

Yardley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103037
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	308203
Inspection date	23 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	442
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	86
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Leigh Clothier
Headteacher	Mr Norman Clear
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hawkwood Crescent London E4 7PH
Telephone number	020 8529 3671
Fax number	020 8529 3229

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' achievement and standards in writing at Key Stage 2
- the factors leading to the school's high standards in national tests, particularly the quality of teaching and learning
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from:

- observations of lessons, the school's autumn festival celebration, and break times
- discussions with school staff, members of the governing body and pupils
- the school's documentation, particularly records of pupils' progress
- questionnaires returned by parents
- examples of pupils' work.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. It has a Nursery, where younger children in the EYFS attend part time, either mornings or afternoons. Older EYFS children attend full-time in two Reception classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is above average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin, but there is an above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, with a wide range of heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is greater than in most schools, but relatively few are at early stages of learning English. There is a breakfast club that takes place on the school site as well as an after-school club, which are not managed by the governing body. These are reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school has gone from strength to strength since its last inspection and now provides an outstanding education. It is a harmonious, positive community where boys and girls from all backgrounds work and play together happily. This results in outstanding achievement and excellent personal development. Relationships are very positive, and Year 6 pupils told an inspector that '...you never feel left out...' and '...we always look forward to coming to school'.

The curriculum, in particular, has improved considerably, and it is now excellent. An innovative programme to support pupils' personal development, through lessons in thinking skills and emotional intelligence, is highly successful. This has contributed, with other elements of the school's excellent pastoral care, to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an extremely good understanding of right and wrong, and pupils in Year 6 showed great maturity when discussing complex and difficult issues together. Behaviour is excellent, and pupils are enthusiastic about the school's systems of rewards for effort and success.

Arrangements to safeguard pupils and look after their welfare are all in place, and Year 6 stressed that, 'Teachers make sure that children stay safe.' Pupils respond very positively to the many opportunities that the school provides for physical exercise. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, although some of them are only at the early stages of modifying what they eat in response to this knowledge. They make an extremely positive contribution to the thriving school community. Older pupils take on a wide range of challenging responsibility that contribute to this, for example, acting as 'peer mediators' to help schoolmates to resolve arguments, or teaching playground games to younger pupils. Their strong contribution to the wider community was evident in the autumn festival on the morning of the inspection, when parents and other members of the community were welcomed to a lively and exciting production. Most pupils attend regularly, but attendance is only slightly above average, because of a high proportion of families who take holidays during term time.

An extensive programme of class projects, that link different areas of the curriculum in an exciting and meaningful way, is well established. This supports pupils' excellent academic progress, as well as their very high levels of enjoyment and extremely positive attitudes to school. In discussion, pupils were extremely enthusiastic about these projects, which staff introduced in response to a survey of pupils to find out how they felt they learned best.

Standards are exceptionally and consistently high by the end of Year 6, despite children starting in the EYFS with standards somewhat lower than those expected for their age. Pupils do particularly well in reading, in mathematics and in science throughout the school, with very large proportions exceeding the nationally expected level by Year 6. Work last year to raise writing standards resulted in clear improvements, as shown by higher results in national assessments at Year 2. In contrast, results of writing tests at the end of Year 6 were disappointing in comparison to other subjects, and were lower than the school's own assessments had predicted. Inspection evidence showed examples of excellent writing by older pupils, in different subjects, when done as part of cross-curricular projects. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. However, the school has identified that it had not spent enough time during last year on getting pupils to write on an unexpected topic of which they have short notice, as they have to in a test situation. Staff are now planning how to give pupils such experiences in a meaningful way this year.

A major factor in all pupils' achievement is the school's excellent system for tracking how well they are doing, using a variety of assessment information. This is analysed carefully, and challenging individual targets are set. Any pupils who start to fall behind are identified quickly, and the school provides immediate help and support to ensure that everyone makes the progress they should.

The quality of teaching is outstanding and underpins high academic and pastoral standards. Pupils like and trust their teachers, telling the inspector they are 'friendly' and '...really care for you...' although they are '...strict if you misbehave!' As a result, pupils work hard to please them, and lessons are orderly, fast paced and productive. Teachers make excellent use of interactive whiteboards to clarify explanations. They use very effective strategies to make sure all pupils are involved in lessons. In particular, pupils have excellent opportunities to discuss their work together, and develop very strong collaborative skills as a result. They also work very conscientiously and independently when asked. This, along with their very good basic skills, means they are very well prepared for their future lives. The key strength in teaching, underpinning all pupils' progress, is the consistently careful match of work to different needs, so that pupils are challenged consistently to improve.

This challenge for pupils is paralleled by the way the headteacher challenges his colleagues to improve their performance and drive up standards. He has established a high level of consistency in the school's approach, shared by all the team, who together provide excellent leadership and management. Governors understand the school well and give it good support. Central to the consistent improvement are a lack of complacency and extremely effective self-evaluation. Provision and outcomes are monitored continually, and the whole staff team work together to address any issues. Feedback to teachers helps them improve their practice, and has raised the quality of teaching significantly since the last inspection. The school has been successful in involving parents in its work, and they are very supportive and appreciative of what the school provides for their children. A typical comment in the questionnaires was, 'Very happy with all aspects of the school and education - very consistent.' The major improvements since the last inspection, as well as the school's continual striving to do better, show that it is extremely well placed to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Despite a slight decline in the last few years in children's attainment when they start in Nursery, standards by the end of EYFS have risen year on year. Children now make rapid progress so that, by the end of Reception, their attainment is well above national expectations. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes clearly enjoy coming to school. They settle in quickly and they feel safe and at ease with teachers and other children. Parents appreciate the way staff give priority to developing children's personal development and well-being, one saying, 'We couldn't be more pleased with the way our child is progressing and always feel that the school is very approachable.' Adults give good emphasis to helping children learn '...the way we do things here...' through daily routines, such as finding their name-cards at registration, sitting quietly at story and home time, sharing, caring and taking turns. This helps children become confident and independent members of the school community.

Children are interested and eager to join in with the exciting range of indoor and outdoor activities on offer. During the inspection, they very much enjoyed sounding out and spelling short words, counting and calculating, and a range of creative and construction activities. 'Activate' - a whole school initiative to link physical and cognitive skills - is hugely popular.

Staff give very strong emphasis to developing children's social, emotional and communication skills during planned and incidental free choice activities, and this is very successful. Good leadership in the EYFS promotes children's very good progress. Teachers assess children's overall development accurately on arrival at school, and then at regular stages. Leadership and management are good, and underpin the many strengths in EYFS. However, arrangements have not been put in place to familiarise all the adults with the new national requirements and guidance for EYFS.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in writing at Key Stage 2 to be closer to that in reading, mathematics and science.
- Make sure that all the adults who work in Nursery and Reception fully understand the new requirements and guidance for the EYFS.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

07 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Yardley Primary School, London, E4 7PH

On behalf of your inspectors, I would like to thank you for all your help and your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you all working so hard. You told us how much you liked school, and we could see why. We think your school is outstanding. There are too many good things about it to mention them all, but these are some of the most important.

We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour, how well you all get on together, and how hard you work. You are growing up into sensible, caring and thoughtful young people who are a credit to your school and your parents.

You are making excellent progress because your teachers are so good at helping you to learn. You don't do quite as well in writing as in other subjects by the end of the school, and we have agreed with the staff that they are going to help you get even better this year, especially when you write about new topics without a lot of preparation.

You have lots of interesting things to do that make lessons exciting, and help you to think carefully about important issues, such as honesty.

The staff are very good at keeping an eye on how you are doing, and make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets it.

The children in Nursery and Reception get off to a brilliant start, so they enjoy school. We have asked the staff to check some new government advice about teaching young children, to make sure that everything they do is up to date.

The headteacher and all the other adults have worked very hard to make your school so good, and you have helped them a lot. They are keen to keep on doing better and better, and you can help by carrying on always helping each other, and working hard.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector