

Queen's Manor School and Special Needs Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100337
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	323260
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan

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)	209
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	Mrs Bryanna Patterson
Headteacher	Miss Leesa Schooneman (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lysia Street Fulham London SW6 6ND
Telephone number	020 7385 4343

Age group	3–11
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Fax number

020 7381 0311

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Queen's Manor School serves an area that is very diverse, culturally and economically. Around two thirds of the pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are from African and Caribbean heritages. A third of the pupils, which is much higher than average, have a home language other than English, with around a fifth at the very early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is above average. High numbers of pupils join or leave the school at other than customary times. The school is led currently by an acting headteacher, in post for two weeks at the time of the inspection. The Healthy School, Artsmark Gold and Activemark are among recent school awards.

The school hosts a unit for up to 30 pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties. Pupils are drawn from a much wider locality than that adjacent to the school. Around a half of the school population, a well above average proportion, have barriers to learning that include speech and language delay and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Boys significantly outnumber girls on the school's register of pupils, with special educational needs having the highest proportions in Years 3 to 6. This is because families with ready access to other schools often transfer pupils at the end of the Reception Year and Year 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Queen's Manor is a good and truly inclusive school. This judgement is reflected in the comments of the overwhelming majority of parents. 'We love everything about it, including the little things that make it special such as the colour of the week,' commented one parent. Several echoed the view that the school is 'fantastic, as children of all abilities are really valued'. Parents' excellent response rate to the questionnaires, and their clear perceptions of the strengths of the school, are a tribute to its success in involving them as fully as possible in their children's education.

There have been sustained improvements between successive inspections. At the heart of these improvements has been the good leadership and management of the senior staff, the excellent support and challenge by governors, and the willingness of literacy and numeracy coordinators to evaluate their work rigorously. There is a real determination never to settle for 'second best'. The pupils' performance has risen over a five-year period. However, single-class year groups and high numbers of pupils with significant personal and learning difficulties have a huge negative impact on published test results, particularly as the school and Unit are considered an entity. Standards are average for mainstream pupils in each of English, mathematics and science, and progress is good for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities by the end of Year 6. In 2008, more able pupils made better progress than in previous years because the school has focused sharply on areas such as mathematics. Nevertheless, at the end of Year 2, pupils' progress in writing is not yet as fast as it should be.

The school caters well for a very broad mix of pupils in the Unit who have wide-ranging and increasingly complex learning needs. Mainstream pupils also get a good deal, benefiting from carefully organised small classes, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The school is rightly proud of the excellent curriculum that stimulates pupils' interest so that they want to learn. Striking features of the school are the rigour with which teaching is monitored, and its robust procedures that support all the staff. Consequently, classroom practice has improved well since the last inspection and the teaching is mainly good. In particular, the way in which teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons and show them how to take the next steps has developed well. The school agrees, however, that the assessments and recording practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are not yet fully in line with the new requirements.

The vast majority of pupils attend well because they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. The very few whose families spend lengthy periods overseas have an unduly negative impact on attendance figures, as do extended absences for medical reasons. A very special feature of the school is the way pupils and staff pull together to do the best they can. Pupils' excellent personal development, the result of outstanding care, guidance and support, very successfully helps their learning. It is a rare event to see a pupil not engaged in purposeful activities. They are prepared well for their futures, not only because they learn well but also because they understand the importance of making a difference to others. Pupils act as prefects, do duty on the stairs, represent their peers through the school council and ensure the 'friendship stop' is manned at break and lunchtimes. They are generous with their garden produce, sharing it at harvest festival times with those needier than themselves. Pupils often put themselves out to include those from the Unit so that they can take part in all school activities. The pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy is excellent. Not only do they participate well in physical activities but they have also had their say in promoting healthy eating. They are proud of their involvement in changing school menus.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children enter the Nursery, their skills and knowledge are often less than would be expected for their age. They make rapid progress throughout the well-managed EYFS. At the end of their Reception year children's attainment in communication language and literacy and in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy are above the levels expected of five-year-olds. School records show that children make slower, although satisfactory, progress in their creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes clearly enjoy coming to school and parents' comments reflect this. 'My child skips to school everyday,' said one. They feel safe and at ease with teachers and other children. Teachers and support staff are adept at helping children to learn through well-managed daily routines. This helps them become confident and independent members of the school community. Children are interested and eager to join in with the exciting range of indoor and outdoor activities on offer. Currently, however, they do not have access to an all-weather outdoor area for planned and free-choice activities. Teachers assess children's overall development on arrival at school very accurately and follow them up regularly. Nevertheless, they do not yet link assessments fully to the criteria in the new EYFS learning and development requirements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the pupils' progress in writing so that at the end of Year 2 they achieve as highly as possible.
- Sharpen teachers' understanding of how to assess fully children's progress against the learning and development requirements of the EYFS.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall are below average but the achievement of all groups of pupils is good. The school's records show that at the beginning of Year 1, pupils' starting points are much lower than those typical for their ages. This is mainly because those transferring from the Reception year and those who join Queen's Manor after this stage, face a range of learning challenges because of difficult histories medically, socially and academically. This is particularly true of boys. Generally, pupils' rate of progress accelerates the longer they are in the school.

School information on how well pupils achieve alongside that from national tests shows that those with moderate and severe learning difficulties make good progress towards their individual targets over their time in the school. Most make demonstrable improvements in communicating with others, in their social skills, and in basic number and writing. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties also learn to build relationships with adults and their peers, and begin to make up for gaps in their learning. Those at the early stages of learning English make rapid gains in fluency because of carefully targeted support.

Mainstream pupils, around half of the school population, reach average standards by the end of Year 6 in each of English, mathematics and science. In the most recent national tests, provisional results show that a small number of able pupils achieved well and improved on the school's 2007 results, particularly in mathematics. Three quarters of mainstream pupils made at least two levels of progress in English and mathematics from Year 3 to Year 6, and this

signifies good rates of progress for most pupils. The decline in the pupils' performance since the last inspection at the end of Year 2 is mainly because of the increasing numbers of pupils with complex educational needs. Although writing at the end of Year 2 improved in 2008, the school recognises that the proportion gaining the highest available levels is still lower than it should be.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils sensitively celebrate different faiths and cultures. They show great respect and tolerance towards the needs of others and give real assent to the values promoted by the school. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. This is seen clearly in their excellent behaviour in and around the school and in their polite interactions with adults and other pupils. They are particularly keen to look after their very pleasant learning environment.

The overwhelming majority of pupils attend regularly. From the way they engage with the topic activities, it is clear that they really enjoy coming to school. Their good progress in basic skills prepares them extremely well for their future economic well-being. Pupils have a secure understanding of the need to eat healthy meals and to take regular exercise. They feel safe at school and approve of the zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Pupils contribute very well to the school community and do their best to help younger and more vulnerable pupils. They are also proud of the way they can help others in the wider community through their gardening and their involvement in the school fairs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are well motivated to learn because of the warmth and concern teachers and support staff show for each of them. Classrooms are lively and exciting, and staff plan especially well for a range of stimulating activities to support pupils' engagement in tasks. There is a real sense of collaborative working, and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of their partners. In the most successful lessons, there is genuine excitement in learning. Year 2 pupils, for example, in a lesson on measurement, were genuinely enthralled by discovering the impact of shape on capacity. Teachers and support staff build confidence in their pupils, both to persevere in solving problems and to ask questions when really puzzled.

Despite these good features, however, and despite the school's ongoing efforts to improve teaching, there is still some variability in the quality of classroom practice, partly because of staff changes. Not all teaching challenges the most able well enough and there are sometimes missed opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of topics and events.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a broad, stimulating and creative curriculum that is very responsive to the diverse needs of the pupils in this international community. Pupils are included in the process of developing the curriculum. As a result, they get deeply involved with projects, even to the point of undertaking further research and extending project work at home. Topics such as

'pirates' have led to an explosion in character description and creative writing. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by visits to places of interest linked to the topic themes. Outside of the timetabled day there are excellent enrichment opportunities, including modern languages, sports, crafts, music and cookery. Gardening, too, has its slot. Vulnerable pupils also benefit from a range of planned therapies that support their well-being exceptionally well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very high level of care for all pupils. An individual risk assessment against the Every Child Matters agenda is carried out for every pupil in the school. As a result, arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very secure. The well-kept learning environment not only supports pupils academically but also promotes their physical and emotional well-being. Personal guidance for students is outstanding as are the links with outside agencies. The school lays great store in involving families as much as possible in the pupils' development.

The school's assessment practice has improved well since the last inspection and pupils enjoy good academic guidance. All pupils, including those in the Unit, are set challenging targets. Senior and middle managers review these regularly to ensure that all make good progress. The school is aware, however, that whole-school recording systems are unwieldy and make it unnecessarily difficult to follow the progress of the very many different groups of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The shared drive for improvement, and the excellent teamwork among senior staff in all sections of the school, has ensured that planned developments go ahead despite the unavoidable absence of the headteacher. Governance is excellent. Governors are passionate about the school and contribute much to its improvement. Since the last inspection, senior leaders have been tireless in seeking to provide an extensive range of opportunities to enable pupils to flourish, both personally and academically. The impact of the good leadership and management of the school is demonstrated in its mainly accurate self-evaluation, in the increasing skill of middle leaders in managing their responsibilities, and in the good progress of all groups of pupils. Its capacity to improve further is good. Nevertheless, at the end of Year 2, writing skills for able pupils are not as high as they should be and assessment practice in the EYFS does not yet full match the new requirements.

The school's inclusive ethos has been strengthened further since the last inspection. Long-term links with external agencies successfully bring about help for vulnerable pupils and their families. Queen's Manor is very successful in promoting community relationships through its programme of home visits before pupils join the school and through its effective efforts to involve parents in school life. For example, parents, representative of all groups in the school, join in the weekly nursery rhyme time. Annual events such as the summer fair give prominence to one or other of the many ethnic groups represented among the school's families.

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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?	1
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?	1
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?	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
The extent to which 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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

02 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Queen's Manor School and Special Needs Unit, London, SW6 6ND

We would like to say a very big thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your very happy school. We really enjoyed your company, but above all we were delighted to see your smiling faces and to know that you feel safe in school and work hard in lessons.

We think you go to a good school. We know you agree with us because the school council was very clear that you are cared for exceptionally well and learn well in lessons. We were also impressed by how well you get on together, respect each other and the adults around you, and celebrate festivals together. You also tell us that adults are always there to help you, even outside of school hours.

There are many things that are special about Queen's Manor. We were especially impressed about how senior staff are determined that each of you should feel important to them. We would also like to single out your teachers, who have done so much to improve your school since inspectors visited last. You are also very lucky to have such committed support staff and parents who are keen to be involved in your school. You get some really good opportunities to explore each other's cultures, often through the assemblies, the annual fairs and the creative work you do in class. Your gardens are really special and give you very interesting opportunities to work together with adults and to help others.

Before we left, we talked to your teachers about how Queen's Manor could be even better. They told us they will make sure that you have good opportunities that help you to reach higher standards in writing by Year 2. We also asked that the school help staff in the Nursery and Reception to improve the way they record what the children have learned.

We are sure you will continue to work together with your teachers and try to improve your writing. Keep up your efforts to look after those of your fellow pupils who need extra attention at breaks and in class.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector