

Randal Cremer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100236
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	323249
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	David Whatson

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)	443
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Rebecca Nelson
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie Serrette-Figaro
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ormsby Street Shoreditch London E2 8JG
Telephone number	020 7739 8162
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Randal Cremer Primary School is much bigger than most other primary schools. There is an Early Years Foundation Stage for children aged between three and five; 168 children attend full time. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The school is ethnically diverse. The three largest groups at the school are those with a Black African or a Caribbean heritage and those from a White non-British background. Well over half the pupils are learning English as an additional language, many of them at an early stage. The proportion with statements of special educational needs is broadly average but the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Many of these pupils have speech and language difficulties. More pupils than in most other schools join or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club (known as the Play Centre) on the school site, which are managed by the governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Randal Cremer is a good school. It is increasingly successful in raising standards and improving pupils' progress and well-being. Parents are very supportive of the school, appreciate its efforts and recognise its major strengths. One parent echoed the views of many others when she said, 'Randal Cremer is a warm, friendly school with a wonderful atmosphere. They care about their students and parents/carers.'

In 2008, the school's national test results for Year 6 were the best it had ever had and school tracking indicates that the 2009 results will be even better. Parents are pleased that their children have come on in 'leaps and bounds'. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. In mathematics, pupils make very good progress and standards are above average. This also reflects the pattern of results in reading. This is because of high-quality support and teaching. Pupils do not achieve the same success in writing and science, as they are not always sufficiently challenged or guided on how to improve their work.

Pupils make good progress because they enjoy their learning and most attend school on a regular basis. Through a good range of teaching strategies and appealing activities, teachers capture pupils' interest and motivation. Skilled and well-deployed teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to pupils' progress. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, but only in the best practice do teachers provide guidance on how pupils should improve their work. The curriculum has been carefully and creatively adapted to meet the needs of both its pupils and the local community. The school's pastoral care is central to its success and is a very important reason why pupils behave well and are ready to learn. Numerous agencies and organisations are used to extremely good effect to support families and pupils' learning and well-being, especially for those with communication difficulties. Pupils are given targets to help them improve their work, but it is only the oldest pupils who fully understand what they need to do to improve.

The commitment and passion of all staff, particularly that of the headteacher, has been the driving force behind the school's good improvement over the last few years. The school is well placed for these improvements to continue at a good pace. There is a well-structured and proactive team of leaders and managers who are all fully involved in evaluating the school's effectiveness and planning for its future. The school's development plan, however, is extensive and does not fully reflect the school's high ambitions. A lack of clearly identified milestones makes it difficult for the school to assess the impact of its efforts and direct its resources to greatest effect.

Pupils understand what it means to be healthy and enjoy taking part in physical activity, especially the keep fit lessons held twice a week. Pupils state that they feel safe and secure in school and are prepared well for the challenges they face in their local community. Pupils are polite and caring and, by the end of their schooling, are mature and confident. This, coupled with the good progress in their basic skills, prepares them well for the next stage of education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In a very good assembly, pupils gustily sang 'Swing low' and had rhythm as 'The saints came marching in'. This lifted the spirits of all participants and audience.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Nursery, achieving well from starting points that are lower than expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Regular meetings with parents and carers help staff to provide effectively for individual needs. Activities are well planned to engage children's interests and there is a good balance between activities led by adults and those where children explore for themselves through play. Good use is made of the well-equipped outdoor area to provide children with an exciting range of activities, enabling them to work safely, to learn to share and to take turns. Staff encourage good behaviour and are vigilant, quickly averting any potential problems. The coordinator leads the team of staff well, ensuring that children are safe and well cared for and that there is good provision for their learning and personal development. There have been recent improvements to the outdoor area (and more are planned), which have added additional enrichment and joy to children's learning. A recently introduced system of assessing and recording provides a broad picture of what children can do. However, the assessments are not always sufficiently refined to enable teachers to plan challenging work for children consistently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and science, particularly for the more able, by increasing the level of challenge in lessons, involving pupils in assessing their own work and ensuring that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Refine the current school improvement plan so that the school's ambitions and direction are more clearly defined and the impact of its actions easier to evaluate.
- Hone the systems used to track children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that adults know exactly what children can do and what they are capable of, in order to promote the best possible progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Over the last few years, standards in the end of Year 2 assessments have shown a steady improvement and are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Given their starting points, pupils have made good progress in reading and, in all other areas, it has been broadly satisfactory. In relation to their starting points, the great majority of pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stage 2 so that, in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, standards are average overall. They are much higher in mathematics because pupils respond very well to challenging and exciting teaching and many achieve the higher Level 5. Because of intensive support, pupils also make very good progress in reading. In writing and in science, although the majority of pupils make good progress, standards are not as high because the more able pupils do not emulate their success in mathematics.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with communication difficulties, achieve well because of the good support they receive. The many pupils learning English as an additional language also achieve well because of the high priority the school places on the development of English-language skills for all pupils. There is little difference in the achievement of different minority ethnic groups. This is because the school quickly addresses any underperformance so that all pupils achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and say that they 'like mixing with friends and having fun'. They are proud of their school and show it in their good behaviour when they play together well in this racially diverse school. Their pride, however, is not always as evident in their books, where the presentation is sometimes untidy. Attendance is satisfactory; it has improved because a variety of good links have been established with parents. Pupils know about healthy lifestyles and thoroughly enjoy early-morning vigorous keep fit sessions twice a week. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, have someone to turn to if they have a problem, and are aware of the dangers they may face outside of school. School council members are fully aware of their responsibilities and one said, 'It's a big responsibility, but it is fun.' Pupils are aware of those less fortunate than themselves and collect clothes and shoes for charity. In their diverse school community, pupils have good opportunities to explore each other's culture, faith and language, and the way they impact on peoples' lives. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of national and international community issues are developing. Pupils are well prepared for their future and have a good understanding of the world of work. With reference to their reading partners (who come from local businesses), pupils described excitedly how they go 'to offices where we do activities to do with books'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils and teachers get on well together, which establishes a happy and well-managed climate for learning. In most lessons, especially in mathematics, teachers provide exciting and engaging lessons in which pupils enjoy learning. Teachers often ask probing questions and use effective strategies, such as talking partners, to challenge and include all pupils. Teaching assistants are carefully briefed and effectively deployed so that they make a marked contribution to pupils' learning, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Lesson always start well, as teachers share the lesson's objectives, and they usually return to these at the end of the lesson to assess how well they have been achieved. Although they have high expectations, on occasions teachers do not explain clearly what pupils of different abilities are expected to do; nor do they, as in the case of science, prepare work for pupils of different abilities and, therefore, the most able pupils are not stretched while the less able struggle. When marking work, many teachers provide pupils with clear direction about how to improve their work and give them the opportunity to respond, but this good practice is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Since the previous inspection, staff have worked hard to improve the curriculum so that it supports pupils' academic and personal development effectively. Teachers take care to make sure that lessons build on pupils' interests, and that learning is enhanced by the special weeks, such as those for science and art. As well as a strong focus on the basic skills, the curriculum offers practical learning opportunities. One pupil described an activity to plan, resource and prepare a meal as 'the best day of my life!' The school uses its locality well to enrich learning, and the use of outside partners to provide regular writing tutorials and one-to-one reading support has helped raise the standard of pupils' work in literacy. Links further afield with schools

in Turkey and South Africa also broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils' learning and enjoyment are extended well by a good range of popular clubs which include the popular Play Centre. The school is increasing the number of links between subjects in order to make learning more relevant.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Central to the school's success is its very strong pastoral care. A strong moral ethos, the consistent and sensitive application of the school's behaviour policy, and the use of outside agencies to provide counselling and support promote pupils' good behaviour and improve attendance. To support pupils' learning and well-being, the school provides good breakfast and after-school clubs. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are clear, up to date and understood; proper attention is paid to risk assessments. There are excellent partnerships with others that are used to promote pupils' well-being. For example, experts have been used to train teaching assistants to provide focused support for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Links with agencies have also been used to very good effect to support families and build strong links between home and school. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully and intervenes quickly when needed to provide the necessary support. However, the impact of these interventions on pupils' progress is not carefully assessed. Although all pupils are given targets about how to improve, it is only the oldest pupils who remember and fully understand them, because teachers do not refer to them often enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's upward trajectory is the result of the commitment of the headteacher and staff to improving the life chances for all their pupils. At the heart of this lies a strong system of school self-evaluation, which relies heavily on the rigorous monitoring of pupil progress. In addition to this, other approaches to monitoring, such as reviewing pupils' books, have resulted in a plan that includes many ideas aimed at improving provision and helping pupils to overcome the considerable barriers they face. Although this has been successful, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of the planned initiatives accurately because of the plan's complexity and the lack of measurable milestones. Focused staff training and the effective use of teachers modelling good practice to each other are being used well to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school's systems to monitor pupils' progress are extensive and are used well to set challenging targets. There are advanced plans to introduce a computerised system that will simplify what is currently a time-consuming operation. The school is rightly proud of its success at including all pupils and eliminating discrimination. It has accurately evaluated how it contributes to community cohesion at a local level but has not yet extended this further afield. Following some recent changes of membership and a review of their own effectiveness, the governors appreciate that their role in monitoring and challenging the school needs strengthening.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
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	2
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	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**

03 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Randal Cremer Primary School, London, E2 8JG

Thank you very much for making the inspectors so welcome and for being so friendly when we visited your school before the summer holiday. We did enjoy our visit. We were very pleased to hear from you how much you enjoyed school (this was very evident in your singing assembly) and to see how well you worked in lessons. We think your school gives you a really good start. We were impressed by your behaviour and the way you work well together. We think you go to a good school, which not only helps you to learn well but also looks after you well. You should be proud of all your successes, particularly in mathematics and reading.

There are many things that are good about your school, but we would like to single out your teachers and helpers who encourage and support you both in lessons and in the interesting clubs. You say grown-ups listen to your ideas and are always willing to listen if you have a problem. You enjoy your keep fit classes and eat healthily. The school is well managed by the headteacher and her staff, who work very hard to make sure you have the best possible education.

Before we left, we talked to your headteacher about how the school could do even better. She agrees with inspectors that teachers need to do some more work with you to make sure standards rise in writing and science, especially for the more able. We think you'll be able to manage this quite well because your standards in reading and mathematics have been rising and are already good. We have also suggested that the school should slim down the plan it has for what it wants to do to improve the school even more. This would make it easier to understand and to check what has been achieved.

Children in the Nursery and Reception are given a good start to their time at school. But we think that if the teachers could check more carefully what the children can do, they will be able to plan even more precisely what they need to do next.

We hope you will continue to cooperate well with your teachers and pay good attention to the advice they give you.

We would like to wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

David Whatson

Lead Inspector