

Woodgrange Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102722
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	308100
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Stephenson
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2004
School address	Sebert Road London E7 0NJ
Telephone number	020 8534 2120
Fax number	020 8519 1391

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- what the school is doing to improve the performance of more able pupils
- how well the curriculum meets the learning needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language
- the impact of subject leaders on standards and achievement.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, a governor and pupils also contributed to the 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large school lies in an urban area. More than four fifths of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Bangladeshi. Two thirds of pupils speak an additional language to English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is low. These include speech and language and moderate learning difficulties. The school has the Gold Arts Mark, Healthy School Award and the Active School Sports Award. The school has a partnership with Early Start, which funded a new Early Years building on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has many strengths. Pupils achieve well because of consistently good teaching. A parent spoke for many when she said, 'Woodgrange is a happy school, with good quality teaching and a strong sense of community'. The headteacher's passion for education drives her clear vision to see every pupil succeed. She is supported very ably by a strong leadership team. The impact of leadership and management in raising standards and achievement is good, especially of the more able pupils and those who speak English as an additional language. A new tightly-structured reading scheme enables all pupils to be taught in ability groups and make progress at their own pace. This has improved the way in which they link letters and sounds, and given them the support they need to be confident writers. Booster groups for more able pupils have been successful, and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in national assessments at the end of Year 2 has gone up this year to be above average.

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities below those normally found, especially in social and emotional development and language acquisition. They make good progress each year, so that by the time they leave the school, standards are consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. A good vibrant curriculum contributes well to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being and their great enjoyment of school. The curriculum is adapted to meet effectively the specific learning needs of pupils and caters particularly well for the many pupils whose first language is not English. An emphasis on speaking and listening, practical activity and visual resources enables these pupils to grow in confidence and make rapid progress. The school has recruited widely from its local community, so that staff speak most of the languages known by the pupils, and this also assists them, especially in settling into the school when they first arrive. The curriculum provides well for literacy and numeracy, but pupils do not have enough access to computers, because there is only one in each classroom. The school's computer suite is inadequately housed in a windowless former corridor that gets very hot and noisy with the machinery. As a consequence, Year 2 pupils in particular are not able to use and apply their technology skills or develop their research skills sufficiently.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They work and play together harmoniously and celebrate one another's different cultures and faiths. Pupils nominate their schoolmates for awards in assembly, and help out as playground pals and lunchtime helpers. The school council is making a difference in improving school meals and toilet facilities. As one pupil put it, 'We work out stuff and make sure everything's right for the school.' Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and stay safe, and take plenty of exercise including swimming. Over one hundred of them participate each week in a good range of clubs such as French, art, sports and pottery. Attendance is above average for infant schools, and pupils are very keen to win the weekly prize. A pupil said, 'I like the attendance cup. It's shiny and it's real!' Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils help to keep the school's extensive grounds looking beautiful, and worked with Morgan Stanley volunteers in improving the woodland area. They raise money for charities and have strong links with the church and mosque. Pupils are in touch with a school in Cuba, and welcomed visitors from there who came all the way to see them. Pupils have a good set of basic skills, and become confident learners, well prepared for junior school.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. They make lessons interesting by using a variety of strategies to engage pupils, with regular

opportunities for them to compare ideas in pairs or small groups. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. One pupil said, 'I like magical stories!' The staff match work to pupils' abilities well, and support effectively those who find learning more difficult, such as pupils with moderate learning difficulties, whilst challenging appropriately more able pupils. Occasionally the pace of lessons slackens when teachers spend too long getting started. They have high expectations of pupils, who work hard. Much of the recording of mathematics is on commercial sheets, which restricts the opportunities for pupils to show their own working or develop their thinking in original ways. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are outstanding, with, as one parent put it, 'a strong ethos of friendship, respect and sharing.' Pupils are valued as individuals and the staff know them very well, tailoring interventions to meet their needs precisely. Regular pupil progress meetings ensure pupils are on track to succeed, and any who are struggling, such as pupils with speech and language difficulties, are identified and supported straight away. Teaching and learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' good progress. The school has very strong links with parents, and involves them fully in supporting their children's learning. It gave parents a CD of sounds so that they could help their children practise at home. Pupils know their targets for improvement well, and often discuss their progress with their teachers. They increasingly assess one another's work and know what to look for to make their writing better.

Good leadership and management keeps the school focused on raising achievement, with effective monitoring systems in place to measure progress against key priorities. The strategic plan is very much a working document that involves all staff and governors, and is constantly updated. In this way, school leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop and keep up the momentum. The headteacher takes a real interest in the children and their families, and is very accessible around the school. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility and monitor closely what goes on. This has a positive impact on standards and achievement, especially in English, mathematics and science. The school encourages and supports younger teachers well, and there is a culture of sharing expertise and reflective practice. Governors offer support and challenge, and are a useful sounding board for staff. They place a good range of skills at the school's disposal. Their monitoring, however, is not clearly linked to improvement priorities and tends to be quite informal. The school building is outdated and facilities for staff are inadequate. The staffroom is far too small, teachers have only the corner of a corridor for preparation and planning, there are not enough toilets and offices are very cramped. The Nursery is also too small, but there are plans to extend this. Staff have selflessly put investing in children's learning before their own needs to such an extent that conditions are now unacceptable.

This exciting and forward-looking school provides a good level of education for its pupils, and has maintained above average standards for some time. The capacity for it to continue to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is a good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities that interest the children and nurture their natural curiosity. Effective planning focuses on children's learning, both indoors and outside, across the six areas of learning. The good curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of an increasing number of children who enter the Nursery with little English. A 'learning walk' in the woodland area filled children with awe and wonder with cow parsley towering above them, as they sat and listened to all the different sounds. Staff have a good understanding of

how well children are doing, although they do not do enough extended observations of individuals to see how they tackle particular activities over a longer period. Progress is good from starting points below expectations, with many pupils reaching the early learning goals for their age by the end of the Reception year. Reception children have walked around the local area, but do not go on enough trips to places of interest further afield.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' access to computers so that they can practise their technology and research skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the school building so that there are acceptable staff facilities and more space in the Nursery.

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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?	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?	2
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	2
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?	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	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	2

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?	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?	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

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodgrange Infant School, London, E7 0NJ

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. I did enjoy my visit. You told me you have a good school and I agree with you. These are some of the things I particularly like about it.

- You make good progress in your work and learn a lot.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you care for one another very well.
- You do much to make the school a happy place.
- The school council is working very hard for things to be even better.
- The teaching is good and your lessons are interesting.
- There are lots of exciting activities for you to do.
- The school cares for you especially well.
- The headteacher and her staff lead the school well.

I think you need more than one computer in your classrooms, so that you use them more often to do your work and find out new things. I have asked your teachers to think of how they can get some more. Most of you (apart from the Nursery) have enough room to do your work, but your teachers only have a tiny staffroom and need more space for themselves. I have asked the governors to see if they can come up with some ideas to improve things for them, as they work very hard and need somewhere to have a rest every now and again.

Thank you once again for your help. My very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector