example and create a caring culture of trust that enables pupils to flourish and contributes considerably to their outstanding personal development and great enjoyment of school. Several subject leaders are new to their roles, but already are beginning to influence their areas through their grasp of the issues they face. Governors are supportive and well led by the chair, who is enabling less experienced governors to grow in confidence.

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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 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	2
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?	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.

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 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 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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Queensbridge Primary School, London, E8 4ET

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at your school. Yours is a good school with many strengths. Here are some of them.

- Children get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You make good progress in your learning.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you care for one another extremely well.
- You are very involved in supporting the school and the local community.
- Your attendance is good.
- There are lots of clubs for you to enjoy and you go on plenty of visits.
- Teachers make learning fun so that you find lessons interesting.
- The school cares for you extremely well, especially if you have any worries.
- The headteacher makes school exciting and leads extremely effectively.

You all have targets to improve your literacy and numeracy and you discuss your progress with your teachers. We think that marking needs to show you consistently what you need to do next in your learning. Most of you do well at school, but we would like more of you to reach the higher levels. This means you will have to put your knowledge to good use in mathematics and science, and use more interesting words in your writing.

Thank you once again for your help. We enjoyed meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector