

Fenstanton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100595
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	307419
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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)	502
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Valletta Bayley
Headteacher	Ms Sally Hindle
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Abbots Park Tulse Hill London SW2 3PW
Telephone number	020 8674 3311
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fenstanton is a large school with a high proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The school caters for pupils from a rich diversity of ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils are of Black African or Black Caribbean origin. Nearly half of the pupils do not speak English at home. The percentage of pupils who need extra help with their learning, because they have speech and language problems or find concentrating difficult, is higher than found in most other primary schools. There is a small number of refugees and asylum seekers and very few children are looked after outside the family home. More pupils than average arrive or leave school mid academic year.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of one Nursery class and three Reception classes. Nursery children attend either in the morning or in the afternoon. Play-Care Lambeth provides onsite childcare after school. The school has gained Sportsmark, Healthy Schools Award and both Bronze and Silver Eco-Schools Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fenstanton is a good school. Although standards are still well below average the headteacher has steered the school very effectively to sustained improvement. In 2007, standards in English, mathematics and science were low. However, this represented good achievement for these pupils who entered the school with particularly limited skills. The school is keeping up this momentum of good achievement over a year later. The school quite rightly prides itself on its good support for pupils and their families. It deals very sensitively and practically with day-to-day problems linked to pupils' social and domestic circumstances. Consequently, pupils feel very much at home in school and enjoy their learning. Parents are very appreciative of the school. One parent spoke for many when she commented, 'We as a family love the school.' However, attendance rates are well below the national average. Staff monitor attendance and punctuality diligently. Despite the very best efforts of the school, a few families give a low priority to regular and prompt attendance. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils behave sensibly and represent their school well when they are out on trips. A few pupils can be silly and immature, but invariably the others ignore these inappropriate actions. Pupils are particularly knowledgeable about how to live healthy lives. They are lively and generally good-natured at playtimes and love representing their school in competitions.

Most pupils respect their teachers and want to do their best for them. Teachers are well organised and are clear about what they want the pupils to have learnt by the end of the lesson. They are starting to encourage pupils to take more of a lead in their learning. Some teachers involve pupils well in group or paired work, so pupils can evaluate how well they are doing. However, this practice and the setting of goals for improvement are not sufficiently consistent, so some pupils are not clear enough about what they need to do to improve their learning over the longer term. The curriculum is good. The school provides many opportunities for these pupils that they would not otherwise have. Stimulating activities and outings capture the pupils' imaginations and make school a popular place. One boy said 'I like school 100%!'. Of particular note is the chance pupils have to study Spanish both on the timetable and during out-of-hours clubs. Year 6 pupils are particularly excited about the planned exchange trip to Tenerife to practise their Spanish.

Leaders and managers are taking the school onward and upward. Senior leaders focus well on raising standards. They have a very clear understanding about how different groups of pupils are progressing because of precise data analysis. Middle leaders are beginning to monitor lessons first hand, but they do not all have an accurate view of the quality of pupils' learning. Professional development is under way to support teachers who are not confident. In the meantime, senior leaders organise effective special support to enhance the teaching provision. For example, booster sessions, individual support from teaching assistants and visits from outside experts add positively to pupils' achievement. The determined way in which the school has pushed up standards shows that it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below those expected for three and four year olds. Home visits form the basis of very effective settling in routines, helping staff to pinpoint the needs of all new children accurately. Strong links are built-up with parents and staff work hard to ensure that families are involved with their children's development.

Consequently, children settle quickly and arrive happily at school each day. Good teaching, effective care and a well-planned range of activities enable all children to make good progress. For example, the Owl Family theme enthused children to start to write Mum and Dad and had many of them collecting leaves to decorate their chalk drawings of owls. However, reading and numeracy skills remain well below expectations for children of a similar age. By the end of Reception, standards are below those expected but the children have made good progress from their starting points. The EYFS leader has quickly established a united team keen to explore new initiatives to promote further achievement for children. For example, a recent focus on sounding out letters and developing writing skills is showing early signs of success. The monitoring of children's progress has improved but remains inconsistent. Frequent and close daily tracking of the development of children in their independent activities is not sufficiently rigorous. The learning environment, both in the classrooms and the outside areas, is attractive and stimulating. Teachers and assistants provide a very effective blend of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to choose activities of their own accord so children can make progress in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all leaders and managers have first hand evidence of learning so that they can effectively improve the consistency of teaching.
- Ensure pupils are fully involved in their learning and know what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with standards below those expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy. A significant number of pupils also arrive at different times with low skills and speaking very little English. Pupils make good progress and leave with standards below the average for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, Year 2 pupils reached standards below average in writing and exceptionally low standards in reading and mathematics. The Year 6 pupils also attained low standards, but this was an improvement from the previous year. Although standards are still below average the school has improved standards year on year for the last 5 years. This year standards in the unvalidated national tests in English, mathematics and science have improved further and are now below, rather than well below, national averages. Last year, pupils from white British backgrounds did not achieve as well as other pupils. The school has worked methodically to improve their learning and they now achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils who find learning difficult and those who do not speak English at home make similar progress to others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes. Most pupils are courteous, friendly and behave well because teachers set clear expectations. A significant minority of pupils misbehave but they are well managed by staff and do not disrupt learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and relationships at every level are warm and harmonious. Pupils enjoy finding more about the many interesting backgrounds of their classmates. They possess an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. They thrive on additional responsibilities. For example, the school council plays an active role in promoting pupils views and improving their school grounds.

Pupils contribute well to the wider community by raising funds for well-known charities. By the time pupils leave, although the confidence of pupils in their literacy and numeracy is variable, they are well adjusted, mature and ready for the next stage of life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen to learn because teachers know how to inspire confidence and enjoyment. Classrooms are welcoming and staff plan especially well to include many opportunities for speaking and listening activities. Pupils still developing their competence in English greatly benefit from this emphasis on language. Lessons are well structured and teachers clarify what pupils should learn by the end of the lesson. This is enabling pupils, to an increasing extent, to reflect on their own progress. Despite these good features, however, teachers do not always challenge the most able successfully enough, especially in writing. Marking is regular and generally helpful but does not always tell pupils how to make further improvements on their own. In some classes, the introductions to lessons are over long, which leaves less time for pupils to work independently. Senior leaders are aware of this and provide guidance that is leading to improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The well-planned curriculum takes account of the needs of all groups of learners, including those with specific learning difficulties and those who speak little English. The topic-based approach allows pupils to have plenty of 'hands on' experiences to enliven their learning. Pupils' understanding of environmental issues is developed successfully through the school's commitment to ecology. Innovative themed projects and workshops such as 'science week' provide different reasons for pupils to write or use computers. Each term a new topic is heralded by a visit to a place of interest to set the scene and motivate the pupils. For example, the pupils learnt much about the Tudors following their day at Hampton Court. Pupils use public transport for many of the trips so that they grow in confidence in independent travel. A range of sports, led by specialist coaches, contributes very well to pupils' positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy. There are many popular extension activities to the school day, ranging from fitness pursuits to jewelry making.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and guidance provided for pupils' personal development is good. New pupils settle quickly and happily into the school irrespective of the time of year they arrive because of good induction procedures. Health and safety and risk assessments are robust. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult they can turn to if they have a problem. Those with behavioural, social and medical needs are nurtured very well in the safe school environment. The school works effectively with outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable children receive the best possible care. Those at the early stages of learning English make good progress because teachers are quick to find the right support for them. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. There is good practice in some subject areas but a legacy of inconsistency in others. Learners

were able to describe their targets but were less clear how they could use them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior leaders work well as a cohesive team committed to improving the life chances for their pupils. They make a point of understanding their pupils' circumstances so they can give the right support for the best achievement. The school makes good use of challenging targets so staff can strive for improvement. This has proved successful in raising standards steadily over the past 5 years, not only in academic results but also in attendance rates. The headteacher and her team are clear about the school's strengths. They have accurately prioritised major strategic developments. Senior leaders are especially adept at tracking improvements in school attainment and analysing data to identify which groups are not progressing as they should. However, middle leaders are not spending sufficient time in classrooms to experience how well pupils are learning. Consequently, some of their views of the quality of learning are not as accurate as they could be.

The school is very well resourced and has some teaching assistants of high calibre. Nevertheless, support staff are not always deployed in class to ensure their time is best used to support learning. Governors are supportive and have a clear understanding of the school's place in the local community. After recent structural changes, they are getting to grips with improving their ability to hold the school to account.

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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?	2
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	1
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	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	3
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	3
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?	No

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

21 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fenstanton Primary School, London, SW2 3PW

Thank you very much for helping us on the inspection by talking to us and showing us what you can do. Your parents and carers are pleased with your school because they believe you learn well and are in safe hands. We definitely agree.

You go to a good school. We think you are making good progress because your teachers and helpers make sure you have the right support both in the classroom or through special tuition. Standards in English, mathematics and science are lower than other schools, but they are becoming higher each year. You have great opportunities to visit interesting places and do experiments to help your learning. We can see that your teachers mark your work regularly. Ms Hindle and her team of senior teachers lead the school well. We are particularly impressed with the way they can tell from data how well you are doing. If they feel you could do better, they are quick to help you catch up.

You told us that you like coming to school and we are not surprised. Behaviour is good and you get on well with your teachers and friends. We are pleased that you know how to lead healthy and safe lives. We especially like the way you are developing as responsible young people and building up your knowledge of how to be environmentally friendly. It is not every day that we hear about pupils who look after their own chickens!

To make your learning even better, we have asked your school to do two things.

- Make sure all your senior teachers visit your classrooms more often so they can see how well you are learning.
- Ensure teachers always tell you exactly how you can improve your learning.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. We know that your teachers make your school a special place for you. You can do your bit by continuing to be very positive and by making the most of your time at Fenstanton Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McDermott

Lead Inspector