

# Culloden Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	100899
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	323371
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Gray

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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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 (total)	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Denise Syndercombe-Court
Headteacher	Ms Amanda Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
School address	Dee Street London E14 0PT
Telephone number	020 7364 1010
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, conducted a scrutiny of pupils' past work, looked at data about pupils' progress in all classes, minutes of governors' meetings and the school improvement plan, and analysed 363 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the rigour of tracking procedures and what they indicate about pupils' progress
- the impact of strategies designed to raise the attainment of minority White British pupils
- how effectively the needs of deaf pupils are met
- the impact of middle managers on raising pupils' attainment.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than most schools of its type. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is much higher than usually found. Most pupils come from minority ethnic groups; a large majority are of Bangladeshi heritage. English is an additional language for nearly all pupils and about half are at the early stages of acquisition; this is mostly among the youngest children. The school houses a Deaf Support Base (DSB) with places for 26 pupils, all of whom have a statement of special educational need; otherwise, the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below what is normally found. The executive headteacher is also headteacher of another primary school in Tower Hamlets.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

## Main findings

Culloden Primary School's outstanding capacity for improvement is demonstrated by the enormous strides forward it has made during the last two and a half years. Exhaustive monitoring of every aspect of the school's work has involved staff and governors at all levels. From a school that was causing concern to the local authority, it has developed into a good school with a challenging yet achievable target of being outstanding.

The executive headteacher is an outstanding leader and has a team of five assistant headteachers who share her vision and commitment to making the school both a leading school in the borough and a keystone of the local community. This ambition and drive are evident in the work of leaders and managers at all levels. The result is that standards are rising rapidly in all parts of the school. The outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage takes children at the age of three with skills that are much lower than usually found; for the last two years, because of excellent leadership and teaching, children have entered Year 1 with standards that are above expectations. Similar improvements in Years 1 and 2 have raised attainment from well below average over a number of years to be above average in the last two years. Attainment by Year 6 is also rising, having been significantly below the national average for several years. The pupils currently in Year 6 are likely to reach standards that are broadly average, although they began in Year 3 with standards that were low. Pupils' progress is accelerating because of the thoroughness of teachers' assessment and planning, combined with the enthusiasm and drive of the pupils themselves. The school knows that it must continue the rigour of its systems to ensure that standards go on rising; this is its principal aim.

Parents are very supportive of the school's work. 'I am very happy with the school because I have seen good progress in my child', wrote one. They appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support given to their children. As part of its work to develop the role it plays in the local area, the school wants to extend its offer to the community, for example by setting up pre-school provision, extended services and adult learning. Discussions are taking place with the local authority. The importance of this work is summed up by the comment of a pupil, who said, 'In holidays I have nothing to do so I want to get back to school to see my friends.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the robust systems for evaluating the school's work and improving the rate of pupils' progress continue to enhance learning and so raise standards further.
- Build on the good links with parents and the local community to extend the out-of-hours provision and outreach work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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There are many examples of pupils in all year groups whose progress over the last year has been outstanding, a number making more than five times the expected progress. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils made excellent progress in learning how to use a number line to work out money problems, because the teacher made deliberate errors which challenged the pupils to explain and develop their understanding. Year 6 pupils developed their understanding of place value by exploring the relationships between small and large metric measures. Pupils' writing skills across the school develop well, as can be seen from the huge amounts of work in even the youngest pupils' books. This quantity is sometimes at the expense of presentation.

Pupils of all abilities progress at similar rates, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and make good progress in all aspects of learning. Those at the early stages of acquiring English (mostly younger children) make great strides in speaking skills. Most pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage and this is one of the best-performing groups. A previously under-achieving group was the small number of pupils of White British heritage. The thorough procedures for checking all pupils' progress are having as good an effect on these pupils as on others, so that their progress is accelerating and the gap in attainment is rapidly closing. Pupils in the DSB make good progress because of the consistent and effective individual support they receive.

Pupils enjoy learning because teachers work hard to make it interesting and relevant; as a result, pupils achieve well. One parent commented, 'My child loves coming to school because it is such fun.' A wide range of educational visits stimulates learning, such as the work Year 6 pupils did before and after a visit to the theatre, which resulted in much good-quality writing. In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils enjoyed grouping pictures of living things in as many different ways as they could. This developed their understanding of similarities and differences. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. It is best among the oldest pupils because they have developed very good self-discipline and independence in learning. A few younger pupils need occasional encouragement to behave well. Attendance has improved significantly over the last three years as a result of the school's procedures and also because pupils experience success so frequently.

Developing life skills is a key area for the school's work. This is seen not only in pupils' good written work and improving progress in core skills, but also in the wider curriculum. Pupils develop good information and communication technology skills, as seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were planning a procedure to draw automatically the outline of a church, in connection with religious education work.

The school's community is very mixed ethnically and religiously, and pupils learn about and begin to understand and value the different views and beliefs of their friends. This is clearly seen in a display about pupils from the DSB. With a photograph of each child, there is a speech bubble which explains in the child's own words what his or her hearing needs are – for example, 'Please speak slowly' or 'You can talk to me – please include me.' These and work in an assembly have increased all pupils' understanding of the disability and contribute to the excellent inclusion of deaf pupils in all aspects of the school's work.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is effective because it is based on a thorough knowledge of each pupil's needs. Teachers plan their lessons well and have a very thorough understanding of pupils' prior attainment. As a result, teachers frequently design activities that are graded to meet different abilities, though there are occasions when all pupils are asked to complete the same task. So, lessons are usually challenging and exciting, as when a group of Year 3 pupils listened to Spike Milligan reading one of his nonsense poems and then set about designing their own. Teachers' marking is mostly thorough and enables pupils to know how to improve. There are frequent suggestions or requests to rewrite, though pupils do not always respond. The most effective marking is seen in Years 5 and 6.

The curriculum is rapidly developing in the interest and enjoyment it offers to pupils and in its breadth. There had been gaps in provision until recently. For example, no art was taught for a period of three years. Provision for art and design is now good, as evidenced by the very good-quality work from pupils of all ages all round the school. Data show rapid progress in the aspects so far covered, though the scheme of work is still being developed.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Parents receive detailed, accurate and easily understandable information on their children's progress. They are helped to see how their child's attainment compares with that of others and how they can help him or her improve. Pupils say they are free from concerns at school, such as bullying or racism, and parents agree. The school provides a secure and lively community to which the pupils are clearly proud to belong.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's rapid turn-round is a result of the outstanding commitment and drive which all staff share. The leadership team has a thorough knowledge of every aspect of the school's work and the executive headteacher has everything at her fingertips. All staff are held to account for the standards their pupils attain, and they rise to the challenge. The acceleration in pupils' progress comes about as a result of the frequent, detailed and accurate tracking of attainment. This is then used in meetings with teachers, where any underachievement is expected to be explained and a remedy planned. These processes are key to the effectiveness of the school's work in promoting equality of opportunity and success among all its pupils. The school is adamant that these systems will continue to be used and refined to raise standards still further.

All leaders receive excellent professional development, in which leaders from the executive headteacher's other school have played a significant part. This has enabled middle managers to take rapid stock of their subjects and effect important changes that influence outcomes. An example is the work done in science to increase pupils' investigative skills. The result of this work is the narrowing in gaps of attainment – as with the White British pupils – and the increasing rates of progress for all pupils. The DSB is an example of outstanding provision because of the good and increasing progress made by the pupils and the exemplary way in which deaf pupils are involved in the life of their own classes. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding and result in the enormous confidence in the school reflected in the parent questionnaires. As one parent wrote, 'My son is deaf and the school is helping and supporting him to the best of his ability.' Procedures to ensure the suitability of all employees and volunteers are exemplary. As a result, parents, children and staff work together in an harmonious, secure and cohesive community which forms the foundation of the school's rapid improvement.

Governance is outstanding because governors are closely involved in insisting on the school's reversal of its performance. They hold the school to account and have a very developed understanding of how improvements have been brought about and what

the next steps need to be. Their vision for extending the offer to the local area is evidence of their good and growing contribution to community cohesion.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because of the vital contribution it is making to increasing children's progress. This gives them a real opportunity to fulfil their potential by the time they reach Year 6. Outstanding leadership and management ensure that teaching is effective, consistent and focused on what is most important. For most children, this is developing their communication skills. By the time the children leave Reception, the speaking and listening skills of most are at least in line with expectations. An example of highly developed communication skills was observed in a 'read/write' lesson for Reception children. Over a third of the children know all the sounds and blends expected and recite them at top speed. This group is advanced in reading skills and tackles books which are more often seen in older classes. Of the rest of the class, only a small number are at the early stages of learning sounds and they receive support tailored closely to their needs. Nursery children settle quickly into routines and behave with unusual maturity for their years.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was enormous and is a token of how well the school is regarded by the community it serves. Virtually all parents say their children are happy and safe in school, showing the trust they place in its work. Almost all are



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pleased with the progress their children make in academic work and personal development. They feel the school gives the children a really good start to their education and a real chance in their future life.

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Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Culloden Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 363 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 310 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65.6%	28.9%	4.7%	0.8%

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



9 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Culloden Primary School, London, E14 OPT

We really enjoyed our visit to your school just before the half-term holiday. By the time we left, we were beginning to feel as if we were members of the family because you made us so welcome. Your school building is very attractive and bright and the many displays of your good work make it lively and exciting. I can well understand why some of you can't wait to get back after holidays.

We agree with the adults in the school and with your parents that Culloden Primary is a good school. You help to make it so with your hard work, good behaviour and interest in your learning. Your teachers take great care of you, not only to make sure you are safe and happy but to help you make as much progress as you can. By the time you reach Year 6, the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science are similar to those of pupils in most schools, though when you start in the Nursery many of you have a long way to go to get there. This makes your parents proud.

Your school is getting better all the time because you want it to and because your executive headteacher and her staff make sure that everything is going as it should do. They are excellent at this. To make the school better still, we have asked the adults to make sure they continue to help you reach higher standards. You can help by always responding to comments or requests that teachers make when they mark your work. Another thing we have asked is for the school to increase the support they give to you and your parents at times beyond the school day.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Gray  
Lead Inspector

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