

Courtland School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101271
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	307634
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Nathan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Wright
Headteacher	Miss Lisa Walker
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Courtland Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3BG
Telephone number	020 8959 3274
Fax number	020 8959 7978

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2008
Inspection number	307634

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Courtland School is a smaller than average sized primary school with a culturally diverse school population. A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic communities with many speaking a language other than English. The largest ethnic groups are White British and Indian. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is currently much lower than the national average. The school has recently gained the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Courtland School provides an outstanding level of education and care for its pupils. This school has excellent leadership and rigorous systems in place to ensure that all pupils achieve. As one parent said, 'I could not wish for my children to be at a better school.'

Children enter the Foundation Stage with the skills and understanding expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception because of the systematic teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. The high quality of care ensures that children settle well into their learning. By the end of Year 6 when pupils leave the school, they have made excellent progress, particularly in English and mathematics, and standards are very high in these subjects. The school carefully monitors pupils' learning and ensures that they get the right help and support when they need it. This is particularly true for pupils with language or learning disabilities who make outstanding progress.

The school has a clear vision, 'Everybody can be somebody,' and this is reflected in the focus on high standards, which all staff are committed to. Challenging targets are set for teachers to make sure that all pupils make at least good progress in their learning. Systematic monitoring ensures that pupils are on track and that action is taken to address any underachievement. Governors fulfil their duties very well. They often visit the school and have specific roles, which require them to monitor and report on key aspects of the school. Managers know what they need to do to continue to improve the school and strategic planning is strong. The school has excellent capacity for further improvement.

Pupils behave well at school. They have an excellent attitude to learning, which contributes significantly to the outstanding progress they make. They are very aware of the need to stay healthy, for example through their involvement in the many sporting activities available. They are also extremely clear about how to keep themselves safe, such as on the local roads. They know how to deal with bullying and feel confident that they can talk to someone if anything troubles them. Pupils leave the school very well prepared for the next stage their learning. They have developed outstanding literacy and numeracy skills as well as excellent social skills to help them by the time they move on to secondary school.

The quality of teaching and learning in the school is good overall. However, it is outstanding in some year groups and this high quality teaching accelerates learning, contributing significantly to pupils' outstanding progress. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to support learning in well organised lessons. Learning is managed well, although the level of questioning and pace of lessons does not always challenge all learners. Relationships with parents and carers are good with many commenting on the progress their children make. The curriculum provided for pupils is excellent and meets pupils' learning needs very well. The teaching of early reading is well resourced and there are now plenty of opportunities for extended writing. The curriculum is enhanced by the many focus weeks and motivation days that the school holds to promote citizenship, drama, science and technology.

The quality of care provided for pupils is outstanding. Support for pupils' welfare is excellent. Good use is made of local authority support services such as the education welfare and speech therapy services as needed. Pupils receive an induction week at the beginning of each year to help them settle back into school. Fruit breaks and brain gym activities shows teachers have considered carefully how to create the best conditions for learning.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in Reception and engage readily in work. Their knowledge of sounds and letters and their writing skills are developed well. The highly practical curriculum links different areas of learning, and promotes all aspects of children's development very well. The lively and stimulating environment enables them to make swift gains in independence and social skills. The accommodation is used effectively and the outside area has been developed imaginatively this year. Children enjoy the range of activities that are offered to them and work hard. Teaching is good and a strong feature is the support given to children whilst they are working on activities they have started for themselves. The monitoring of teaching and learning is helping to raise standards still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching is of a consistently high standard by improving the pace and quality of questioning in some lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children settle well into Reception and make good progress in their learning particularly in literacy, numeracy and personal development. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and they enter Year 3 with standards well above national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in English and mathematics are exceptionally high and are above average in science. The pupils make excellent progress in their learning, supported by their very positive attitudes and the excellent curriculum, and accelerated by outstanding teaching in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils work and play together very well and really enjoy their time at Courtland. They have an excellent understanding of belonging to the school community. Year 6 have trained as 'Young Leaders' so that they can mentor and support younger pupils in the playground. School Council members are particularly pleased that they raised money to buy a goat for the 'Goat Factor' programme to help a family in Africa whose crops had failed. Behaviour is good and incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils know how to use the internet safely. Older pupils' understanding of the business world is developing through their involvement in events such as 'entrepreneur week'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Tasks set in lessons are well matched to pupils' needs and provide challenge. Lessons are well planned with lots of opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills through role play and working in pairs. The interactive whiteboard is used very well, for example in mathematics, to enhance learning. Pupils work well independently, particularly with their writing, and take

responsibility for their learning. Teaching assistants work highly effectively to support children with language difficulties or disabilities. Excellent relationships with parents supports pupils' learning very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Curriculum planning ensures high quality provision in most subjects. The new national framework strategy for numeracy has been introduced this year and is used creatively to enrich the provision for pupils. The 'Big Write' project is helping pupils to edit and extend their writing by using interesting words and punctuation more accurately. The curriculum is enhanced by themed events such as 'PE week' and 'Space Day'. The house system encourages team responsibility and there are a range of well-attended lunchtime and after school clubs, and a very successful netball team. Pupils' understanding of the wider world is promoted through many visits (including residential trips) and these inspire them to find out more about the topics that are being taught.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Child protection procedures are rigorous and high levels of care are provided. Staff are alert to pupils' academic and social needs and the school quickly identifies potentially vulnerable pupils and ensures that their specific needs are met. This approach helps to build strong links with parents. All adults working in the school are exceptionally good at building pupils' trust and confidence and the 'Please listen box' ensures that there is always an adult available to help pupils if they have worries or concerns. Parents hold the school in high regard and know their children are safe and well cared for. As one parent wrote, 'The school really cares for the children'.

Most pupils understand the targets set for them to improve and try to achieve them, although this does vary from class to class. However, teachers check progress very regularly so that they have a good understanding of what pupils' need to learn next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher gives strong and effective leadership ably supported by her senior management team. All managers are focused on the achievement of pupils. This is reflected in the rigorous monitoring and tracking systems that have been set up to ensure that pupils succeed. The annual review of pupils' progress is very thorough and each week staff and senior managers meet to discuss how pupils are progressing. This means that teachers know their pupils' needs very well. The school puts a strong focus on the care of pupils in everything it does. This is reflected in its robust child protection procedures and emphasis on healthy living.

The school plans well for its future based on an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. It has fully addressed the two issues identified from the previous inspection. The governing body provides excellent support for the school and all statutory responsibilities have been met. The governors' website is particularly good giving great support to governors in their role. The school has excellent links with its local secondary school and

makes very good use of advisory services provided by the local authority for staff training. This has been particularly supportive in improving the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	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	2
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	1

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?	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

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Courtland School, London, NW7 3BG

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave to me and the other inspector when we came to your school recently. We really enjoyed seeing you working in lessons and playing outside and it was good to talk to you about what it is like at your school.

We think your school is outstanding. This means we think that it does a lot of things very well. For example:

- you make excellent progress in your work and reach high standards when you leave your school
- your headteacher and all staff in your school work very hard to ensure you do as well as you can
- you learn a lot of interesting and exciting things and enjoy the focus weeks and motivation days
- you are very well looked after and understand a lot about staying healthy and keeping safe.

Even though yours is a good school, things can always improve, and we have agreed with the adults what they are going to do next. We think that some of the teaching in your school is outstanding and we have asked all teachers to try to make all their lessons as good as the best. You can help them by continuing to work hard and behave well in lessons. If you do this, I am sure that you will continue to do very well in school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Nathan

Lead Inspector