

Eleanor Smith School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102793
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	308123
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Goodchild

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	6–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Boyce
Headteacher	Mr A Hall
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	North Street Plaistow London E13 9HN
Telephone number	020 8471 0018
Fax number	020 8472 1388

Age group	6–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a special school for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The majority of pupils also have associated learning difficulties, particularly specific learning difficulties (SpLD). Most pupils attend on a part-time basis for two or three days a week and remain on roll at their mainstream school; only four pupils currently attend full time. Younger pupils typically stay at the school for around four terms and the aim with all pupils is to return them to mainstream school on a full-time basis. The school is on a split site, with primary aged pupils at the Plaistow site and secondary aged pupils at the Beckton site. Since the last inspection, the school has been through a period of extreme difficulty in recruiting staff to the secondary site; it is now fully staffed. This is the first year that the school has provided for pupils at Key Stage 4: it has a small number of Year 10 pupils but no Year 11 pupils on roll yet. The school has Healthy Schools status and recently gained the Artsmark Silver Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's leaders are right in judging that this is a good school. Parents are highly satisfied with its work. They are very pleased with the progress their children are making and say that they have seen marked changes in them during their time at the school. Mainstream schools are equally positive about the way the school works in partnership with them. They say that they are 'immensely impressed by the dedicated staff at Eleanor Smith School' and the support they provide to 'extremely demanding pupils who would otherwise find it impossible to make progress'.

The school is led and managed well, and the headteacher and senior leadership team provide exceptionally clear direction to its work. Staff morale is high and there is a very strong commitment amongst the staff to making things as good as possible for the pupils. As a result, the school is a lively and dynamic establishment with a real sense of purpose. At the primary site, the school has sustained the very high quality of education found at the last inspection. It has made outstanding improvement at the secondary site, where provision is now good.

Teaching is good overall; there is a significant amount of outstanding teaching at the primary site and in art at the secondary site. Assessment procedures are thorough and well established. The curriculum is good. It is matched very well to pupils' needs and interests at the primary site. In this first year of providing for pupils at Key Stage 4, the school has introduced some accredited courses but the range on offer is limited. It does not currently provide any GCSE courses, though the school has quickly established good links with a college and provides useful vocational experiences for the pupils.

Standards are below average overall but this represents good achievement as the attainment of pupils is at best below and in many cases well below average when they join the school. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, and information and communication technology supports their learning well. Many pupils join the school with particular difficulties in literacy and the school has rightly identified the need to raise standards in writing. Although pupils' spoken answers often show an average understanding, the slowness of their recording limits their ability to express their ideas fully and keeps their attainment below average.

The school cares exceptionally well for its pupils and provides them, and their families, with a great deal of support. It pays very careful attention to the needs of individual pupils and does much to promote their self-esteem. It provides good personal and academic guidance. As a result, personal development is outstanding overall: it is exceptionally good at the primary site and good at the secondary site. Pupils quickly settle in and the school brings about a rapid change in their attitudes and behaviour and, thus, in their readiness to learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce a suitable range of accredited courses at Key Stage 4.
- Raise standards in writing throughout the school so that pupils are better able to record their ideas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make very good progress at the primary site, where there is a significant amount of outstanding teaching. They make good progress at Key Stage 3, and the small number of pupils

at Key Stage 4 make satisfactory progress. On both sites, pupils with specific learning difficulties make very good progress in their reading and spelling as a result of the intensive specialist support they receive. Progress at the secondary site is restricted to some extent in science through lack of specialist teaching facilities, but school data shows that pupils nevertheless make satisfactory progress in the subject. To compensate, the school places particular emphasis on developing pupils' practical skills in the arts. Older pupils make very good progress in art and photography. They produce imaginative work in computer graphics and photography, showing a good technical grasp of the media. Standards in art at the secondary site are in line with the national average and pupils produce some very expressive work in two and three dimensions. Their work is celebrated around the school and has been exhibited in a professional gallery.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is outstanding; their spiritual development is good. The school helps pupils to have a much greater sense of self worth and increasingly to consider the feelings of others. Pupils make outstanding gains in their awareness of healthy living. They take part with enthusiasm in a wide range of physical activities and older pupils in particular gain much insight into healthy eating through cooking nutritious, well-balanced meals. Pupils make outstanding gains in their knowledge of how to keep safe and manage risks, for instance, through the school's work to make them fully aware of knife crime. They learn in an environment that is generally calm and orderly, and pupils treat the school premises with respect. Behaviour is good and there has been significant improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. Individual pupils make clear gains in their ability to reflect on the impact of their actions. Most pupils say that they enjoy school and most apply themselves well in lessons. This is particularly the case at the primary site, where pupils often remain exceptionally focused and show very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, helping to maintain the school grounds at the primary site and some older pupils act as role models to younger ones. Attendance is now good overall and has improved dramatically at the secondary site since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in acquiring a range of skills for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school thoroughly assesses pupils' attainment on entry, keeps comprehensive records of their attainment and tracks their progress carefully. Assessment information is used well in planning lessons that are matched closely to the learning needs of individual pupils. Teachers have high expectations and make learning objectives clear to pupils. Where teaching is outstanding, teachers use their very good subject knowledge to ask probing questions and make learning highly motivating. These lessons move at a rapid pace and there is a strong sense of shared purpose between staff and pupils. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants manage behaviour very well and ensure that pupils stay on task. Where teaching is good and occasionally satisfactory, teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is less developed and pupils are not challenged to work as quickly or independently as they do in the best lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school places appropriate emphasis on teaching the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support pupils' planned return to mainstream school. It also provides a wide range of experiences to promote pupils' personal, social and health education. Art and photography are particular strengths at the secondary site, and cooking and physical education feature strongly. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is at an early stage of development since this is the first year that the school has had pupils on roll beyond the end of Year 9. It has introduced accredited courses in basic skills and the ASDAN Bronze Award Scheme, and is seeking further relevant courses. Vocational opportunities are already good and there are effective links with the local college for part-time courses in building, car and motorcycle maintenance, hairdressing and plumbing. Pupils undertake work experience and gain valuable insight into the world of work. The curriculum is enriched by many visits out and visitors into the school, and pupils have exceptionally good opportunities to gain a range of skills through sport and outdoor pursuits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school places exceptionally good emphasis on child protection and on ensuring that pupils are kept safe. This is a particularly important feature of its work as most of its pupils are vulnerable. Effective procedures are in place for dealing with any bullying or racist incidents, and there are very high levels of supervision. The management of behaviour is very good and staff are highly skilled at defusing situations, though the school is at an early stage in measuring the progress pupils make in tackling their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are kept very well informed through daily reports and telephone conversations. They are fully involved when their children join the school, in the process of reviewing their progress and when it is time for them to leave. Learning mentors on each site help to forge extremely close links between the school, other agencies and parents. Careers guidance is tailored very well to individual needs. Pupils are made aware of their targets and, at the primary site especially, they are involved in assessing their own progress at the end of lessons. The school has outstanding procedures in place for preparing pupils for transition when they leave and this contributes to its very high success rate in returning pupils full time to mainstream school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and other senior leaders provide exceptionally clear vision for the school's work. They aspire to providing the best possible quality of education and are exceptionally committed to including all pupils as fully as possible. The strong impetus for growth combined with good self-evaluation and monitoring puts the school in a good position to improve further. Becoming an outstanding school is therefore clearly in its sights. Leaders are clear about what is working well and what still needs to be done, and the school has a strong management structure where responsibilities are clearly delegated. The staff are involved collectively in self-evaluation and subject co-ordinators play a key role in this. Partnership with other schools is outstanding. The school works in exceptionally close collaboration with mainstream schools,

liaising with them, supporting pupils in mainstream classes and advising on strategies that may be used successfully with its pupils. Governance is satisfactory and improving. Governors bring some valuable expertise and are involved closely in the life of the school. They are developing their role in challenging staff, for instance through forging links with subjects and increasing the number of committees to cover more areas of the school's work.

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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?	1
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?	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	2
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	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	1
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	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

03 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eleanor Smith School, London, E13 9HN

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit, seeing the interesting work you do, and now I am writing to tell you what I found out about your school.

Eleanor Smith is a good school and I can see why so many of your parents wrote to say how pleased they are with the progress you are making. Your mainstream schools are also very pleased with the help the school gives you.

There are many good things about your school. These are some of the most important:

- the teaching is good and sometimes it is outstanding
- in art and photography, you produce some very good work and it must have been so exciting to see your work exhibited in a professional gallery
- you have fantastic opportunities to learn skills in sport and outdoor pursuits, and you cook meals that look very tasty
- the teachers and teaching assistants care for you really well
- you are making extremely good progress in improving your behaviour and behaviour is usually good
- most importantly, the school is outstanding in the way it helps nearly all of you to prepare for getting back full time into mainstream school.

The headteacher and other teachers are very enthusiastic about making the school even better. I have asked them to do all they can to help you reach higher standards in writing. I have also asked them to provide those of you at Key Stage 4 with more opportunities to gain qualifications.

Keep enjoying your time at Eleanor Smith and work really hard because your future depends on how hard you try now.

Yours sincerely,

Ms M J Goodchild

Lead Inspector