

Gearies Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133934
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	316223
Inspection date	3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Rogers

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Pettifer
Headteacher	Mr R Drew
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2004
School address	Waremead Road Gants Hill Ilford IG2 6TD
Telephone number	020 8550 1803
Fax number	020 8551 0118

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas:

- the quality of teaching and learning, and improvements since the last inspection
- the impact of improvement work done by leaders, especially in English and mathematics
- the quality of pupils' personal development and the school's provision for their care, guidance and support.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work and school documents, parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Gearies is a larger than average sized school. The overwhelming majority of the pupils are of minority ethnic background and three quarters of learners are new to English or bilingual. There is a steady increase of eastern European families and refugees. The take up of free school meals is lower than the national average, as is the number of pupils who have identified special needs. The school has achieved the Artsmark gold, Healthy Schools award (they gained a special teaching award for the quality of this), Investors in People and the Eco-School green flag award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Gearies is an outstanding school, where pupils make excellent progress in their lessons and in their personal development. When asked if they like school the pupils exclaim 'Definitely' and 'It's fun!' The vast majority of parents share their children's views and praise the hard work and dedication of the headteacher and the staff.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are weaker than would normally be expected for their age. This is because a significant number are new to English or have poor language skills. They make outstanding progress by the time they leave Year 2. Progress has continued to improve because the school's leadership has a clear focus on improving teaching. Test results have been consistently above average and this year pupils are on track to achieve standards that are exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. Over a third of pupils are expected to reach an above average Level 3 in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. Pupils do very well because the teachers use school assessment information very effectively to ensure that work is properly matched to pupils' abilities and that expectations are high. Although pupils know a lot for their age the way in which they present their work is sometimes untidy. This is because teachers' expectations are less clear and work on the walls is not always used well enough to exemplify high standards and good presentation skills.

The teaching is excellent because teachers have good subject knowledge and have developed an outstanding, lively, curriculum. Teachers build in opportunities for pupils to talk and develop their speaking and thinking skills and they make particularly good use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are thrilled to be writing 'blogs' about their reading and school trips for example. They also enthused about a Year 2 lesson where they developed their language skills by writing and recording a song. Fitness clubs contribute to the school's exemplary record in developing healthy lifestyles. 'Bollywood dancing' is a favourite attraction. Teachers set very challenging targets that are regularly reviewed to make sure pupils are on track. This helps teachers to identify pupils who need extra help so that all pupils, including those who are new to English make exceptionally good progress. Support from additional staff is very well managed. Pupils attend regular meetings with teachers and their parents to ensure that they are fully involved in evaluating their own progress and know what they have to do to improve.

Relationships are very strong, pupils are exceptionally well cared for and attendance is above average. The school strives to engage with the local community and works hard to inform and engage parents. Pupils learn to make an excellent contribution themselves through, for example, charity work and innovative art projects. They provided mosaics and sculptures in the tube station and on a local roundabout respectively. Parents are regularly asked what they think about the school and consultation with pupils is exemplary. Pupils are given their own version of the school development plan, known as 'Big Ideas for the School' and are asked to say how the school has improved. In addition, the school council are proud of their achievements. These include improvements to playground organisation and equipment that provide plenty of things for pupils to do at playtimes. Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is very good and they play harmoniously together. Learners say that they feel very safe and the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school has its own well developed scheme for pupils' personal development and makes many opportunities to teach about other countries and other faiths. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils'

outstanding progress in basic skills and in ICT ensures that they are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

The headteacher is an excellent leader. He has built an effective management team. The governing body have a very good knowledge of the school enabling them to challenge and support effectively. They help maintain the focus on achievement for all and working with the community. This is demonstrated in their motto, 'Every child matters and underline the every'. All leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitoring of the school's actions is strong. Consequently, pupils reach exceptional standards and improvement since the last inspection has been very good. This demonstrates that the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception and Nursery classes. There has been considerable recent improvement and pupils' progress is accelerating, due to changes in teaching and planning. Children's progress has, historically, been consistently good, as, from a below average starting point, the children achieve standards that are in line with national expectations by the time they reach Year 1. This year children will be working at levels that are above national expectations in many areas when they leave the Reception class. They make good progress due to very well planned, exciting, activities that keep them engaged. For example, children were very much enjoying learning about the seaside by paddling and looking at shells and pebbles. Activities planned where children work with adults are excellent and are extremely well assessed, so that children's interests are always at the heart of the curriculum. Independent activities are planned in less detail. As a result, children are not always clear about what they are learning and make slightly slower progress. The school has worked hard to improve teaching, planning and the deployment of staff in this key stage. Their hard work has paid off, but they recognise that there is still scope to do more in the planning of activities to increase children's independence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of planning in the Foundation Stage.
- Raise the standard of pupils' presentation of their 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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 the 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

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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

15 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gearies Infants' School, Ilford, IG2 6TD

Thank you very much for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing you learning. Special thanks to the School Council for finding time in their lunch hour to meet me.

I was very pleased to hear how much you enjoy school. I agree with you that Gearies is a really good school. It is an outstanding school, which means that it is one of the best schools in the country. You do really well in your lessons and in your personal development. This is because you all get on together and the staff look after you so well. The headteacher and teachers work very hard and the teaching is excellent. You were keen to tell me how much fun you have in lessons. I was very happy to see that you learn to keep very fit and you know a great deal about health. I was very interested too in hearing about the many ways in which you help around your local area. Your sculptures and mosaics are a great and enjoyable way to improve life for others. I also think the teachers do a very good job in consulting you on the 'Big Ideas' for the school.

Most things about your school are already excellent. However, I have asked the teachers in the Foundation Stage to change their planning a little bit. In addition, although you make very good progress, the way you present your work is sometimes a little untidy. I have asked the teachers to help you get better at this.

Carry on working hard to make sure that your school stays excellent!

Yours sincerely,

Sue Rogers

Lead Inspector