

William Davis Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100943
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	307531
Inspection date	28 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr P A Clayton
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Flegg
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Wood Close Cheshire Street London E2 6ET
Telephone number	0207 739 1511
Fax number	0207 739 1331

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how the school is raising standards by the end of Year 2; the extent of pupils' involvement in their own learning; the effectiveness of subject leaders in monitoring and influencing their areas of responsibility. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, a governor and pupils also 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This smaller-than-average sized school with a Nursery lies in the inner city. More than 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, most being Bangladeshi. Almost all pupils speak an additional language to English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Many of these have speech and language difficulties. A large number of pupils join and leave the school outside normal times. The school is part of the Graduate Teaching Programme. It has awards for excellent attendance, promoting basic skills and healthy lifestyles, and for its provision of physical education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school with many excellent features. The headteacher's dynamic leadership ensures that staff work together extremely effectively in providing the best possible education for all its pupils. As a result, achievement is outstanding. Each year, pupils reach standards that are above the national average in Year 6 tests, despite entering the school with skills and abilities well below those normally expected. Outstanding teaching that is never less than consistently good, and a vibrant curriculum, tailored precisely to the pupils' needs, boosts their progress. A parent commented, 'It's very important to me that my children enjoy and feel safe at school, and at William Davis they do.' Many parents support this view and value the superb contribution that the school makes to their children's personal and academic development.

The secret of the school's success lies in the determination of the headteacher and deputy head to confront and overcome barriers to learning, so that all pupils can excel. Staff share their vision for an inclusive and rich learning environment underpinned by high expectations. The school has adopted the International Primary Curriculum as best suited to its pupils, which develops themes and ideas through learning actively. This builds up their skills across subject areas in exciting and fun ways. For example, as part of a project on myths, legends and fairy tales pupils made masks and acted out their legends, designing imaginative sets. The large number of pupils who are learning English benefit from this visual approach with a focus on spoken language.

Last year, results in assessments at the end of Year 2 were low, and the school has worked hard to raise standards this year both in Year 2 and in Year 3. Its highly structured literacy programme, and the use of early intervention with pupils at risk of falling behind, has paid dividends. The present Year 2 pupils are on course to do much better, and Year 3 pupils have made rapid progress. Because most pupils do not reach fluency in English until after they have left Year 2, the full benefits of the school's excellent provision is not seen until they are in Years 3 to 6. Consequently, standards are currently below average in Year 2, but are above average in Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties, such as in speech and language delay, make outstanding progress, because the school caters for their needs extremely effectively. A speech therapist is employed one morning a week, and there is a teaching assistant with expertise in delivering speech and language support.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their behaviour is excellent. They respect one another and co-operate together extremely well in lessons. The older pupils support the younger ones with their reading and teach them playground games. Pupils hugely enjoy school. The school's attendance rate, at 98%, is the best in the borough. A pupil said, 'At this school we have a fun way of learning different things.' Pupils write their own weekly newsletter that goes home to parents, telling them about what they are studying. They have an outstanding understanding of how to live healthily and stay safe. The school's innovative mentoring groups give pupils opportunities to discuss matters related to their well-being with adults they trust. Their art adorns the walls of the restaurant of a local hospital that pupils support. Pupils develop a love of learning and grow in independence, leaving the school with a good set of basic skills.

Outstanding teaching ensures pupils make very rapid progress. Teachers confidently develop pupils' learning in ways that give them a thirst for knowledge. They encourage pupils to share their ideas with one another in pairs or groups, and lead class discussions with carefully

considered questions that make pupils think. The work is tailored exactly to pupils' level of understanding, so that higher attaining pupils are challenged well, and those who find learning more difficult are given the support they need. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and work closely with teachers in assessing what pupils can do and understand. At present, the computer suite is out of action as new computers are being installed, and pupils have limited access to computers in their classrooms. They do not have enough opportunity currently to practise the skills they are learning in different subjects through technology, although there are plans to purchase laptops to remedy this.

The school's caring ethos is at the heart of all it does. Pupils feel valued and thrive in an inclusive environment that treats each individual as special. A parent said, 'They care for the needs of the children and parents.' The headteacher says, 'What happens outside school happens inside school', recognising that pupils are going to be affected by their circumstances and need strategies to cope. The school's employment of Bangladeshi and Somali family workers helps build strong relationships with families and the local community. Outstanding leadership and management by the special needs coordinator ensure that the school meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, such as those who experience speech and language delay, extremely effectively. Weekly mentoring sessions enable all pupils to reflect on issues that matter to them and consider their academic progress. They receive particularly strong guidance and are fully involved in their own learning, agreeing targets with teachers and parents at regular consultations. Marking encourages a dialogue between teacher and pupil, with follow-up questions and responses in books.

Subject leaders have a real impact on standards and achievement through close monitoring and setting challenging targets with colleagues. Their action plans reveal an excellent understanding of strengths and areas to develop. The school's improvement plan reflects leaders' clear understanding of how to make things even better based on a thorough and robust assessment of the school's performance. Governors support the school well, with a good mixture of experience and new blood. Their monitoring tends to be too informal, and lacks a clear focus on the school's priorities for improvement. The school has made very rapid progress since its last inspection and has excellent capacity to continue to go from strength to strength.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make outstanding progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because the activities are exciting and fun and promote their learning. Staff make especially good use of the outdoor areas to teach all six areas of learning. A specialist sports coach makes a significant contribution to children's physical development and coordination, for example through teaching them basketball skills. Children are happy and settle quickly, able to co-operate together in group tasks and to sustain concentration. Very thorough assessment procedures ensure staff know the children particularly well and plan work that meets their needs precisely. The Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely effectively, with staff having a shared understanding of how young children learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' access to technology so that they can apply their skills across the curriculum more often.
- Sharpen the monitoring role of the governing body in checking the school's work.

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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?	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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

07 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Davis Primary School, London, E2 6ET

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. I enjoyed meeting you. Yours is an outstanding school. There are many strengths. Here are some of them.

- You make excellent progress in your learning so that standards are above average by the time you leave the school.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you love coming to school.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a very good start.
- The teaching is particularly strong and teachers make sure that lessons are exciting and fun.
- The school cares for you especially well and helps you when you have a difficulty.
- The headteacher and deputy head lead the school especially well.

I have asked your teachers to give you more time on computers so that you can practise your skills in different subjects. I know you enjoy finding things out for yourselves. The governors support the school well. I would like them to spend more time checking how well you are doing so that they know exactly what the school needs to do to get even better.

Thank you once again for your help. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector