

St John's Upper Holloway CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100439
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	307390
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	201
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	55
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Jacqui Forrester
Headteacher	Mrs Patti Dean
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pemberton Gardens Islington London N19 5RR
Telephone number	020 7272 2780

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Inspection number	307390

Fax number

020 7561 1692

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils in this average-sized primary school come from a variety of backgrounds. The percentage entitled to free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is increasing and is greater than in most schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), largely those who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, is above average. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and governors run a breakfast and after school club. It is also the designated school within North Islington for pupils with physical disabilities. More pupils enter and leave the school at times other than the beginning of the school year than in most schools. Staffing has become more stable in the past two years. The school has been awarded the Active Schools Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and the Financial Management Standard in 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. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, it continues to improve. Children enter the EYFS with levels and knowledge and skills below those expected for most three year-olds. They make good progress overall and by the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. The progress that pupils, especially boys, make in writing throughout the school needs to accelerate. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is too low and needs to improve.

'My child loves to come to school and thoroughly enjoys learning,' is typical of the overwhelmingly supportive comments made by parents. From the start of the day when parents, pupils and teachers routinely mingle on the playground, the school provides a stable and happy environment where mutual support and understanding are paramount. A period of staffing instability slowed down the progress pupils made, especially in Key Stage 1. Staffing is now stable. New school initiatives are now having a positive impact on pupils' progress. These include the linking of subjects across the curriculum and effective procedures to track the progress of every pupil. Good teaching ensures that pupils' needs are met. Induction procedures for pupils who enter the school during the school year are good so that they settle quickly into school routines. The school is responding very well to the recent increase in the number of pupils learning English as an additional language. Very good external support helps ensure that provision is well organised and consequently pupils are very well supported and make good progress. Plans to introduce Spanish into the curriculum are well in hand, drawing on the language spoken by many of the new entrants. Pupils are beginning to use information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool to support learning in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils also use interactive whiteboards effectively as a teaching resource. All work is marked and many comments help pupils understand what they need to do in order to improve.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They are friendly and welcoming, speaking confidently to adults. Very good links exist with the local Behaviour Support Team. Consequently, appropriate training is provided to support the behaviour management of the small minority of pupils that need it. Staff also receive very good support from external agencies to help them meet the needs of pupils who either find aspects of work challenging or need additional support because of their physical disabilities. Consequently, all staff including teaching assistants, are well prepared to support pupils who need more support in classrooms and around the school. A consistent approach to speaking and listening is helping pupils become more aware of the need to consider others' points of view. Pupils enjoy the many experiences offered and speak with enthusiasm about their prowess in sport and the many special curriculum weeks that are organised to motivate them in their learning.

The headteacher is very focused on accelerating achievement and improving the learning experiences of the pupils. She has successfully gained the understanding and support of all staff, who share her vision and apply themselves to the task with enthusiasm. The recently reviewed self-evaluation procedures are outstanding. This is because the stabilised senior management team has adopted rigorous procedures that ensure all staff know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and share a common understanding of priorities for improvement. The school also benefits from the support of parents, reflected in good attendance at curriculum meetings and the formation of groups such as the 'Achievement Group', established originally to promote the progress of Black Caribbean boys but now with a more general remit

of support. The school has clearly identified priorities and governors are determined and committed to accelerate progress and raise standards even further, especially in writing and the higher levels in mathematics. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and excellent teamwork provide a vibrant and interesting learning environment. Children are taught very well. Teaching is innovative, for example, the singing 'crocodile' line to the dining hall to ensure that all arrive safely. Children respond with energy and enthusiasm. They make good progress from a low base on entry with most reaching and a few exceeding the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Children settle quickly into Nursery routines. Very effective procedures ensure that children whose first language is not English are supported very well. This was seen during the inspection, for example, when a new non-English speaking child quickly settled in, after being encouraged to make friends and being led by the hand to explore different activities. There are excellent links with parents who are initially encouraged to stay with their children, easing the transfer from home to school. The very well planned curriculum meets statutory requirements, and is supported by a wide range of resources. It is play-based, takes very good account of children's interests and introduces them to many new experiences. Excellent assessment procedures provide information in a profile that is used effectively to plan future exciting work. The transfer to Reception is smooth. Good use is made of all facilities to enhance learning and to meet the children's needs. Personal, social, emotional and physical development is good. Parents are very supportive, frequently providing a more rounded view of their child when adding comments to the school assessment sheets. The implementation of an external programme to develop children's communication, language and literacy is helping to raise standards. It has received excellent praise from external assessors. Children from the EYFS do not attend the breakfast or after school clubs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in writing throughout the school, particularly for boys.
- Set more challenging targets in mathematics, especially for more able pupils, to increase the percentage attaining the higher levels by the end of Year 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Pupils make good progress from entry into the Nursery and through Reception. A high turnover of teachers in Key Stage 1 has slowed down pupils' progress, although their achievement is still satisfactory. Between 2005 and 2007, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in all subjects year-on-year because staffing in these classes was more stable and the quality of teaching was consistently good. Standards in the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 6 were broadly average. The 2008 results indicate that these standards are being maintained. The school recognises that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels in writing is too low. As a result, the school has focussed on this aspect of pupils' work and there is evidence, in most classes, that this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics is also inconsistent from year to year even allowing for the comparatively small numbers. The school needs to

ensure that targets set in mathematics for more able pupils are challenging and that their progress accelerates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They really enjoy school and have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to stay safe. Attendance is good but punctuality for a few pupils needs to improve. Behaviour is managed well and is good overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents, who are pleased with the values promoted, said that they, 'enjoyed and appreciated the collective spirit of the school'. Pupils respect each other's cultural heritage and beliefs and enjoy occasions when these are celebrated. Assemblies led by the vicar strengthen ties with the local church and community. Pupils' views are actively sought through the school council that has lobbied successfully to improve toilets and playground markings. Pupils talk confidently about what they need to do to live a healthy life-style. Year 6 talked enthusiastically about the sponsoring of a child in Uganda, fund raising for charities and recycling materials to improve the environment. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities provided in both the Breakfast Club and after school Buzz Club that enable them to apply and practice a wide range of skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'We can always talk to the teacher about how we feel about our work', said a pupil in Year 2. This openness of discussion and the very good relationships between all adults and pupils underpin the good progress that pupils make. Teachers plan work that interests and motivates pupils and is generally well matched to their abilities. They acknowledge that more able pupils have not always attained the higher levels, especially in mathematics and writing and in a minority of lessons teachers expectations of these pupils are still too low. The most successful lessons move on at a brisk pace, engaging the pupils in tasks where they cooperate well and apply their skills successfully to overcome challenges. Skilled teaching assistants have established very good working relationships with the pupils they support. These include a small minority who find it difficult to concentrate for long periods and need the extra support that teaching assistants provide. Teachers question well, encouraging pupils to reflect, explain and justify their opinions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

'I really enjoyed the trip to the supermarket', said a Year 1 pupil on his return to school. Such visits, combined with visitors, curriculum weeks, special days such as International Day, acclaimed by pupils as 'great', and a wide range of extra-curricular activities help create a curriculum that is rich in learning opportunities. Teachers are developing curriculum planning by creating links between subjects to make learning more relevant to pupils. The needs of pupils, including those who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, are met well. The school also successfully includes pupils entering with English as an additional language well, by drawing on their knowledge and understanding of their own country and culture. The provision of more challenging activities in mathematics and especially for the more able pupils is a school priority.

The school organised a 'film week' instead of a 'book week' in a successful attempt to motivate boys and encourage them to take a more active part in speaking, listening and writing activities. The development of key skills in reading is a strength.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care pupils receive is outstanding. Systems ensure that pupils feel safe and secure and know who to go if they experience difficulties. All adults are well trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. The behaviour policy is consistently applied, lessons are not interrupted and there is harmony in the playground. Initiatives to improve pupils' diets and exercise have been successful. Very good use is made of external professionals, such as the speech therapist, to support pupils with specific learning and physical needs. New procedures to check attendance are proving successful. Guidance and support are good. Rigorous systems for tracking individual pupils' progress, implemented recently, help ensure that under-achievers receive the support they need to meet the targets expected of them. It is early days but these are beginning to have a positive impact on progress. Marking is consistent and often helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve. However, there are too few opportunities for older pupils to evaluate their work and record their comments before handing their books in for marking. Before and after school provision is good. A wide range of interesting activities is planned and pupils work and play within a safe environment and are well supervised.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has created an effective senior management team that is enthusiastic and determined to accelerate progress and raise standards. All members of the team feel empowered. Senior leaders recognise that until recently the higher than average turnover of staff hampered continuity and progression and that too few pupils are attaining the expected levels in writing and the higher levels in mathematics. However, recent stability has created more opportunities for the application of initiatives, both consistently and over time. Consequently, senior leaders now rigorously monitor the progress of individuals to ensure all receive appropriate support and enjoy equal opportunities to succeed. All staff are very clear about their areas of responsibility and everyone's opinion is valued and considered. Consequently, teaching assistants express the view that they now feel totally involved in the school and are confident 'that strategies are now in place that will help us move pupils on in every aspect of their work'. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are very supportive, especially in fostering and developing the very good links that exist between the school and all sections of the local community. The provision for before and after school care is also well led and managed.

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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?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
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**

24 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Upper Holloway CofE Primary School, London, N19 5RR

On behalf of your inspectors, thank you for being so welcoming, polite and friendly when we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you and looking at all your work and the exciting things that you do.

You go to a good school. Here is a list of some of the things we liked best.

- Everybody we met in your school made us feel very welcome and looked after us.
- You are polite and caring and you behave well.
- You are beginning to listen very carefully to all that your teachers and teaching assistants say and this helps you know exactly what you have to do in lessons.
- You work together well and make good progress in your work.
- Your teachers are good at planning interesting things for you to do.
- All the adults make sure you are really well looked after.
- Your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are doing a good job.

Every school, even one as good as yours, has things that could be improved.

- We think that more of you could do even better in your writing and especially the boys.
- We think that more of you could attain the higher levels in mathematics before you leave the school.

Yours sincerely

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector