

Tidemill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100706
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	307450
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Wilson

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	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Ami Ibitson
Headteacher	Mr Mark Elms
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
School address	Frankham Street London SE8 4RN
Telephone number	020 8692 3470
Fax number	020 8305 8985

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Tidemill is an above average sized school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and having a home language other than English are very high, with Somali, Persian/Farsi, French and Yoruba being the most common languages. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. A much higher proportion of pupils than usual join and leave the school at other than normal times. The school has gained a number of awards including, Healthy School Status and the Activemark for physical education. The school provides a range of extended services.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Tidemill is an outstanding school. It provides a very high quality of education and level of care for its pupils. One parent wrote, 'I think Tidemill is an outstanding school with excellent teaching and support staff. They care really well for the children and give them a wonderful attitude to learning.' This is typical of the very large number of comments by parents.

Pupils achieve very well in the school. This is due to a combination of factors. Very significant amongst these is their personal development, which is excellent. For example, the outstanding social and emotional development of pupils results in a happy community in which relationships are excellent and, as a parent said, there is a 'fantastic celebration of diversity throughout the school'. Pupils feel part of and proud of their school, know that they are very well looked after and, as a result, they are very keen to learn and to do well. Teaching is of high quality. Literacy, numeracy and science investigational skills are all taught very well, and very well-planned additional support is provided for those pupils falling behind or having difficulty.

Pupils start school with well below average skills. They achieve exceptionally well to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. There has, however, been a considerable turnover of staff in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 in recent times, which has caused some disruption to pupils' learning. Consequently, progress in these years, though still good is not outstanding as it is in later years, where staffing has been more stable. The school leaders recognise that progress could have been quicker amongst these pupils and they are taking effective action to improve it, for example by providing extra support staff to work with pupils in lessons. The curriculum is very well planned and organised, so that it meets the needs of all pupils very well, including higher attainers, those needing extra help with their learning and the many who speak English as an additional language. Excellent links with the community, and the opportunities pupils have to participate in a wide range of trips and activities, help make learning more relevant. An outstanding range of clubs and after school activities contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership of the school is outstanding. The headteacher and staff work well as a team and share the common aim of providing the best for the pupils. The school has made excellent improvement since the last inspection. For example, the progress of pupils has improved significantly, assessment of pupils is much better and provision in information and communications technology is much better. It has an outstanding capacity for further improvement. Central to the ethos of the school are the outstanding links with parents and the community. 'The school is an extension of the family' commented one parent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Most of the teachers are new to the school. They work well together and are well led by the new team leader who is bringing about considerable improvement. The learning environment within classrooms is good. Lessons are well planned with activities that meet children's learning needs and there are good arrangements for assessing their knowledge and understanding. Other significant improvements are the increased opportunities for children to develop independence and the much greater involvement of parents. Arrangements to evaluate children's overall progress and set challenging targets, thereby checking that progress is as good as it could be, are underdeveloped. Sound use is

made of the outside learning area but its size limits the range of opportunities that can be provided. Most children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their ages. Many have very limited social and communication skills and low literacy and mathematical skills. They make good progress and the standards they attain at the end of the Reception year, though below average, are improving because of the recent improvements to provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Support the teachers new to the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 so that progress of pupils is consistently outstanding throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From a level of attainment which is well below average when they join the school, pupils attain standards at the end of Year 6 that match national averages in English and mathematics and exceed them in science. Overall, this represents outstanding achievement. Progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, although good, has been affected by a high turnover of staff. However, more stable staffing is now ensuring that the progress made by pupils in these year groups continues to improve. Pupils of all backgrounds, those who need additional help with their learning, and the many speaking English as an additional language, make similar progress to their classmates. Almost all of the school's very challenging targets for 2007 were exceeded and equally challenging targets have been set for the current academic year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. This can be seen in the excellent relationships, the very good behaviour and the way in which pupils listen to, support and encourage each other. Pupils are mature, confident and respect each other's cultures and traditions. Their enjoyment of school is very evident in the enthusiastic way in which they participate in lessons and the many other activities provided for them. Their attendance is excellent and they talk with pride about 'their school'. Pupils have a very good knowledge of what they need to do to live a healthy lifestyle including eating well and taking exercise. They know how to stay very safe through visits from appropriate professional personnel such as police, road safety officers and through work in lessons on topics such as drugs education. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, through working as helpers, being members of the vibrant school council and being involved in a wide range of events. Their strong personal and social skills, coupled with sound levels of key basic skills ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding because the overall high quality of the teaching enables pupils to achieve so well. Teachers are enthusiastic, skilled at managing pupils' behaviour and have excellent relationships with their pupils. They are very good at developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and this contributes well to helping pupils to learn. Teachers have good

subject knowledge and plan interesting lessons that pupils enjoy and which are well matched to their learning needs. Expectations are high. Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies including whole-class teaching, individual, paired and group work. The pace of lessons is good but sometimes activities are overlong and pupils lose concentration towards the end of the lesson. Pupils are given clear guidance on how they are doing and how to improve their work through a combination of very good marking and feedback on their work and the setting of targets for each pupil in English. There are good aids to learning in all classrooms, such as grammatical prompts for English and mathematical displays. Teaching assistants are skilled and are used well to provide additional help to those pupils needing it. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it matches the needs of pupils very well. For example, the emphasis on speaking and listening in lessons helps meet the needs of the many pupils speaking English as an additional language and the use of drama helps boys' literacy skills. Provision for pupils who need additional help with their learning is well planned and organised. Class groupings are well planned and flexible so that English and mathematics are taught in smaller groups whilst larger, mixed age groups facilitate integration and enable good use of resources. There is an emphasis on rich, first hand experiences to compensate for pupils' limited prior knowledge. For example, all Year 5 pupils recently participated in a boat building project and members of the school council are involved in helping to redesign the school. The curriculum provides very well for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and links between subjects are good, so that pupils see the connections between areas of learning. It also provides exceptionally well for pupils' personal development. A contributory factor to this is the outstanding range of clubs and after school activities in which many pupils participate. Another key element is the way the school is rooted in the local community. It supports and involves parents through providing opportunities for them to work alongside their children. There is very good guidance for parents on how to help their children read and language classes for those parents who want to improve their command of English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care provided for pupils in the school is excellent. Pupils feel valued and safe and say, 'teachers never give up trying for us'. Systems are meticulous and thorough. For example, pupils' emotional needs are monitored, child protection arrangements are robust, trips are carefully planned to ensure pupils' safety and support is provided for families in difficult circumstances. Strategies for ensuring pupils' attendance are outstanding and include the use of theatre groups to model situations where conflicts may occur, for example a child refusing to go to school. There is a school breakfast club and extended services include workshops and parent groups. Academic support for pupils is excellent. Arrangements to keep track of pupils' ongoing academic progress are exceptionally thorough and the information is used very well to plan support and intervention for pupils not making expected progress. Parents are expected to come to the regular meetings to discuss their children's progress and the attendance rate is excellent. Very good use is made of outside agencies to provide specialist support for pupils where needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He is experienced, enthusiastic and innovative and is supported by a very competent leadership team committed to continually improving the school. Staff are valued, expected to work hard and are very well supported in developing their skills and expertise. Managers at all levels have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on very effective systems for evaluation and planning. Arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and the curriculum are very thorough, and action is taken where needed, to maintain the high quality of provision. The need to provide continuing support to teachers in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where there has been a high staff turnover, is recognised by leaders, in order to ensure consistently outstanding progress of pupils. Data are used very effectively to set realistic and challenging targets based on each pupils' potential. The school makes excellent use of resources and is successful in attracting external sources of funding, for example, for after school provision. The school rightly prides itself on its inclusion of pupils with wide ranging needs, but provision for wheel chair access is limited. Governors are knowledgeable, able and committed. They have a good knowledge of the broad strengths and weaknesses of the school but lack a clear understanding of school performance data.

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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tidemill Primary School, London, SE8 4RN

You may remember that three inspectors recently came to visit your school. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. You were all very polite, confident and told us what you thought very clearly. We really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and other people who work in the school, and I am writing to let you know what we found out.

We think that you go to an excellent school, which is led very well by your headteacher. Both he and all staff are very committed to helping you achieve very well. We think that you have very good teachers and that the school organises lessons very effectively so that they are interesting and meet your needs very well. The school frequently checks on how well you are doing and provides very good additional help when you need it. As a result, your achievements are excellent. Both you and your parents said how much you enjoyed school and get along with each other. You feel safe and cared for and you work hard. We were particularly impressed with the way your school helps you to develop good personal skills, such as self-confidence, being responsible and knowing how to stay safe and healthy. We were also very impressed with the way the school works with your parents, your excellent attendance and the excellent relationships throughout the school.

We have made just one suggestion for improvement and that is for the school to improve your progress even further so that it is consistently high throughout the school.

I am sure that your school will carry on getting better and better and that you will help by keeping up the excellent behaviour and continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Ian Wilson

Lead Inspector