

Aldersbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102823
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	308130
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Matthews

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	581
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor A Burgess
Headteacher	Mr A Wright
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Harpenden Road Wanstead London E12 5HL
Telephone number	020 8989 0210
Fax number	020 8518 8993

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Aldersbrook is a larger than average primary school. The school is a multi-cultural community with over a third of the pupils in the school having English as an additional language. There is a below average proportion of pupils with additional learning or physical needs and a below average eligibility for free school meals. Pupil turnover is extremely high. The school is member of the local authority's Schools Sports partnership, has the International School status, and is working towards a Healthy Schools award. There has been a significant turnover of headteachers since the last inspection. The present headteacher started in April 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Aldersbrook is a good school with some outstanding features and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Despite a very high turnover of pupils, the school is very successful in integrating pupils and families from wide ranging backgrounds, cultures and religions, and creating a very happy and well-balanced community. It provides a good education for its pupils and an excellent level of care. Pupils' strong personal development reflects their very positive relationships with their teachers and the school's determination that all pupils will enjoy learning and want to do their best. Pupils' behaviour is good because they understand the rules and how they make the school an orderly, and safe place, in which to learn.

From Nursery, pupils achieve consistently well as they move through the school. Regular assessment and analysis of pupils' work enable teachers to plan lessons that have the maximum impact on learning. Good pupil progress tracking systems ensure that any underachievement is quickly identified and addressed. Standards for the current Year 6 pupils show a clear improvement on the previous year being above average overall. However, despite these improvements, the school is right to identify writing and science as areas that still need further improvement. Pupils also make very good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) which is now linked effectively with other subjects.

Leadership and management are good overall, and the leadership of the headteacher is extremely strong. He and his deputy make a strong team and they have made excellent use of the partnerships with local schools and the local authority to improve the school's provision. The school now has a strong team spirit and share a united confidence that it can make things better for the pupils. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses because of rigorous self-evaluation procedures. Its priorities for future development are well chosen and accurate and, as such, the school is well placed for further improvement. Governors are supportive of the school but do not find out for themselves how it is doing or how decisions they have made are being implemented.

The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well paced and challenging, resulting in well-motivated pupils who learn at a fast pace. Teachers' marking is thorough but there is a lack of consistency in the way in which they inform pupils about how to improve their work. The curriculum is excellent with exciting cross-curricular links that really motivate the pupils. High quality music and sports tuition and a well-planned range of visits and visitors further enhance the pupils' learning opportunities. Teaching and learning support assistants play an integral part in the learning of the pupils, especially those with behavioural or speech and language difficulties. The organisation of the support for those at an early stage of learning English is outstanding, enabling these pupils to make rapid progress.

Parents are very supportive of the school's provision and are highly appreciative of the many improvements that have recently been made. This was summed up by one parent who wrote, 'My children now love this school and we are very proud to send our children to Aldersbrook'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with attainment in line with age related expectations. They make good progress due to well-planned activities that provide an appropriate balance between adult led and child initiated activities. Children at early stages of learning English quickly develop

the confidence to join in activities and learn happily alongside their peers. The different areas of learning are linked in relevant and meaningful ways. The early teaching of letter sounds and meaning (phonics) is well planned and effective. The quality of the Foundation Stage is good. It is well led and there is good teamwork between staff and a commitment to continual professional development. Relationships between adults and children are positive and caring. Parents are welcomed into school and contribute in several ways, such as for the 'One World Week', when they brought in prayer mats to show the children. Children leave Reception with the great majority having gained the skills expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the new and creative approaches to planning lessons continue to drive up standards in writing and science.
- Ensure teachers' marking consistently informs pupils how to improve their work.
- Develop the role of governors so that they have more first hand knowledge of how well the school is performing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards in Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Progress in writing and science has rightly been highlighted as a priority and teachers' creative approaches to planning units of work are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in these two areas. Last year's dip in standards for the Asian and Black ethnic groups has been robustly addressed. The proportion of pupils with above average standards is increasing. However, the very high turnover of pupils is putting added pressure on the school to maintain these standards. The school's assessment and support procedures work really well and new pupils are effectively assimilated into the life and work of their classes. Younger pupils' progress in reading and writing is improving fast because of the improved phonics' provision. Pupils achieve well in music and sport and make very good progress in ICT with some high quality work observed in multi-media presentations and control technology.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is good because they enjoy school and are positive about what they do. They are happy and confident and relate very well to adults and to each other. Good working habits are forming a firm foundation for the pupils' future lives. Thought-provoking assemblies successfully reinforce pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's caring ethos contributes significantly to the very strong racial harmony. Attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is above average but the school is working hard to reduce the number of pupils who do not arrive promptly for the start of the day. The school council has developed its role effectively, leading to initiatives and improvements that reflect pupils' own wishes and views. Pupils are very involved in the life of the local community and raise money for charity, both locally and further afield in Uganda, where there are strong links with a school in Gulu. Pupils have a good knowledge of keeping healthy and safe. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of regular exercise and the dangers of drugs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers plan well to meet pupils' needs. Lessons are interesting, well planned and challenging. Recent improvements to the curriculum have resulted in increased opportunities for pupils to be involved in 'hands on' practical and investigative learning. One pupil mentioned that, 'Mental mathematics is more fun now because we learn through challenging games'. Relationships are good and teachers manage behaviour very well, enabling pupils to learn at a fast pace. Teaching and learning support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning ensuring all are fully included in the lessons. Pupils also benefit from the use of a good range of visual and ICT resources. The use of 'talking partners' is underused in some classes and teachers' marking, although supportive, is not consistently helping pupils to improve their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy learning due to the new and innovative curriculum. This skilfully links subjects in relevant and meaningful ways. For instance, pupils in Year 3 used ICT to compose newspaper articles as part of their project on Anglo-Saxons. A new phonics programme has been introduced in Years 1, 2 and 3 and is having a positive impact on the pupils' reading and writing skills. The new emphasis on investigative and practical learning is having a clear impact on pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their behaviour. International links with Uganda have greatly increased pupils' knowledge of other cultures and have led to the school gaining an International School Award. The curriculum and resources for ICT have improved dramatically, making computers a natural part of the pupils' learning and improving standards across the school. The curriculum is also enhanced by specialist teaching in music, drama and physical education. Visits, visitors and an exciting range of extra curricular activities greatly enrich pupils' learning and life experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Whilst the care, guidance and support is good overall, the care the school provides for its pupils is outstanding. This is particularly so for pupils new to the school, who settle quickly and thrive in its supportive atmosphere. Pupils at risk are identified early, and effective arrangements are put in place to provide appropriate support. Challenging end-of-year targets are set for all pupils, but these are not always shared with the pupils. Good links with outside agencies coupled with well focused support in classes enables pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and particularly those with behavioural or speech and language problems, to achieve well. Procedures for all aspects of child protection and health and safety meet requirements. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment, where pupils feel safe and where there is little bullying. Pupils receive very good support to ensure their own safety both in and outside school, and also receive good guidance on healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management for the school and has very successfully created an ethos where everyone feels valued, cared for and wants to do their best. The highly effective management systems involving phase and subject leaders ensure staff know what to do and how to do it. Thorough self-evaluation procedures ensure planned developments are most effective in helping the school improve. Target setting and the tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous and help ensure pupils are reaching their full potential. Staff development is particularly strong and links closely to the school's priorities. Very focused spending on resources, particularly in ICT, has had a real impact on pupils' achievement and their enthusiasm for learning. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive but do not have enough first hand information about how well the school is doing.

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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?	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	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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?	1
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	1
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

18 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Aldersbrook Primary School, London, E12 5HL

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking with you at break times and lunchtimes and watching you working with your teachers. It was good to speak with your teachers about how well you do at school. We also enjoyed your singing in assembly and listening to the orchestra. We think that you and your teachers have worked very hard together to make yours a good school and such an interesting one to visit. It does many things well but there are some things, we feel it can do, to make it even better.

What we liked most about your school:

- your headteacher is doing a really good job; he knows just what to do to make the school better for you
- your teachers and all those who work with you in the classroom look after you very well and really help you improve your work
- you have lots of opportunities to say how the school can get better
- you really enjoy school, behave well and have very good relationships with each other and your teachers
- those of you who find work difficult or are learning to speak English are getting the right sort of help and you use it well.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help you do even better in your writing and science work
- make sure that when your teachers mark your books they let you know how you can improve your work
- invite your governors in more often so that they can ask you about all the exciting things that you are doing in school.

I wish you every success for the future.

Andrew Matthews

Lead inspector