

Malmesbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134160
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	316242
Inspection dates	9–10 September 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)	544
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	67
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie Turner
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Clensy
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Coborn Street Bow London E3 2AB
Telephone number	020 8980 4299
Fax number	020 8980 1102

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school with a Nursery in an ethnically diverse area of Bow. Younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are educated either part-time or full-time in two Nursery classes. Older children in the EYFS attend full-time in two Reception classes during the autumn term, with a third Reception class operating from January. Over half the pupils are of Bangladeshi origin, with about a fifth of White British heritage, a tenth from Black African backgrounds and others from a wide range of other groups. A very high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, and about a fifth (mostly in the EYFS) are at the early stages of learning the language. Over half the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these pupils struggle with basic literacy and numeracy because of moderate or specific learning difficulties, or they have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Malmesbury is a good school that has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is a happy and harmonious multi-cultural community where all pupils do well because of the excellent provision to include everyone in the life of the school. Good teaching now ensures that achievement is good.

Standards have risen and are broadly average. Children start in the EYFS with skills and knowledge much lower than expected nationally, and many of them are new to speaking English. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, and do well in learning English. Pupils make good progress across the rest of the school. Standards have gone up for several years running in Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, standards meet the national average, although relatively few pupils reach the higher level 3. Standards have also risen at Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, an average number of pupils reach the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. However, too few reach the higher level 5, particularly in science.

Pupils' personal development is good because of the school's strong systems of pastoral care. Behaviour has improved and is now consistently good. Pupils enjoy school, take a pride in their work and try hard. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They get on well with each other and with their teachers, and have a good understanding of keeping safe and of staying healthy.

Teaching is good and, although it is inconsistent between classes, is always at least satisfactory. Positive relationships, good classroom management, and clear explanations support pupils' good progress. Teachers generally work hard to match work to the needs of individuals and groups, using the school's good systems to track pupils' progress. However, sometimes this is not done accurately enough, and then work lacks challenge for the more able pupils. Skilled teaching assistants contribute positively to pupils' learning, particularly in supporting those who would otherwise struggle to make progress.

There is an increasingly creative and stimulating curriculum that meets pupils' interests and needs well. The school has accurately identified the need for better investigative work in science and some improvements have been made, although more remains to be done.

Teachers make effective use of the good systems for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics to identify any individuals who are not doing well enough. The school then uses a good range of support strategies to help these pupils make up any lost ground. The tracking of progress in other subjects is still developing. An improved system has been introduced in science, for example, but there has not been time for this to have an impact.

Leadership and management are good. The school is extremely well led by the headteacher and senior management team, who continually seek improvements for the benefit of the pupils. Equal opportunities and community cohesion are promoted very effectively. Self-evaluation is good. The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously and teachers given effective feedback that has helped to improve practice. Good use is made of assessment results to modify the curriculum. Subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) have been involved well in this process. Leaders of other subjects are increasingly being given the opportunities to work with colleagues to improve provision. The many positive changes since the last inspection show the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory and improving. Children make sound progress from low starting points. By the end of Reception, their skills and knowledge remain below national expectations, especially in communication, language and literacy. Recent changes mean there are now good opportunities to explore and investigate in the outdoor area. When children initiate their own activities they are enthusiastic and purposeful, for example, when they ride bikes or scooters vigorously and negotiate the marked track skilfully. They develop games amongst themselves and even the youngest show good levels of social awareness. They enjoy opportunities to choose from a rich range of activities.

Children make good progress in developing positive attitudes to learning especially when they decide what they want to play with. Independent play is characterised by harmonious behaviour and happy children. Adults help children to play safely and learn the appropriate habits when they prepare for lunchtimes. However, there is a significant imbalance between adult directed tasks and children's opportunities to select what they want to explore for themselves and how they will set about it. Too much time is spent teaching literacy and numeracy directly to children in the Reception classes. This slows their rate of progress, especially in communication, language and literacy.

Staff promotes children's welfare well and safeguarding requirements are robust and consistently implemented. The school works effectively with parents and carers and has good strategies to involve particular groups of parents further.

Leadership and management are good. The new leader of EYFS has identified the imbalance in provision and has started to make positive changes. She has been instrumental in radically improving the outdoor area, so that it now reflects the requirements and philosophy of the EYFS national guidance. She is training all adults to make this good quality consistent in all aspects of provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more pupils reach the higher levels of achievement, by improving the match of work to their needs.
- Improve progress in the EYFS by ensuring a better balance between adult-directed activities and child-initiated play.
- Raise standards in science by improving the provision for investigative work and using the new assessment systems to support learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from a low base to reach broadly average standards by the end of the school. They do better in English and mathematics than in science, where standards remain well below average overall, because too few pupils reach the higher level. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified clearly and good provision is made to address them. Pupils new to English learn the language quickly because staff are skilled in including them and developing their fluency. Pupils achieve equally well regardless of their gender, ethnic origin or mother tongue.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is apparent in the way they rejoice in each other's successes and celebrate the many different cultures they represent. Their positive attitude to each other and to adults generates tolerance. They get on well together and are good at working cooperatively. Behaviour is uniformly good. This ensures that pupils can learn effectively, independently or in groups, and make good progress. Pupils say that there is no bullying and are confident that adults will deal with any problems they have. There were no exclusions last year. The school council contributes to well-thought-out improvements for everyone, for example, in better playground equipment and school meals. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Older pupils are developing good skills to equip them for transfer to their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures that lessons are orderly and have a brisk pace, so that pupils accomplish a lot in the time available. Good relationships mean that pupils trust their teachers and are confident in asking for help when they need it. They are happy to contribute their ideas because they know they are valued. Teachers often give pupils extensive opportunities to discuss their work together, leading to rapid learning. Lessons vary from outstanding to satisfactory. Teachers have made increasingly better use of information about pupils' progress to plan work that is matched to their needs. At times, however, they do not prepare sufficiently challenging work for pupils of higher ability, and then progress is just satisfactory. Lessons are well organised, usually making good use of resources, including staffing. However, teachers do not always make the best use of the expertise of classroom assistants. Marking is good, making clear to pupils the reasons for their success and, particularly in English, pointing out how they can improve in the future.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a rich curriculum, which helps develop pupils' personal and social skills very successfully. Specialist teaching in music, French and physical education contributes to pupils' achievement and enjoyment. Creative approaches to learning raise pupils' enthusiasm, for example, with visits to a pizza restaurant, the City Learning Centre, family trips to Chalkwell, or residential trips to Gorsefield. The many varied clubs on offer strongly enhance learning. They include karate, fencing, art, guitar, and computers for girls. There are several homework clubs, including one for Somali children and a mathematics club for their parents. The curriculum promotes good cultural awareness that leads to strong racial harmony. There is considerable emphasis given to healthy lifestyles and this contributes to the pupils' secure understanding of the issues. The breakfast club adds to this dimension and provides good opportunities for pupils to socialise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection and safeguarding procedures are exemplary and staff follow them rigorously. Adults' consistent care and kindness to pupils results in positive attitudes and confident behaviour. The quality of school dinners is very good and promotes healthy eating well. The school's tracking system provides immediate and accurate information on pupils' performance, and there is rapid intervention if any fall behind. The headteacher has successfully involved parents from all sections of the community in their children's schooling and is building on this to improve performance further. An unrelenting approach to getting pupils to come to school has improved attendance. The school's strategies to promote equality of opportunity are outstanding and lie at the heart of all its work. Individuals' difficulties are identified early, planned for carefully and strategies shared amongst staff, parents and pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has developed a very strong sense of community and teamwork among colleagues. They have a clear vision and an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and where there is scope for improvement. Since the last inspection, senior staff have improved the quality of teaching and learning through rigorous self-evaluation. Monitoring in the school is very thorough. Staff have improved the standard of behaviour and are making the curriculum more creative. Both of these are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, and raising standards. There is very good teamwork and the leadership teams have been positive role models to colleagues. This has raised staff morale and expertise, and led to better communication so there is a shared ethos of high expectations. The school promotes community cohesion very effectively, both within school and in reaching out to the local and wider communities. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's needs and fulfil their role as 'critical friend' by providing appropriate levels of challenge to staff.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 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	2
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**

22 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Malmesbury Primary School, London, E3 2AB

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work. You told us that Malmesbury is a good school, and we agree. It has improved a lot since the last time the inspectors called. We were particularly impressed by how well you all get on together, and how good your behaviour is. This is helping you all to make good progress, so standards are going up. You do really well in English and maths, and the staff keep a very careful eye on your progress, and make sure you get extra help if you need it.

You are not doing quite as well in science, and we have asked your teachers to work on this with you. They already have plans to improve things by giving you more investigations to do, and keeping better track of how you get on.

Your teachers are good at helping you to learn. They give you interesting things to do and make sure that everyone can join in all the activities. They try to give you work that is just right for you. Occasionally, some of you get work that is a bit too easy, and we have asked your teachers to make sure that you always get work that really makes you think, so that you learn even more.

The youngest children enjoy their start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes. They make steady progress, but we have agreed with the adults that they could learn even more if some changes were made, and they are already starting to make improvements.

The headteacher and all the adults are keen to help you do as well as you can. You can help by keeping up your good behaviour, always coming to school on time, and keeping on working hard, especially in science. We hope you all carry on enjoying your school.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector