

East Acton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101868
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	307833
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nigel Williams
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Bates
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2003
School address	East Acton Lane Acton London W3 7HA
Telephone number	020 8762 0540
Fax number	020 8762 0545

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2008
Inspection number	307833

© 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

East Acton is an average size school serving an area of significant social and ethnic diversity. A higher than average percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. In the Foundation Stage, three-year-old children attend the Nursery class part-time and four-year-olds attend full-time in the Reception class. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, the largest groups being Black African or of Middle Eastern heritage. The percentage of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English is much higher than that found in most schools, the large majority of whom speak Arabic or Somali in addition to learning English. Currently, the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average, but this varies each year and is much higher in some year groups. Most of the LDD pupils have moderate learning difficulties in speech and language or need additional support learning to read. There is a high turnover of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times. Most of the teaching staff joined the school in the last three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents believe that East Acton is a good school and, as one rightly stated, is 'at the heart of the community.' The inspection confirms that the school provides a good education for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. Partnerships with parents, other agencies and organisations are outstanding, and make a significant contribution to a good curriculum and pupils' enjoyment of learning. There is exceptional racial harmony in this culturally diverse community. Pupils enjoy the wealth of experiences, including role-play, music, dance, drama and poetry. Additional activities extend pupils' learning in the local and wider community such as the use of visits and visitors like the Royal Institute who work on special science projects. Pupils' personal development is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They behave well, treat each other with courtesy and respect, and as one put it, 'You make friends easily here.' Pupils feel safe from harm and they are well cared for by a vigilant and committed team of teachers and support staff. Pupils are very proud of their school and thrive on the opportunities to become school councillors and to support others. They have a good understanding of healthy and active living through many opportunities to eat fruit and engage in exercise and sports during and after school.

Teaching is good and enables the pupils to achieve well in relation to their very low starting points. The pace of learning is good throughout the Nursery and Reception Years. A wealth of stimulating indoor and outdoor activities help the children to make good progress towards the learning goals expected of five-year-olds. Standards in national tests can vary from year to year because of the high mobility of pupils. Last year they were average in English and mathematics but below average in science. Although currently standards are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6, from whatever level or time the pupils start school, they make good rates of progress. Many who join at different times are new arrivals from other countries, most of whom speak Arabic, Somali or a range of other Asian, European or African languages. They soon settle and learn conversational English because the leadership team and teacher responsible for these pupils successfully coordinate skilled support and intervention. Consequently, most of these pupils reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics and are very keen learners. 'There is always something new to learn,' explained one, another pupil adding, 'and we enjoy all the things we do.' Despite the challenges of managing such a diverse and changing school population, pupils' performance in reading and mathematics is improving well in every class. However, writing standards by the end of Year 2 have been too low for some time, and remain so. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 lack the confidence to write accurate and complete sentences independently. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching has improved very well since the last inspection, which is reflected in rising standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science throughout the school, although improving, are not high enough. The targets set for pupils in science are lower than they should be, and pupils lack the confidence and abilities to apply their science skills to investigation work. The school has made a good start addressing this through special themed weeks such as the 'Magic of science' work, but there is still more to do.

The headteacher and assistant heads provide good leadership and work as an effective team that is continuing to strive towards improvement. Their modest assessment of the school's effectiveness is testament to the high expectations of governors and staff. Governors provide good support whilst holding the school to account through their diligent monitoring. The headteacher has guided good improvements to the school since its last inspection.

Well-considered teaching appointments and staff training through initiatives such as the 'teacher-learner community' enable staff to share ideas and best practice. These have helped to strengthen the teaching and show that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Nursery and Reception children get off to a good start. They improve their language and communication skills well when learning letter sounds to recognise their own names or when sounding out and writing letters. Role-play, stories, nursery rhymes and songs are used very well to improve the children's confidence in speaking and listening. Children successfully learn to explore number sequences when playing counting games in the very well resourced and stimulating outdoor area. Nursery children make very good progress developing early language and mathematics skills in the role-play 'shop'. The children explore the world around them with curiosity and interest, gaining confidence as they climb and explore spaces. They learn to describe changes to textures and shapes when investigating 'slimy pasta' in the water tray. The staff are vigilant and supportive, although in the Reception class, some children find it difficult to settle to one activity so their learning is not always sustained or extended.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the teaching has a greater impact on raising standards in writing by the end of Year 2.
- Raise standards in science throughout the school, ensuring that assessments in science provide clear learning targets for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are below average but are improving. Pupils across the school achieve well. Children join the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are well below those expected of three and four-year-olds. They make good progress in all areas of learning. Last year's national tests showed that pupils in Year 6 reached average standards in English and mathematics, although standards were below average in science. Assessments also show that pupils in Year 2 reached average standards in reading and mathematics but exceptionally low standards in writing. These trends reflect strengths in the teaching of reading and mathematics, and relative weaknesses in the teaching of pupils' independent writing in Years 1 and 2 and in science across the school. The high proportion of pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and those joining the school at different times make rapid progress because of skilled support. Pupils who have difficulty learning to read or who need extra help with their mathematics make good progress towards their individual learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and, although attendance rates are satisfactory, they are improving well. Punctuality is good and pupils are keen and eager learners. School councillors benefit from the opportunities to represent the views of others. Pupils show initiative when supporting pupils at break times as peer mediators. Pupils adopt healthy eating habits and are encouraged to be active in sports. They have a strong sense of community and take responsibility for helping those beyond their immediate locality through charitable fund-raising. Well-planned

opportunities in lessons and assemblies help the pupils to reflect on important moral and spiritual themes, such as making 'every day a golden day' by forgiving others and respecting other points of view. Pupils are thoughtful and look for the positive qualities of the many cultures represented through drama, poetry and music, including the celebration of world faiths and festivals. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) and basic skills such as writing, which prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons well to meet the wide-ranging needs and abilities of the pupils. Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting those who need one-to-one support with reading, writing or mathematics. Teachers are particularly good at asking the pupils to reflect on their own learning. The objectives of lessons and tasks are made clear to the pupils, but teachers do not use these enough to check that all pupils understand what is expected. There are good opportunities for pupils to practice their skills and to extend these, which was seen to very good effect in Year 6 when the pupils wrote interesting story openings. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good opportunities to reinforce their reading skills but are less confident when attempting to write independently. Teachers plan lessons well to encourage the pupils to share ideas with talk partners or to self-correct using 'editing buddies'. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently to check that everyone is on track to reach their targets, although this is not yet done consistently in science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An extensive range of enrichment is provided that includes the creative arts, sport, visits and visitors. Personal, social and health education is promoted well through specially themed topics or whole weeks dedicated to a specific subject, such as Black History or 'The magic of science'. However, there is scope to improve opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative science skills. There is a strong emphasis on the creative curriculum, which is reflected in the high standard of pupils' artwork displayed around the school. The performing arts and music are used well to widen pupils' experiences. The school capitalises on its excellent partnerships with parents and others. For example, special workshops with parents are organised so they can experience activities with their children, so gaining a greater insight into the school's curriculum. The school has made good improvements to ICT resources, which has extended the work pupils do in this subject, although some tasks should be more challenging.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides strong pastoral support and care. The staff have established good systems to promote pupils' safety. Very good attention is paid to child protection and to systematic risk assessments of activities and resources. The staff are vigilant when supervising pupils at break times. Assessment and marking are used consistently well to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning. Individual targets also help pupils to check their own progress. However, assessment in science is not as well established to ensure that all pupils are on course to reach

their targets. The monitoring of pupils who join the school at different times, and assessments of those in the early stages of learning English, are excellent, helping these pupils to do well and reach their targets. There are very good procedures in place that help new arrivals to settle quickly, achieve well and play a full part in the life of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, assistant heads and governors work as an effective team. They have identified the right priorities for improvement since the last inspection. These also incorporate the views of pupils, parents and staff. Assessment and target setting are sophisticated enough to check the progress of this very diverse and changing school population. Senior staff are very skilled at assessing pupils on entry whenever they join the school and setting challenging targets that are checked frequently. This has yet to be established in science. Governors hold the school to account well and provide good support. There are effective systems in place to ensure that they monitor the school's performance. Governors and staff have forged highly effective relationships with parents, who contribute greatly to the life of the school.

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.

Annex A

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?	2
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of East Acton Primary School, London, W3 7HA

The inspectors were very pleased to visit your school. You made us feel welcome. We think that you go to a good school. You all work hard with your teachers. The inspectors were very pleased with the displays of your work around the school. Your headteacher and staff have done a great deal to improve the school since it was last inspected. These are just a few of the things that inspectors were pleased with most.

- You are well behaved, polite and considerate.
- Your teachers and support staff are good at helping you to do well in English and mathematics and you are starting to do better in science. The 'magic of science' was great fun and we could see that you really enjoyed this.
- You enjoy school and, together with your teachers, you are particularly good at helping those who are new to the school to settle quickly. Well done!
- The inspector who spoke to the school council was really impressed with the way you all help to make your school better. We also think that peer mediation at break times works really well.
- Your parents are very pleased with you and your teachers and the school works very closely with them.
- The headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and work hard to keep looking for ways to make the school even better.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help younger pupils to do even better in writing
- make sure that you all do better in your science work.

You can all help by making sure that you all come to school regularly, as we were pleased to see that attendance rates are improving well. Keep this up.

Well done and I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector