

Laycock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100411
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	307384
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Kay Charlton

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	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Mullins
Headteacher	Ms C Miles
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Laycock Street Upper Street London N1 1SW
Telephone number	020 7226 2927
Fax number	020 7704 2885

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Laycock is a large inner city primary school with a unit for 52 deaf pupils who receive specialist support and who are included in many lessons and main school activities. It serves an area of high social deprivation and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of White British origin. A very high percentage speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements mainly related to hearing impairment, is unusually high and varies significantly from one cohort to another. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award and has a 39-place nursery that children attend on a full-time basis.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. They make comments such as, 'There is a very happy and positive environment' and, 'This school has some great assets including a very loyal staff'. The inspection confirms the parents' and the school's view that it is a good school.

At the heart of the school's vision is the belief that all pupils, whatever their background or ability, can be successful and this is achieved in practice. Teaching and learning are good. Staff have secure knowledge of the areas they teach and all are keen and enthusiastic. In turn, pupils try hard and, across the school, they achieve well and make good progress. Deaf pupils are catered for well and make good progress. By age eleven, the standards pupils attain are below those expected nationally but given their starting points this represents good progress and achievement. Occasionally, when teachers do not make use of a sufficiently wide range of teaching strategies to challenge all pupils fully, some do not do as well as they should.

Throughout the school, pupils show extremely positive attitudes and a keen sense of enjoyment in their work. A particular strength of the school is the way in which pupils from very diverse backgrounds and with very different needs work together showing high levels of respect for each other. The curriculum is good and enriched extremely well by a range of exciting activities that leads pupils to say, 'Education is fun in this school'.

Care of pupils is of an extremely high quality and the guidance and support they receive for their academic work is generally good. Staff establish excellent relationships with pupils and, in a calm and purposeful climate, ensure that they feel safe and secure. There are outstanding links with others that make a particularly positive contribution to the provision and provide pupils with excellent opportunities to participate in events with the wider community.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and, along with the senior team, has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They actively develop the skills of the staff to ensure that the school's identified priorities are addressed. Governors ask searching questions about the school's effectiveness and provide a good level of support in its drive for improvement. Monitoring is rigorous and used well, resulting in good improvement since the last inspection. Since there are such significant variations between cohorts, particularly in terms of the percentage of statements, it complicates the school's ability to compare its performance against the national picture to check that every pupil is achieving as well as they should be. Even so, staff have made a good start in using the school's own monitoring information to be certain that every pupil is achieving their very best but there is still further to go in this area. The school's track record of improvement shows that it has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's achievements and progress are good. As a result of good teaching, where assessment is used effectively children of all abilities begin to catch up from a very low starting point on entry. Nevertheless, overall standards are still significantly below those expected at the start of Year 1. Staff are very experienced in working with young children and provide a wide range of purposeful activities that are well matched to the children's ages and interests. They encourage children to take initiative and, as a result, children make very good gains in developing their levels of confidence and independence. The leadership of the foundation stage is good.

It has rightly highlighted further improvement in children's basic skills of literacy and numeracy as key priorities to ensure that no opportunity is missed to challenge children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching fully challenges all pupils so that standards more closely match those expected at age eleven.
- Ensure staff use monitoring information in a way that enables them to be certain that every pupil is achieving of their very best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, whatever their background or ability, achieve well. The school's key focus on speaking and listening not only supports the achievement of pupils with hearing impairment but also that of others including those who speak English as an additional language. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are below the national average. However, given the very low starting point of pupils on entry, this represents good progress overall. There are fluctuations in the standards that pupils attain because of the high percentage of special educational needs within different year groups. Nevertheless, the school has met the challenging targets set for 2007 and is on course to reach those set for 2008. It has a key priority related to raising standards in English and mathematics and is actively addressing this issue so that pupils' achievements improve even further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

All pupils make significant gains in developing their confidence and social skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils show noticeable respect for others ensuring a harmonious working atmosphere throughout. They thoroughly enjoy school and their behaviour is good. A number of pupils show significant improvement in their behaviour from when they first joined the school. The school does all that it can to encourage attendance, but overall attendance is only average since it is skewed by a high rate of medical appointments. The school has worked hard to ensure pupils make a punctual start, but a minority still arrive late. Pupils make a strong contribution to life in school and an exceptionally strong contribution to the wider community. Their voice is heard and they play an active role in making decisions that affect everyone; for example when organising the school's Christmas postal service. Pupils develop good understanding of healthy eating and say how much they like the healthy school meals. They have an excellent appreciation of potentially dangerous situations and speak very knowledgeably about the ways in which they should respond. By age eleven, pupils develop good basic skills, including those in information communication technology (ICT), and this provides effective support for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff are very positive in their approach and as a result pupils say, 'Our teachers help us to learn a lot'. Teachers make good use of resources to provide first hand experiences that make learning both meaningful and fun. Good teamwork is a noticeable

feature and class teachers and staff from the unit for deaf pupils work together very well to ensure all pupils are fully integrated into lessons. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well and make particularly effective use of spoken language to extend pupils' learning. There is excellent teaching in some lessons, where staff use a very wide range of teaching strategies to challenge every pupil to achieve their best. However, this practice is not fully consistent across the school and, as a result, there are occasions where pupils' achievements are only satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with excellent enrichment through rewarding visits out of school, such as the overnight stay at the science museum. It is well planned to meet pupils' diverse needs, including those from the unit for deaf pupils, with a very strong emphasis on personal development. There is a very wide range of visitors to the school, including visiting musicians, which build on the rich diversity of its community.

ICT is used well in other subjects, as are pupils' basic skills in speaking, listening and literacy but opportunities to use their skills in numeracy are sometimes missed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide exemplary care and high levels of support for pupils' personal development. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and teaching and support staff show commitment to ensuring very high levels of care at all times. They are vigilant and meticulous in implementing the school's procedures. They listen carefully to pupils' concerns and help them to appreciate how they might resolve problems for themselves. This plays an important part in developing pupils' confidence and independence.

Information about pupils' academic performance is used well to set targets for each individual. Pupils are very aware of their targets in literacy and are clear about the ways that they might improve their work. In numeracy, targets are not sufficiently well established as part of everyday practice to provide pupils with clear direction for the next steps in their learning. Particularly good advice is given to both pupils with special educational needs and their parents so that both are clear about the ways in which improvements might take place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the school is successful in its central vision of raising standards and achievement for pupils of very different backgrounds and beliefs. Staff work together very well as a team with a common sense of purpose. All show a strong commitment to future improvement and professional development is high on everyone's agenda. Governors act as the school's critical friend and they are effective in ensuring that the school provides good value for money. All leaders within the school have helped to establish excellent links with parents and other agencies that not only support the school's work but also help to create a strong sense of community. Rigorous monitoring is undertaken and it takes account of the views of all major stakeholders. As a result, the school is clear about its strengths and the areas that are most in need of improvement. There are significant variations between cohorts and this complicates the school's ability to compare its performance against the national picture.

It has recognised this issue and staff have started to use the school's own monitoring information in a more focussed way to be certain that every pupil is achieving of their very best.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Laycock Primary School, London, N1 1SW

Thank you for your help when we came to inspect your school on 6 and 7 November 2007.

You said Laycock is a good school and you are very proud of it. You think that everyone gets on well together and that the staff help you to learn a lot so that you make good progress. We agree with your view that it is a good school.

We could see that you try hard and enjoy your work. You all show high levels of respect towards each other. You work together very well and your behaviour is good. You make an exceptional contribution to the local community, for example when helping the aged and when helping to improve the local environment. Teaching is good. Staff work very well as a team and they make learning fun. They organise an exceptionally wide range of events and visits out of school for this reason. All of the staff look after you very well indeed and you are extremely well informed about the importance of keeping safe at all times.

The headteacher and the leadership team support the staff well and they are helping everyone to develop their skills so that the school improves. At present they are working with the staff to sure that they challenge you at all times so that your achievements improve even further. We also want the staff to use the information they have about your progress in a way that means they are certain that every one of you is achieving your very best. You can help by trying your hardest at all time and by some of you making sure you are on time at the start of the school day.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector