

Edmund Waller Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100680
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	307437
Inspection date	17 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Gray

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	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Judy Harrington
Headteacher	Mr Brian Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Waller Road London SE14 5LY
Telephone number	020 7639 0436
Fax number	020 7635 0153

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by pupils from entry to the Nursery until the end of Year 2, the effectiveness of leadership and management in raising standards in mathematics, and pupils' personal development. Evidence was gathered from records of pupils' attainment, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and round the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils, and an analysis of responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than most schools of its type. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is higher than usually found. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average but only a few are at the early stages of learning English. A smaller than average number of pupils have statements of education need although the proportion on the special needs register is higher than usually found. The two largest groups are pupils with speech, language and communication problems and those with moderate learning difficulties. The headteacher took up his post at the beginning of February this year.

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 where pupils achieve well. Their personal development is outstanding, as reflected by the comments of one of the parents: 'Children thrive and learn to be citizens of the world through speech, art and sport'. Pupils' awareness of the many cultures in their school is as well developed as their understanding of the need for complete acceptance of others. 'Each person must have the right religion if it meets his or her needs,' commented a Year 6 pupil, when asked to consider if it was fair to compare religions. Pupils' behaviour and enjoyment of learning are good, though these are sometimes affected if the lesson does not absorb the pupils' interest. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. The school council, though small, is seen as very effective by other pupils. 'It does a good job with the big issues - their surveys on bullying have really made a difference.' Members helped interview the candidates for the headteacher; they asked each one, 'Is it good for a headteacher to be funny?'

Children have a good start in the exciting and lively Foundation Stage - in the words of a parent, 'The Nursery environment is fantastically stimulating and creative'. Children begin Year 1 with broadly average skills, a picture which is repeated by the end of Year 2. They make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics. The school is working to improve the progress pupils make in these subjects. The effect of the work done so far to help pupils link sounds to letters shows that the school has good capacity to improve further. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6, especially in English and science, and the school is keen to make their progress in mathematics as good as it is in the other two subjects. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science.

The school's current management structure has served the school well and the effectiveness of leadership and management is good, as is seen in the higher standards by Year 6 than at the time of the last inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and involves all members of the school community. However, there is no middle layer of management, so that there is no one with day-to-day responsibility for each of the two phases of the school, infants and juniors. Subject leaders are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas but have not always received the necessary time to have sufficient impact on improvement. The school is formulating a new structure to remedy this. Governors are very well involved in planning the school's development and offer good challenge to its work. They gain first-hand experience of the school's day-to-day running and are planning to introduce more rigour into how they evaluate it.

The curriculum is good and meets pupils' needs well. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use computers in many subjects and the school is keen to extend this into the realms of film and music. There is a large range of sporting opportunities and pupils proudly told the inspector about the trophies that school teams have won. Another school team is hopeful of reaching the finals of an inter-school quiz. Music and drama are well represented; for example, the choir recently performed when HM The Queen attended the opening of the Royal Festival Hall.

Teaching is good and inspires pupils to take great pride in their work. This was seen in a Year 3 classroom, where pupils were keen that the inspector should see all their work on display. Strong relationships between pupils and all adults are vital to this and were commented on by many parents. In mathematics, teachers generally plan well to meet the needs of average and lower attaining pupils; however, higher attaining pupils do not always receive work that is hard enough. The school collects reliable data on pupils' performance in reading, writing and

mathematics and uses this information well to support learning in English. It is now turning to make more effective use of data in mathematics.

The pastoral care which the school gives its pupils is excellent. One parent wrote to say, 'The children are well cared for in every way possible.' The input of the community worker and therapists for drama, speech and language was commended by parents. The school makes very effective use of its partnership with local primary and secondary schools to enhance the expertise and enjoyment available to pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children begin the Nursery with skills which vary from year to year. Overall they are slightly below national expectations, especially in terms of their social and emotional development. By the time they leave Reception, most children have reached the goals expected of them and many have exceeded them. This represents good progress. A strength of the provision is the commitment of all staff to the care and nurture of the children. Children's experience is consistently good in all three classes. Staff provide good quality learning experiences for them which they clearly enjoy enormously; for example, during the morning of the inspection, children were hunting for cardboard Easter eggs bearing the numbers one to 20, which had to be hung in sequence on a line. Assessment procedures are thorough and frequent and lead to well written reports at the end of the Foundation Stage. The system to gauge children's attainment on entry to Nursery is not sufficiently detailed for the school to be able to assess the value added by the time the children enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Make more effective use of assessment data in mathematics throughout the school, to give pupils work that is more closely matched to their ability, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Complete plans for the new management structure to give more accountability to middle managers.

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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	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	3
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

26 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edmund Waller Primary School, London, SE14 5LY

Just before Easter, I spent a day in your school, which I enjoyed very much. This was because you were all so very friendly, welcoming and polite. The youngest children involved me in their learning and play and the oldest were very open in discussing their mature and well considered opinions. I am very grateful that you made my work so pleasant.

I agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school. One of the best things about it is how you grow up to become responsible and caring people. You are keen to lead a healthy life and understand why this is important. Another of the best things is how hard all the staff work to keep you safe and to make your lessons fun. You told me you feel very secure in school and that things like learning to swim and sail help you keep safe outside school. You behave very well and only occasionally do a few people spoil things.

There is much that you enjoy about school, such as the trips and residential visits. Drama and productions are among the things you like best, you told me. Some added reading to this list, when I asked about it. You do well in English, mathematics and science and reach above average standards by the time you leave. I have asked the school to help you make faster progress in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. You make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Those of you who learn quickest would benefit sometimes from harder work in mathematics and I have asked your teachers to take this into account when they plan your work.

Your new headteacher and his senior staff lead the school well and many of your parents expressed their confidence in the school's future. The headteacher is planning to make some changes to the jobs that leaders have around the school. You may not be aware of the changes when they happen, but I agree with the headteacher that this is a good improvement to make.

I hope you continue to enjoy your learning at Edmund Waller.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Additional Inspector