

# James Dixon Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101631
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	307760
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 April –1 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Whatson

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	315
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Len Blomstrand
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Wilson (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	William Booth Road Anerley London SE20 8BW
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8778 6101
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8402 4044

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

### Description of the school

James Dixon is a larger than average primary school. It includes two classes that provide specialist provision for pupils with complex learning needs, many of which are behavioural, emotional or social. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. Two thirds of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, whilst the remainder are from a White British background. About a third of pupils are learning English as an additional language; a few are at an early stage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The percentage with statements of special educational needs is very high. The rate at which pupils join and leave the school is also very high. In September 2004, the school was merged with, and relocated to the site of, another local school, which at the time was identified as having serious weaknesses.

A newly appointed leadership team (including an executive headteacher from another local school) took up their posts in January 2008.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. Standards are exceptionally low because teaching and learning, care, guidance and support and leadership and management are inadequate.

Over the last three years, standards at the school fell as increasing numbers of pupils failed to achieve their best. Steps taken to reverse this trend were not successful. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science in the national tests and assessments in 2007 were exceptionally low in both Years 2 and 6 and there was widespread underachievement. The performance of some groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those learning English, as an additional language and boys, was particularly weak. The school acknowledged this very poor performance and identified inadequate teaching and ineffective intervention programmes as the cause.

The executive headteacher has a strong vision of success for all. The school's new leadership team is in the process of building a strong team and developing a more positive culture but there is still inconsistent and inadequate achievement. In the short time available, the steps taken to rapidly raise achievement have not had a significant or sustained impact.

The focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning has met with some limited success and a minority of pupils in most classes are making better progress. However, in their planning, teachers rarely identify the needs of different groups of pupils, such as those learning English as an additional language, or how best to support them. Because some teachers do not make clear their expectations of pupils of different abilities, most pupils make unsatisfactory progress. As a result, these pupils do not learn fast enough to catch up and overcome the legacy of underachievement. The result is that pupils' are not being well equipped for their future.

The curriculum and academic support are improving, although most initiatives are very new and have not yet had an impact on pupil achievement. The school's monitoring of its own provision and pupil progress are not sufficiently robust. The quality of provision in the specialist class in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory.

The new leadership team is having an impact, but pupils' progress remains very inconsistent because the school is not yet providing an acceptable standard of education. The weaknesses within the school's leadership in relation to skills, practices and experience means that the pace of improvement has been too slow. At present, therefore, the school lacks the capacity to improve. The governors have supported the school but have not been robust enough in their own monitoring or in holding the school to account.

Most pupils enjoy what the school has to offer. However, although attendance has improved it remains below average. Punctuality also remains unsatisfactory in spite of improvements. This acts as a considerable barrier to learning. Behaviour in lessons has improved, but remains fragile. Around the school, a few pupils are overly boisterous. Most pupils feel reasonably safe and secure. Their knowledge about what it means to be healthy is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

A clear vision and good management by the new Foundation Stage leader has resulted in some recent improvements. Many children start the Nursery and Reception year with skills and abilities that are well below those expected of three and four-year-olds. Their personal development and language skills are particularly weak. Teachers give these two areas of learning a very high priority and progress in them is often good. Adults encourage children to play together, but approaches to manage and develop children's behaviour are not always appropriate. A new approach to teaching children to link sounds and letters in a fun way is having a positive impact. However, some activities lack both a sharp focus and meaningful interactions between adults and children to enable rapid learning to take place. A close check is kept on children's development so that resources and the curriculum are increasingly being modified to meet their needs. The Foundation Stage leader is working to broaden the curriculum so that children have greater access to the outside area and more opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Parents say that their children are well cared for and staff are friendly and approachable. Children make satisfactory progress although the skills and knowledge of most remain below that expected for their age by the time they start Year 1.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science and make sure that all pupils do as well as they can.
- Improve pupils' progress by ensuring that teachers make their expectations clear and provide challenging activities for pupils with different needs.
- Improve the attendance and punctuality of those pupils whose record is unsatisfactory.
- Strengthen the monitoring of both provision and pupils' performance by leaders at all levels to secure rapid improvements.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Since January 2008, standards have risen and achievement improved in English, mathematics and science and there is now a more positive picture, but it is not a secure one. Progress remains inconsistent between classes, year groups and subjects and is inadequate. Specific groups of pupils, including boys and those learning English as an additional language, do not achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties in the main school make unsatisfactory progress. Progress in the specialist provision also remains very inconsistent; it is good for the younger pupils but unsatisfactory for the older pupils.

Although more pupils are on track to achieve the expected level in this year's national test, than in 2007, standards remain too low.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils say they enjoy the practical activities in their art and music lessons. However, even when lessons are interesting, pupils are too often lethargic and do not use their initiative. Attendance has improved, as has punctuality, but attendance remains well below the national average. Pupils know how to lead healthy lives through plenty of sport, but a small minority are reluctant to

eat the healthy school dinners. Most pupils are kind and polite. In lessons, the behaviour of most pupils is broadly satisfactory but many pupils become easily distracted and restless. As parents have also noted, a minority of pupils create a disproportionate amount of disruption outside the classroom. In principle, pupils know what they should do to keep themselves safe but this is not always reflected in their behaviour. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their community both in school and locally. The members of the school council are proud of their roles and make sensible decisions to help improve the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate so that pupils are making insufficient progress. Due to recent support being put in place, there are some strengths in teaching. The relationships in most classes are satisfactory and teachers manage their pupils' behaviour adequately. The school's new planning formats give lessons greater consistency and structure. However, there is not enough good teaching to enable pupils to catch up and overcome the legacy of past underachievement and there are too many instances of inadequate teaching that hinder pupils' progress.

The learning of some pupils, such as those learning English as an additional language, is hindered because teachers' plans do not identify how or who should support these pupils. Teachers are increasingly adept at using information on pupil performance to set work for pupils of different abilities. However, they do not always communicate this clearly to pupils and so some pupils remain unchallenged.

Marking is frequent and lets the pupils know how well they have done, but it does not consistently tell them what they need to do to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has begun to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. There is a strong focus throughout the school on literacy and numeracy. In areas, such as reading where improved progress is clear, it is too soon to know if it can be sustained. Many of these initiatives, such as teaching by ability in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 are so recent they have not yet had a demonstrable impact. Links between subjects and real life are making learning more fun and meaningful. For example, Year 5 pupils made good progress in their writing because their learning was linked to London's mayoral elections. However, such good practice is not consistent across the school.

There are a satisfactory number of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and a satisfactory range of extra curricular clubs to develop pupils' personal development and physical growth.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 4**

Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are adequate. The school works appropriately with a range of outside agencies and increasingly with parents, most of whom are generally satisfied with the school. Pupils value the school's pastoral support. Although the management of behaviour in the classroom has been strengthened, it remains inconsistent at lunchtime.

Systems to improve attendance are secure and being used well. The school's new system for tracking pupil progress is used well to monitor the progress of individuals and identify any possible underachievement. However, the progress of specific groups of pupils, such as those of a White British background, is not monitored closely enough to ensure that their needs are being met and they make good progress. Most pupils have targets, but they do not always remember or understand them and therefore, do not have a clear idea of how to improve. The support the youngest pupils receive in the specialist provision is good, but it is unsatisfactory for the older pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management are inadequate because in the last few years not enough has been done to reverse the decline in achievement. The new leadership team has begun to improve the provision. Parents are supportive of the new regime, and their views are clearly reflected in the words of one who wrote, 'I have faith in the new headteacher as I can see the improvement already since January 2008'. This view is correct, but these changes have not led to a significant, or sustained, impact in raising pupils' achievement. The new senior staff have identified the school's weaknesses and provided a clear set of priorities and actions to address these, but in the time available, they have not had sufficient impact. This is due, in part, to the fact that most of the senior leadership team, and subject leaders, are new to the school and their roles. The checks they make on the school's performance are not comprehensive enough and the monitoring of the quality of teaching is too infrequent and lacks sufficient focus on pupils' learning. The governors are supportive of the school but have not appreciated the magnitude of the school's problems and have not held it to account through their own rigorous monitoring.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	4

<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>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

05 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of James Dixon Primary School, London, SE20 8BW

Some time ago, you may remember that inspectors came to visit your school. Thank you for welcoming us and asking us to vote in your elections. Talking to you and looking at your work helped us find out a lot about your school.

I am writing to tell you that the inspectors think that your school needs some extra help. We call this 'special measures'. This means that there are many important parts of your school not working well enough and it needs help to put them right as quickly as possible. Your school will have help to do this and inspectors will be visiting you quite often in the future to check if the school is making enough progress.

In order to help you make faster progress, and to raise standards in English, mathematics and science:

- Teachers need to explain to you exactly what they expect of you and plan more carefully to help pupils with different needs.
- You need to come to school regularly and on time.
- Adults in the school need to check more carefully on how well you are doing and to keep a close check on what is happening in classrooms.

The new headteacher, the school's leadership team, and the teachers, have already made a start on these improvements. You can help them by behaving well, working hard, and coming to school regularly and on time.

There is a lot about your school that you should make you pleased. Adults take quite good care of you. The building is a bright and cheerful place and there is a lot of outdoor space. Many of you are friendly and polite. You enjoy the responsibilities that you have and the music made by the steel pan band is great.

With very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Whatson

Lead Inspector