

# Beam Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101202
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	307611
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sudworth

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	418
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr P Waker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G Bradbury and Miss L Culyer (joint)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Oval Road North Dagenham RM10 9ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8270 4700
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8270 4699

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Children begin the Nursery in the September following their third birthday in this larger than average multi-ethnic primary school. The largest group of pupils, other than White British pupils, are Black Africans who make up about one-third of the school's population. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than in most schools and the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is slightly higher than usually found. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. The school has gained several national awards, including the Healthy Schools Award and Sport England Schools' Active Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Beam Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is a happy, friendly school. Very good relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils to feel safe and develop confidence and self-esteem. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards, although pupils have been making better progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 than elsewhere in the school. This is because, in the main, the teaching of the younger pupils is of a higher quality than in Years 3 to 6, although there are examples of very good teaching with the older year groups. The school has analysed why girls have been attaining more highly than the boys and by more than the usual differences found nationally, but the impact of the action to address this is not yet fully seen in results.

The school has some particularly good features. Pupils' personal development is good and staff take very good care of the pupils so that they are confident to discuss any concerns. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well cared for. Pupils are polite and have positive attitudes to their work. They get on very well together and have a good understanding of healthy and safe living, such as taking part in regular exercise and eating healthy foods. Pupils contribute well to both the school and local communities, taking on various roles and responsibilities and engaging well in local events. They enjoy school and participate well in extra-curricular activities. They are prepared soundly for their future economic well-being.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They find it easy to approach staff and discuss matters with them and feel that they respond quickly to any concerns. Parents particularly praise the school's joint headteachers in this regard and the way that they act in their children's best interests. As one parent writes, 'The staff and headteachers are very approachable. My children love coming to the school and the discipline is really good. There are lots of school clubs and activities for my children to take part in.'

The curriculum is satisfactory, but some lessons are overlong and so make it difficult to give enough quality time to all subjects, such as the humanities. Links between subjects are not yet well developed. The school misses opportunities to further pupils' spiritual development in assemblies and through curriculum planning.

The school's leadership and management are satisfactory. The joint headteachers work well together. However, some subject leaders do not have sufficient oversight of whole school issues because in many subjects, systems are at an early stage of development for monitoring standards and ensuring good quality provision and consistency in approaches to teaching and learning throughout the school. They are better in English and currently leading to improvements in writing. The governing body is developing well under its new chair and beginning to take a much more active role in the school's affairs.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. Given the overall quality of teaching and pupils' rates of progress, it demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below expectations, particularly in communication and language and social development but the Nursery staff help the children to get off to a good start. Children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and many reach

standards close to expectations by the time they go into Year 1. However, from the start, boys do not attain as well as girls, especially in mathematics and early reading and writing skills.

The provision is well led and managed. Teaching is good and promotes good progress for most children. Curriculum planning and assessment are outstanding. Very detailed assessments and a good range of retained evidence support the stages in learning children reach and lead to accurate analysis of the next teaching steps required for individual children. The accommodation for the Reception children is restricted, especially the outside provision, and this limits the range of opportunities for physical and creative activities. Staff work hard to stimulate the children's curiosity, for example, by providing apparatus to observe the work of ants.

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

- Ensure that the school's investigations, into the reasons for the superior performance of girls' compared to that of boys, result in the better attainment of boys.
- Develop the role of subject leaders to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning and raise levels of attainment further.
- Improve the curriculum so that there are better links between subjects and so that all subjects receive quality time.

A small number of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the main and are currently reaching expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and sometimes reach above average standards. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress, but they underachieved in English in 2007 mainly because of boys' weak performance in English, particularly in writing. Boys generally have not been attaining as well as the girls, and the difference in their performance has been much wider than that nationally. There are some signs of improvement as the school is beginning to focus more on boys' interests. Black African pupils attain well and make good progress. Pupils who speak a language other than English as their first language make satisfactory progress initially but gain in confidence and achieve well over time.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and are proud of the contribution that they make to it. They behave well, have good attitudes to work and show much respect for one another's different cultures and beliefs. One summed up the pupils' attitudes well. 'It doesn't matter what colour your skin is, we get on together.' They take part enthusiastically in extra-curricular activities because they know that exercise contributes to a healthy life style. They run a healthy tuck shop, which is popular with pupils. Pupils contribute well to the school community, engaging conscientiously in various duties, such as librarians. They also make a good contribution to the local community, for example contributing ideas to a local playground project. They raise money for various charities through their own ideas. Pupils feel safe in school and approach staff confidently with any concerns. Attendance has improved, but it is below the national average. Pupils' spiritual development is only satisfactory because opportunities are missed to promote this.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching of the younger pupils is good and contributes to better progress than in Years 3 to 6, where teaching is mainly satisfactory. Nevertheless, there are examples of inspirational teaching. For example, the use of drama, video and group discussion in Year 6 helped pupils to empathise with a wartime setting before they undertook compositional writing. Staff maintain very good relationships with pupils and create a very supportive and pleasant learning environment in which pupils are confident to contribute their ideas. Nevertheless, some pupils sit back and let others answer because too often staff only ask those who volunteer answers. Staff use praise well and this boosts pupils' confidence. Marking is satisfactory but it varies widely in quality. The best is up to date and helps pupils understand how they can improve. However, some marking is unsatisfactory because it is irregular, not helpful enough and does not challenge pupils to set out their work neatly. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements, although timetables do not always make best use of time. Some lessons are over long and begin to affect pupils' concentration. Art is a particular strength. Pupils' work is outstanding in this subject. The provision of French and whole-class instrumental lessons in Year 5 adds variety. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, with some run by the pupils themselves. Visits to places of interest, for example to make river studies, residential visits, and visitors, such as football coaches, enrich the curriculum well. The school recognises that some subjects do not receive enough time. This is particularly noticeable in the humanities, where there is insufficient work of good quality and where there is some overuse of poor quality worksheets. Currently, there are limited links between subjects. The school recognises that it needs to review the curriculum to make it even more interesting for the pupils. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils who find difficulties in learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are thorough and reviewed regularly. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure vulnerable pupils can play a full and active part in the school's life. The school is effective in reaching out to parents through its welfare service and other agencies to help parents support their children at home and to understand their learning. There is good support for pupils who are new to the school and their families. Regular attention is given to health and safety matters, but reports on actions taken are not always formalised sufficiently well.

The school's tracking procedures to monitor pupils' progress generally work well and are used effectively to provide extra support for those who are not making the expected progress. While pupils know the National Curriculum level that they are working at, they do not always know what they need to do to get to the next stage in their learning and how, individually, they can improve their performance.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The school is managed well. The new joint headteacher arrangement is operating harmoniously. The school correctly identified writing as a particular weakness. It has made good strides in tackling the issue through the strong leadership of English. Senior staff have undertaken some monitoring of teaching and learning and this has been particularly beneficial in support of newly qualified staff, but it is not yet widespread enough. Subject leaders do not scrutinise pupils' work sufficiently regularly or vigorously and pick up enough on whole school issues. For example, there is a wide variation in the quality of marking and expectations and in progress from class to class. Consequently, self-evaluation is only satisfactory and priorities are not feeding into a clear strategic development plan for the school.

The new chair of the governing body is helping to involve governors more effectively in the life of the school and has a good perception of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governing body committees have been set up but, their organisation is too informal and they do not have written terms of reference.

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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?	3
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	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

14 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beam Primary School, Dagenham, RM10 9ED

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. You told us many interesting things about what you do. You clearly enjoy school and make many friends. We were impressed with your behaviour and the way you get on so well together. Beam Primary provides you with a satisfactory education and there are particular strengths, such as the way that you are developing as young people and the very good care that the staff take of you. We were impressed with the way you undertake various jobs. We think that your healthy tuck shop is a very good idea. You obviously enjoy the extra activities before and after school and take part in these well because of the exercise that they give you, to learn new ideas and skills and to make new friends.

There are some things that your school can do to improve further. We noticed that, in the main, boys have not been making as much progress as the girls. We have asked the school to make sure that the boys make better progress in the future. Apart from English, members of staff who lead subjects have not been reviewing your work and the teaching across the school well enough to check on its quality. We have asked the staff to do this more frequently in future to help raise standards further. Finally, we would like the school to review the curriculum and make it more exciting and interesting for you.

Thank you once again for all your help when we visited. We hope that you will work hard in order to fulfil the ambitions that you have for yourselves.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector