

Gateway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101112
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	307587
Inspection date	12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan

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	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Phillida Inman
Headteacher	Mr Keith Duggan
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Capland Street London NW8 8LN
Telephone number	020 7641 4160
Fax number	020 7641 5466

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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.

- How well children in the Foundation Stage make progress?
- How well pupils make progress as they go through the school?
- What is it about leadership and management that makes this school successful?

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), by observing lessons, scrutinising the school's records and other documentation, and by discussions with students and staff. Parents' responses to questionnaires also informed 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 SEF, were other than justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Gateway Primary School draws its pupils from a community that has a very much higher than average proportion of families from a wide range of ethnic heritages. Around a quarter have refugee status or are seeking asylum. High numbers begin school with little knowledge of English. Over half of the school population is eligible for a free school meal. The school is massively oversubscribed and its roll is expanding to include an additional form of entry in each year group. The school has been involved in major building works over two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Gateway is an 'exceptional school' said a parent, echoing the views of many. This view endorses the school's accurate evaluation of its work and the inspection judgement of outstanding. Despite the significant disruption caused by major building works, Gateway has sustained its high expectations, not least because of the inspirational guidance of the headteacher and his senior team. The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school and are happy that their children achieve so well. 'The school is the hub of our local community and always aims for the highest standards' commented a parent. Pupils, too, are very pleased to attend the school because 'they never feel alone'.

For three years running, Gateway pupils have achieved as well as those in the top one percent of schools nationally by the end of Year 6. Standards are average in Year 2 and progress good in Key Stage 1 from below average starting points at the end of the Reception Year. Gradually developing English language skills still hinder many from gaining the highest available levels, particularly in reading. Progress accelerates rapidly as pupils move through the school and all groups, including those with specific learning difficulties, make real leaps in learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve outstandingly well to reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. They regularly exceed the school's challenging targets.

At the heart of the school's success is the strong leadership that ensures consistency in implementing policies and procedures, especially those relating to the monitoring of pupils' performance and progress. Because of very clear direction by senior managers, all teachers make careful and regular checks on pupils' learning. Pupils clearly understand their targets as do the adults who support them. This is particularly so for those pupils with specific speech and language difficulties. A striking feature of the school is the way marking involves pupils directly so that they are able to discuss the feedback on their work with teachers. This allows all pupils to understand how their work is assessed and encourages them to try even harder.

This sharp focus on feedback to pupils means all staff know individuals well and plan lessons that match carefully the needs of all groups of pupils. As a result, teaching and learning are outstanding overall. The well-considered partnership between experienced and inexperienced teachers ensures the quality of classroom practice remains high despite staffing changes. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are important tools in the way teachers engage pupils in learning. Staff and pupils often use ICT very creatively both within and outside of the classroom. Warm working relationships, high expectations and lively, stimulating classroom environments add significantly to pupils' delight in learning. They develop good study habits from the earliest years. This together with high levels of success in basic skills, prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of education and for future economic well-being.

Besides excellent academic guidance, the school also ensures that all pupils receive outstanding personal care, guidance and support. Pupils report that they feel very safe in school and know who to turn to if in need. They really enjoy all aspects of school life. The majority attend regularly but because of extended family holidays, a number take too much time off school. Families persist in this practice despite the school's best efforts. Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is excellent. They behave exceptionally well, understand right from wrong and take responsibility for their own actions. They are tolerant of views and traditions other than their own and are keen to explore ethical and moral issues, especially in class

assemblies. Pupils have done their level best in the midst of the building works to maintain their responsibilities for the environment. They generally 'look out for each other,' work well in teams and are happy to support a number of charities at home and abroad. Their support for a charity helping lepers, for example, is impressive. Many contribute generously to local cultural and social events. Year 3 proudly 'showcased' their 'fascinating rhythm' for visitors during the inspection.

The curriculum is very well designed to ensure that pupils build on previous learning. Clear links between subjects allow pupils to apply basic skills across many areas. A Year 5 class readily made the links between their work on the seasons in literature and their studies on the sun and moon in science. A very strong feature of the outstanding curriculum is the way imaginative and exciting projects are used successfully to widen pupils' experiences. The school makes excellent use of local resources through visits to city landmarks, museums and galleries. These experiences do much to help pupils understand the society in which they live and to foster good community relationships. The many clubs and learning opportunities outside of the timetable are also excellent. Pupils clearly enjoy them all but especially the language, music and drama opportunities. After-school help for basic skills also contributes well to pupils' long-term progress.

The sustained success over many years at Gateway owes much to senior leaders' very clear vision to provide learning opportunities that exactly meet the needs of this very diverse community. Outstanding leadership and management have promoted rigorous self-evaluation at all levels. A stable core of senior managers supports the headteacher whole-heartedly in the drive to do the best for the pupils. As a result of good training opportunities, middle leaders manage their areas of accountability very well. Governance is excellent. Governors are assiduous in ensuring that the school is in safe hands now and in the future.

The school has undergone many changes since the last inspection. The on-going building works have, to some extent, impeded aspects of its community work and hindered the development of some extended school activities and outdoor play areas. Nevertheless, Gateway has maintained its highly inclusive ethos, its strong drive for learning and its very good links with parents and the wider community. The school has clearly demonstrated its excellent capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for Nursery and Reception children is good. Under excellent guidance from a senior manager, it has recovered well from the disruption caused by extensive building and from earlier turbulence in the management of the Nursery. There is still work to be done, however, to develop the new external areas to coordinate outside and inside learning. Most children enter the Nursery with little knowledge of English, sometimes limited social skills, and a narrower than expected knowledge and understanding of the world. Careful observation and planning for their individual needs ensures that most get off to a good start. A careful balance of activities directed by staff and those where children make their own choices helps them gain steadily in fluency in English, in their social and emotional and creative development. By the end of the Reception class, children have made good progress from low starting points to start Year 1 with below average standards. They make particularly good progress in language for communication and thinking.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance by working further with those families whose children are absent most.

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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 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	1
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?	2
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	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 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	1
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

24 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gateway Primary School, London, NW8 8LN

Thank you for welcoming me to Gateway School and for sharing not only your ideas and opinions but also your 'fascinating rhythm', your lessons and your playtimes. Thank you, particularly to the school council that so ably shared their thoughts with me.

You and your parents are rightly proud of Gateway. You think that it is an excellent school and I agree with you. Your inspirational headteacher, staff and governors want the best for you and are determined that you make as much progress as you can in lessons and in your personal development. Because you enjoy school and many of you attend well and work hard, you make exceptional progress in all areas of learning.

Your teachers and support staff know you all individually and look after you very well. You also help to look after others, particularly those younger than you. You told me you feel really comfortable in school and that there is always someone to help you if you are distressed. You try to eat healthily and I was impressed by your exercise regimes, including the skipping for Year 6 before school. You are confident to express your views but at the same time ready to listen to others. You understand the importance of helping others and are ready to support children in the playground and around the school.

When thinking about how it could be even better, your school is very clear that it would like some of you to attend more regularly. I agree with them. It will try even harder to encourage your families to help you do so.

I am sure all of you will continue to do your level best to cooperate with your teachers.

I wish you a very happy future at Gateway.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector