

The Clara Grant Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100901
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	307522
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Kekshan Salaria HMI

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)	433
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	73
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Taylorson
Headteacher	Ms Susan Ward
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Knapp Road Bow London E3 4BU
Telephone number	020 7987 4564
Fax number	020 7536 3890

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Clara Grant is a larger than average sized primary school. Many of the pupils come from backgrounds that can be considered economically disadvantageous. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national expectation. A very high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, predominantly linked to difficulties in communication or behavioural, emotional or social needs, is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are from Bangladeshi heritage, although other ethnic groups are represented in small numbers. The school gained Healthy School status, Artsmark, and Gold Nutritional Award in 2008. The school provides a breakfast and after school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I love the school and so does my child. There are lots of different things for the children to take part in and for them to find their strengths - sports, art, drama, and singing as well as school work.' This comment from a parent captured the views expressed by the majority and concurs with inspection findings.

Clara Grant is an outstanding school, offering a very rich learning experience to its pupils. The leadership and management of the headteacher reflect dedication and vision, which is shared by the very effective senior management team. The school has a real sense of community and this is one of its great strengths. Senior leaders recognise and value the contributions made by all adults working in the school. Consequently, this has created excellent teamwork and commitment, ensuring the success of the school.

Children enter the school with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below those usually expected for their age, particularly, in communication, language and literacy. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. As a result of a senior leadership focus on improving writing and more detailed attention to tracking progress in English and mathematics, the recent decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 has been reversed. Inspection evidence indicates standards now are in line with national expectations.

Unvalidated data in Key Stage 2 for 2008 suggests that standards overall have continued to rise and are now well above national averages, with good improvements in mathematics and science. Given pupils starting point, this represents outstanding progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with moderate learning needs or behavioural difficulties, also achieve very well. There are several features, which contribute to this excellent achievement. These include an outstanding curriculum, the pupils' very strong personal development and positive attitudes towards learning, and very well focussed support.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils experience a good range of interesting activities to help them to learn. Lessons proceed at a good pace and effective questioning builds on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. Teachers and pupils make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons, are well motivated and work hard. The excellent curriculum makes very good provision for art and music, as well as for basic skills. It is enhanced by making effective use of local places of interest to bring learning to life.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding because of the excellent pastoral care provided. The school provides a wide range of high quality activities and performances, both within the school day and outside of school hours to enhance provision. Emphasis is given to increasing pupils activity levels through additional sporting opportunities and external trips and visits.

Pupils behave extremely well. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, and contribute very effectively to the school community. Despite strenuous efforts by the school, some parents do not reinforce its high expectations of pupils attending school regularly, therefore, attendance is satisfactory.

The capacity to improve further is excellent as demonstrated by the continuing high standards and the high quality provision that has been maintained and built upon since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children come into the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge much lower than those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and social development. The EYFS has undergone some change; namely staff changes and the recent introduction of planning and assessment systems. These changes have not yet fully embedded. However, inspection evidence indicates these new measures are resulting in the current cohort of children making good progress.

Key workers carry out focused observations and feed these into planning and as a result, they adapt the curriculum to suit children's needs. For instance, in the Nursery, themes covering superheroes and space are resulting in greater interest and engagement from the boys. Senior leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development through the rigorous monitoring of teaching. The EYFS team work together cohesively and form strong and caring relationships with the children. Outstanding attention is paid to the welfare of the children. The atmosphere for learning, both indoors and outdoors, is very positive. Parents appreciate the way their children are enabled to settle quickly, and how active and occupied they are in their learning. The children's personal development is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school should continue to maintain consistency in standards in Key Stage 1.
- Work with parents and external agencies to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards are well above the national average. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress and the majority attain high standards by the time they leave the school. This very good progress is due to the rigorous monitoring and targeting of pupils. Regular evaluation ensures pupils continue to make the progress they are capable of and are supported to do so. Additionally, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are keen to learn and respond very well to opportunities to work collaboratively. Additional support and intervention programmes are used very effectively to overcome any barriers to learning. Consequently, no groups of pupils, including those with English as a second language, underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They are keen to join in all activities and enjoy learning. Their strong commitment is reflected in the excellent work habits that they develop through the school. They work hard in lessons, persevere with difficult tasks and cooperate well with others. These strengths lead to the high standards that they achieve and prepares them well for the next stage of their learning. They make impressive progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A strong sense of community is fostered in daily assemblies. Pupils join in respectfully and confidently express personal beliefs. They appreciate and celebrate the achievements of others.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent, reflecting the school's high expectations. Their listening is often impressive during instruction but a few pupils, particularly older girls, hold back in discussions for fear of being wrong and need more encouragement. Pupils have an excellent understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. Their economic understanding is well developed, for instance through opportunities to take the initiative in charitable fund-raising. Attendance, although in line with national average, is improving and there are strong structures and systems to ensure it increases further, such as certificates that reward good attendance. However, despite these efforts, some parents do not ensure their children attend school regularly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Overall teaching and learning are good. Pupils are taught well and as a result make very good progress. Teachers create a purposeful working atmosphere where pupils understand what they are expected to achieve, enjoy their learning and are willing to work hard. Lessons are well prepared, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and relationships are outstanding. This helps the pupils to feel secure, raises their self-esteem and hence boosts their learning. Planning for, and assessment of, the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is good. As a result, these pupils make very good progress in relation to their starting points. Classrooms are bright and attractive, with high quality pupils' work on display. Teachers' marking of work is thorough and their comments link well to the pupils' group targets and give clear guidance on how to improve further. In a small number of lessons, opportunities to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils experience a highly stimulating and exciting curriculum. This impacts exceedingly well on their engagement and achievement. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wealth of extra curricular activities, visits, visitors and themed weeks, which result in strong personal development and behaviour. The skills based curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of pupils. There is a clear focus on developing speaking and listening, teamwork and pupils' confidence. There are excellent opportunities to learn in relevant and meaningful ways across a range of subjects. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were highly engrossed in their 'holiday's project' producing, as a result, high quality art work and lively and interesting discussions. Themed weeks contribute highly to pupils' knowledge and understanding. For instance, during 'music appreciation week' pupils were enthused and learnt about a wide range of musical instruments and music from different cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The strong relationships between adults and pupils found throughout the school underpin the high quality of care. Staff work very effectively to create a family atmosphere where each individual is valued. Child protection procedures are well understood. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that any concerns they have will be heard sympathetically and dealt with promptly.

Pupils' academic performance is assessed regularly to check their progress. The school makes the analysis of this information a high priority and ensures it is shared with all staff. It is used very effectively to set targets for individuals and groups, and identify where more intensive support programmes are needed. Pupils are involved in assessing their own progress and have a good understanding of their targets. The school makes very good use of surrounding facilities to enhance pupils' experiences and opportunities, for example working with artists from the community arts project and the local city farm.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leadership provided by the headteacher, complemented by her senior management team is excellent and provides very clear direction and purpose. The headteacher knows the school very well and this is evident in the high quality of the school's own self-evaluation. This is comprehensive and rigorous, clearly identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The recent decline in standards in Key Stage 1 has been reversed because senior leaders have focussed on improving writing and ensured more detailed attention to tracking pupil progress in English and mathematics. This has been taken on whole-heartedly by all staff. Middle management is good and has contributed to rising standards through regular monitoring of pupils' work. Lesson observations result in useful feedback to teachers.

The governing body serves the school well, is fully involved in the life of the school and has a good knowledge of its strengths and areas for development. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. 'Staff at Clara Grant are brilliant with children and parents', is just one of the enthusiastic quotes reflecting parents' strong support for the school.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

19 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Clara Grant Primary School, London, E3 4BU

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. You told us you are proud of your school and we can see why.

We think Clara Grant is an outstanding school. These are the things we liked most.

- The school is exceptionally well led by your headteacher and her team. They want the very best for you and are determined that you should make as much progress as you can in lessons.
- You work hard, make excellent progress and reach high standards. We were particularly impressed by the standards reached in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. You receive good teaching.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You and your parents and carers are rightly very proud of your school.
- Your school is a safe place and you know that if you have a problem, there is always an adult to talk to.
- You try to eat healthily and take full advantage of exercise opportunities.

Many of you were very enthusiastic and said how much you enjoy school, especially your lessons. We have asked your school to improve a few things to make it even better. In particular, we have asked them to continue to work with your parents and carers to improve your attendance and to help you be even better in reading, writing, and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

We wish you continuing success in the future. It was a privilege to come to your school and meet you and your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector