

Richard Alibon Primary School with ARP for Cognitive and Learning
Difficulties: SEN Base
Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130357
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	315621
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Wade
Headteacher	Miss M Smith
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Alibon Road Dagenham RM10 8DF
Telephone number	020 8270 4706
Fax number	020 8270 4709

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average primary school serves a culturally diverse area of East London. About a third of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a number are at very earliest stages of learning English. Mobility has risen significantly over the past three years. Attainment when children start school in Foundation Stage is very much lower than that expected for the age group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The school provides special provision for children with cognitive and learning difficulties. A newly appointed headteacher will be in post from the beginning of next term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This improving school gives a satisfactory standard of education. The overwhelming majority of parents believe the school is friendly and caring and every child is valued and made to feel special. One parent wrote 'Since my child started at the school in September I have noticed a remarkable improvement in her. I thoroughly recommend the school'.

The retiring headteacher has built a strong sense of community and teamwork so that all adults are working purposefully to improve the achievement of all pupils. Partnerships to promote pupils' well-being remain strong and effective. Standards are improving. Almost all pupils make the progress expected of them, so that achievement is satisfactory overall.

The amount of good or better teaching is increasing but it is still not enough. Learning is most effective when pupils have opportunities to learn independently or in small groups and use their initiative. However, this is not consistent across the school. Some teachers do not give pupils, especially the higher attainers, sufficient chances to explore their own ideas or do not give them enough time to do so, and consequently progress is uneven.

Care, guidance and support are good. The use of self-assessment alongside targets for improvement is developing well, especially for the oldest pupils. However, there is still scope to improve this support so that pupils of all ages have an even clearer understanding of what they must do to improve. The headteachers determination that staff must focus on helping pupils discuss their emotions and think about behaviour has helped to create the school's calm and orderly atmosphere and the pupils' good behaviour. Pupils with cognitive and learning difficulties are very well supported through seamless teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. They are fully included in the life of the school.

The curriculum is satisfactory with a number of good features. These include a good number and variety of enrichment activities that capture pupils' enthusiasm and interest. Well-promoted personal skills ensure that pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and staying safe. Another good feature is the way in which it meets the needs of pupils with cognitive and learning difficulties. However, teachers do not always plan well enough for pupils that are more able and this limits their progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently restructured senior management team are sharpening the use of assessment information so they can measure more effectively the impact of their work on raising standards. However, the school has rightly recognised the need to increase the influence of the less experienced subject leaders in ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. There is satisfactory capacity to secure further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Most children start the Nursery with skills that are very low, particularly in their language and literacy and personal development. They settle well into the daily routines because the school makes effective links with parents through home visits and sharing of information. Children are happy and enjoy their learning. They learn to co-operate with each other and develop good attitudes to their learning. There is an appropriate balance between activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by children, including a good range of tasks based on particular themes. Children make satisfactory

progress but most are still well below the levels expected for their age by the start of Year 1 in personal, social and emotional development and in language and literacy. Children make the best progress in the Reception class where teaching is stronger.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good teaching in order to accelerate progress and raise standards.
- Ensure that subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school with the same rigour as the leaders for English, mathematics and science, in order to raise standards further.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils, especially the higher attainers to learn independently or in small groups and use their initiative.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The drive to improve standards is starting to bear fruit. Standards are below average overall, but achievement is satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils are now making the expected progress and meeting their targets. Pupils make the most progress between Year 2 and Year 6. Standards attained by the younger children are also improving but remain well below average overall. Those pupils speaking English as an additional language make satisfactory progress as do those who have difficulty with reading and writing. However, planning for the needs of higher attaining pupils is inconsistent in some classes, and this limits the progress they make. Pupils who have specific cognitive and learning difficulties make good progress against their targets. This occurs because of the very good quality help and support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave well. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the many cultures represented within the school community and value and respect them. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award, which is further evidence that pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and the importance of exercise. Pupils enjoy responsibility, for example as school councillors or 'yellow hats' - a group who are trained as playground buddies. Pupils feel safe at school. They say it is a harmonious, caring community where the adults deal with any bullying very quickly. Their systems for improving attendance are working, especially for the older pupils who now come to school more often. The lower than expected attendance figures are mostly due to the regular absence of a number of the youngest pupils. Pupils' contribution to the community is good. They raise funds for a number of local and national charities. While basic skills are below average, pupils work together cooperatively and develop exceptional self worth.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress throughout the school. There are a number of good elements to the teaching and learning but these are not consistent across the school. In the better lessons, teachers set a good pace, structure the learning well and provide good opportunities for pupils to investigate their own ideas on their own or in small groups. This helps pupils to make good progress in their lessons. However, in too many other lessons, teachers do too much talking or do not allow pupils sufficient opportunities to work independently or think for themselves. On these occasions, pupils do not learn as quickly as they should. This leads to variations in the rate at which pupils learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum promotes pupils' all-round development and their enjoyment of school. Teachers are developing a thematic approach to planning so that pupils can see how the different aspects of their learning fit together. For example, it promotes an understanding of cultural diversity through a number of subjects such as geography, history, religious education, English and music. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in the base is good, because of the range of experiences that are effectively matched to their needs. Throughout the school curriculum enrichment is strong, with many clubs for pupils to enjoy, and a host of visits and visitors. The arts, music and drama also support pupils' cultural development well. Despite these strengths, planning is not consistently rigorous enough in providing challenge for pupils, particularly the more able, which results in some uneven progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good and the pastoral aspects are outstanding. All adults believe that every child really does matter and the support for pupils with specific cognitive and learning difficulties is of very good quality. The school draws effectively on the expertise of a range of other agencies to help learners and their families. For example, the family learning activities organised by the school are enabling parents to become more involved in their children's learning. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and regularly reviewed, including annual updating of staff training. Pupils trust their teachers and know they can approach adults in the school to help solve problems. Target setting is developing well including the use of self-assessment. The oldest pupils find this very useful as it helps to guide their academic development. However, there is still scope to improve this support so that pupils of all ages have an even clearer understanding of what they must do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership, which builds on people's strengths and abilities. She is ably supported by the recently restructured

management team in setting out a clear vision for raising the achievement of all pupils. Good systems for appraising the school's work have identified key priorities for development. These are manageable and provide a useful framework for action and review. The leaders of English, mathematics and science monitor their subjects well and use the information they gather to make useful contributions to the school's development. However, other subject leaders are not yet as effective at ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school or its impact on the pupils' progress. Governors are becoming much more involved in the strategic management and at effectively holding the school to account for its 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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

01 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Alibon Primary School with ARP for Cognitive and Learning Difficulties: SEN Base, Dagenham, RM10 8DF

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were impressed with your friendliness and good behaviour and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other. We think that your school, overall, is satisfactory and you make satisfactory progress.

Here are some of the good things we found about your school.

- Your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on well with each other.
- You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and learn a lot in lessons.
- The school council represents your views very well and you all help the school to run smoothly. We were particularly pleased to find that some of you are 'Yellow Hats' and willingly help others at playtime.
- The school is good at organising many extra things for you to do.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are very well looked after.

We have asked the school to work on some things to make your school even better.

- Make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best ones in the school.
- We would like your teachers to check regularly how well you are learning in class. This will help them to make your work even better than it is.
- We are asking your teachers to give you even more opportunities during lessons to learn independently and explore your own ideas. You told us that you enjoy working in this way and that it really helps you to improve your work.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and to meet the targets set for you.

With best wishes

John Earish

Lead Inspector