

# Ashmead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100716
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	307455
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Beale

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	244
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Collen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Mornington Centre Stanley Street London SE8 4BL
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8692 6081
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8692 6632

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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspection focused on:

- how well the school is maintaining its qualities during the considerable disruption caused by the move of site during the rebuilding programme
- the effectiveness of the school's action to improve writing
- the impact of assessment and its use to guide pupils in understanding the next steps in their learning.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, external monitoring, observations of teaching and the work produced by pupils. Parents' questionnaires, discussions with pupils, governors and staff contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves a culturally diverse community that includes some areas with high levels of social deprivation. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups; the largest are of Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds. About a quarter of the pupils have a home language other than English. The school is currently operating in accommodation over a mile from its normal site, while the buildings are being demolished and rebuilt. The Nursery currently remains in its original building some 400 metres from the old school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Ashmead Primary is a good school. It also has some outstanding features. Its success is built on a happy and purposeful atmosphere and strong leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by a cohesive staff team. Parents are delighted with the way the school cares for their children. As one parent wrote, 'The school has a family friendly approach and is personal to each child.'

Parents also recognise how well staff and pupils are coping with operating in different buildings, although they miss the daily contact with their children's teachers. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to help the pupils feel that this is 'their school' even if for only a short time, by trying as far as possible to retain its atmosphere and ethos. One parent summed this up well when writing, 'All in all, it could have been a very disruptive experience for children and parents, but due to the efforts of the school this has not been the case.' Health and safety procedures are secure and are standing up to current upheavals. The school council played a very important role in the school by allaying any concerns their classmates might have had by visiting the temporary buildings beforehand and talking to pupils there at the time about their experiences.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school because teachers make their work interesting not just in normal lessons but also by the additional activities and events that bring learning to life. Teachers have forged strong links between subjects and make the use of new technology integral to pupils' learning. However, the temporary building does not enable teachers and pupils the access to classroom computers to which they been accustomed. Music makes a major contribution to the life of the school, whether this is through pupils' learning to play an instrument or through other activities such as choral work or the Samba band. Pupils make a very considerable contribution to the community and are proud of their work with a local special school in the production of the musical 'Billy Elliott'.

The international dimension gives many interesting opportunities for the pupils to gain a better understanding of the customs of others around the world. The link with a school in China is developing well, and pupils have learnt a few words in Chinese. They particularly enjoyed the recent opportunity to try out Tai Chi. Pupils talk with much enthusiasm about the 'International Lunch', where they taste food from a wide variety of countries and dress up in traditional costumes. This not only celebrates the school's cultural diversity but also encourages groups of parents to participate. Many of these activities are strengthened by links with local secondary schools including the opportunity to learn French. Links such as these and the sports partnerships make a very considerable contribution to broadening the pupils' experiences and help them to understand how to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Teachers are always searching for ways in which to improve the pupils' achievement and make their experiences more enjoyable. Pupils achieve well because teachers make their lessons interesting by adopting a wide range of methods to promote learning in different ways. However, in less successful lessons they do not adopt the most effective activities to support learning, particularly for some of the more able in their classes. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school and are prepared well for the next stage of their learning and beyond. Standards are above average by Year 6, with a considerable number of pupils working beyond the level expected for their age. There are several reasons for this. Talented Year 6 mathematicians are extended well and teachers generate a love for science through experiments

and investigations. New programmes to improve the pupils' writing are also proving successful, but have yet to feed through into test results at Year 2 and Year 6.

Improvements in the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress enable staff to have a clear picture of individual needs. Pupils who find learning difficult are identified quickly and effective programmes introduced so that they make good progress. Where pupils arrive at the school with limited English, they are given carefully targeted support so that they make good progress too. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their improvement targets and teachers' marking in most cases helps them to understand the next steps in their learning. All adults have a clear picture of the circumstances of the pupils and their families. As a result, pupils feel very safe and secure in school confident there is someone to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in cramped playgrounds and a building completely different in design to their old one.

There is a committed and reflective staff team, who are continually searching for ways to improve their performance. Subject leaders play a key role in supporting their colleagues, although the school is seeking to extend their skills so that they can make an even more effective contribution. The reasons for undertaking new projects are carefully thought through before implementation and their impact is rigorously monitored. There is a very clear picture of what the school stands for and its qualities, based on accurate self-evaluation and secure processes to improve everyone's performance. Governors have played a crucial role in planning for the new buildings while ensuring the headteacher and staff team remain focused on the well-being and progress all of the pupils. This gives a strong platform from which to achieve its goal of becoming an outstanding school.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents are very pleased that their children have a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. As one happy parent put it, 'My son's teachers are very supportive, always respond to my concerns and make time to discuss his progress when I ask'. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and understanding below that expected for their age. Through stimulating teaching in a rich and interesting environment, children make good progress, although not all reach the levels expected for their age by the time they leave Reception, particularly in aspects of literacy. Improving children's literacy skills is rightly given a high priority and with increasing success. The two classes operating on separate sites has drawbacks, which the new building could help to resolve. There are times when resources are duplicated or cannot be used efficiently. Considering the problems this poses, the adults involved work quite closely by undertaking some teaching in the other class. This helps Nursery children on transfer to Reception as they have already met their new teachers and support staff. This, and visits to home before a child enters each class, help them to settle quickly into the routines and become confident young learners.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently adopt methods and activities that support and extend learning, particularly for more able pupils.

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## 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 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 <sup>1</sup> 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	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	2
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?	2
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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

18 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashmead Primary School, London, SE8 4BL

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn. You were very kind, polite and helpful. I was very impressed by how well you are all coping with having to work in different surroundings while your school is rebuilt. You showed me how proud you are of your school. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that you go to a good school.

You make good progress during your time at school and are prepared well to take the next steps in your education. You do particularly well in science and your writing is improving all the time. You thoroughly enjoy school, attend regularly, work very hard and behave very sensibly. Your teachers provide many interesting tasks to help you learn. All members of staff help to make sure you are safe and cared for well. You have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle.

Your headteacher, other staff and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. I think there is one thing in particular they could do, so I have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that they always give activities that help you learn rapidly and make the best progress possible, particularly for the cleverest amongst you.

You can play your part in this by continuing to help everyone cope with the changes now and in the future when you return to your new school. I hope the disruption is worth it!

Yours sincerely,

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector