

Green Dragon Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 132266 |
| Local Authority | Hounslow |
| Inspection number | 315999 |
| Inspection dates | 31 January –1 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Mike Thompson |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 400 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ms Catherine Toms |
| Headteacher | Mr John Golightly |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 January 2003 |
| School address | North Road Brentford TW8 0BJ |
| Telephone number | 020 8568 3971 |
| Fax number | 020 8569 9260 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Green Dragon is a large primary school serving a culturally and socially diverse community. The local area contains significant pockets of social disadvantage, as apparent in the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is more than twice the national average. In addition, an above average proportion of pupils either joins or leaves the school during the course of each year. About half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, and about one in eight is in the early stages of learning English. Both of these proportions are well above the national average. The impact of this is seen on entry to the Nursery, where children's skills in communicating in English are often weaker than would normally be expected at this age. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is about average for a school of this size. About a third of these pupils are identified as having more severe difficulties, including a very small number with statements of special educational need. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Green Dragon Primary is an improving school that provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It has a number of strengths, mostly relating to pastoral care and welfare. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

Parents and carers have very positive views of the school. Many written comments received were appreciative of the family atmosphere within the school. One parent sums up these views well when noting, 'Green Dragon is a unique community where children and families from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures get on very well.' Another, appreciative of the improvements made, comments, 'The current leadership looks for solutions rather than problems.'

Pupils' personal development is good. Their good behaviour contributes to the positive climate for learning throughout the school. They enjoy school and develop well as young citizens by making a positive contribution to the community. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle because the school is good at promoting sensible eating habits and the benefits of regular exercise. The pre-school sports activities, for example, are popular and help encourage regular attendance.

The headteacher has made a significant impact since his appointment, and is working hard to improve all aspects of provision, much of which is currently satisfactory. He has introduced new systems to check on pupils' progress, but recognises the need to develop them further. Work is underway to improve the quality of teachers' assessments, because practice is inconsistent. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but also lacks consistency. There are pockets of good teaching throughout the school, but these are more likely to be found in Key Stage 2 than elsewhere. The consequence is that pupils make better progress in some classes than in others. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of additional activities, such as the out-of-school clubs, most of which are of a sporting nature. However, lack of resources for information and communication technology (ICT) limits pupils' opportunities to develop skills in its use, and a previous heavy emphasis on basic skills has limited pupils' experiences in other subjects. The school is working to remedy this by adopting a cross-curricular approach to learning.

The improvements needed in teaching, the curriculum and academic guidance for pupils are to some extent a reflection of the current stage of staff development. However, they also reflect the lack of rigorous monitoring, particularly by subject leaders. The headteacher recognises the need to improve the skills of these middle managers in monitoring their areas of responsibility and in becoming accountable for the achievement of the pupils. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement from its last inspection, although much of this improvement has occurred within the past year. The systems being developed provide a sound basis for future improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The promotion of children's skills in speaking and listening is an important focus in the Nursery. However, on occasions, staff miss opportunities to develop these skills and ensure that all children understand what to do. All groups of children make satisfactory progress overall. A good choice of activities and judicious use of adults results in focused teaching groups. However,

children do less well in activities that they choose for themselves because there is not enough discussion about what they might learn while doing these tasks. Teachers are still developing their assessment practice and so the information used to inform future planning is not yet reliable. Outdoor provision for the Reception classes is poor. The lack of good quality outdoor equipment means that activities are cumbersome to organise and children therefore do not learn outdoors as often as they should. The Nursery outdoor resources, however, provide a stimulating environment. The school has rightly identified the need for further development in the Foundation Stage and has been taking advice from local authority consultants. It is in the process of appointing a permanent Foundation Stage manager to lead the planned improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made by pupils in all key stages by ensuring that more teaching is good or better.
- Refine the systems for checking on pupils' progress and improve the quality and range of assessments that underpin these.
- Develop the role of middle managers.

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

Although pupils in Key Stage 1 make steady progress, this is not enough to make significant inroads into the generally low levels of literacy and numeracy evident when they transfer from the Foundation Stage. Consequently, standards do not improve greatly by the end of Year 2 and, in most years, are well below the national average in reading writing and mathematics. The school is working hard to tackle this issue, and reports rapid gains in pupils' knowledge of letter sounds because of the increased focus placed on teaching phonics. However, the impact of this work is yet to be seen in improved standards. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Sometimes particular groups of pupils make rapid progress when given intensive extra help to remedy specific weaknesses in their work. A good example of this was seen during the inspection, where the headteacher effectively helped a small group of pupils to improve their skills in carrying out additions of two-digit numbers. This type of effective targeting of pupils was an important factor in the improved performance, and rapid progress, of Year 6 pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007. Pupils with LDD make satisfactory progress. Their individual needs are clearly identified and are met through extra help. Across the school, rates of progress in lessons vary because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. For example, pupils relate well to one another and respect the beliefs and cultural backgrounds of everyone in the school community. Attendance is improving, and was in line with the national average during the last school year.

Pupils effectively develop skills in citizenship through, for example, the school council and the opportunities provided for them to take on greater responsibility as they get older. Some act as Security Officers and others as Post Officers. They consider the role of being a 'Buddy' to the infant children one that is very important. They receive training for the role and learn how to deal with the needs of the younger ones with enhanced understanding.

Pupils' good social skills help prepare them for the next phase of their education and in becoming life-long learners. However, this strength is offset by weakness in their use of ICT as a tool for learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and mutual respect underpins effective management of behaviour. Other aspects of teaching are more variable. Some teachers make good use of their secure assessment of pupils to pitch work at levels that provide achievable challenges for all. Pupils also do well when teachers ensure that they are very clear about what is expected. This is often underpinned by good marking that celebrates what has been achieved and shows pupils what they need to do next. Pupils do less well in lessons where teachers do not explain clearly and are less skilled at matching work to pupils' abilities. They also make slower progress when they are not given clear guidance about how long they have to complete their tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has rightly placed a strong emphasis on improving pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, this has resulted in a curriculum that is a little unbalanced. The school has recognised the need to be sure that other subjects are properly covered, and is tackling this by beginning to develop a cross-curricular approach. This has the benefit of making subjects more interesting by establishing links that allow teaching in more than one subject at the same time. Currently this is only in place in Years 1 to 3. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, but pupils do not have regular enough access to computers to consolidate their skills. A variety of visits and visitors help enrich the curriculum. Year 6, for example, very recently visited London Zoo as part of their study of food chains.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is vigilant about health and safety and child-protection matters, and provides good quality day-to-day care for pupils. There are good systems for identifying pupils who need specific help with their studies. However, the academic guidance given to pupils is inconsistent, although it has some good features. Most pupils have learning targets, but these are generally new, and pupils do not always know or understand them. Plans to involve pupils in the evaluation of their work are still in their infancy. Marking, whilst good at times, is too inconsistent to ensure that pupils always understand the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

On appointment, the headteacher inherited a significant budgetary surplus, far in excess of the recommended maximum. In addition, the school was under-resourced in a number of important areas, such as ICT. The premises were in need of significant improvement. The headteacher has made good progress in addressing these issues. He is implementing a raft of measures designed to bring about improvements in pupils' achievement and to raise standards. His deputy provides valuable support and is effective in her areas of responsibility. All other staff with management responsibilities have not been adequately involved in rigorously evaluating either the provision or its impact on the pupils' progress. To some extent, this is due to the previous lack of a whole-school overview of pupils' progress. New systems now in place are designed to remedy this situation.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors are committed to and supportive of the school. However, they are not involved enough in the process of school self-evaluation.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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? | 3 |

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

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| 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 | 3 |
| 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Green Dragon Primary School, Brentford, TW8 0BJ

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work.

We think that your school is satisfactory overall, with some things that are good. Here are some of the things we liked best about your school.

- It is a happy place to be in. Everyone is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on well with each other and your teachers.
- You know a lot about how to keep healthy and safe.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.
- Whenever you need help, there is always someone there for you.

All of the other people who help run your school want it to be even better. Here are some things we have suggested that they should do.

- We would like your school to make sure that more of your lessons really make you think hard. We are sure that you are ready for this challenge!
- We like the way that the school checks on the progress that you are making, but we think that it could be even better. To help this happen, we would like your teachers to become more expert in working out how well you are doing in your work.
- We would like all the teachers to become really skilled in taking charge of different subjects.

We wish you lots of success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector