

Dorothy Barley Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101188
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	323416
Inspection date	21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	415
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	Mr Mick London
Headteacher	Miss Shan Evans
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Davington Road Dagenham RM8 2LL
Telephone number	020 8270 4655
Fax number	0208 270 4654

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The extent to which the learning and welfare needs of all the pupils are being met.
- The impact of the work of leaders and managers.
- How effectively the school is raising achievement in writing, particularly for boys.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, school information and records, lesson observations and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors 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

Dorothy Barley is a very large infant school with a culturally diverse population. Just over half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The next largest group are from Black African backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is more than double that found nationally, as is the proportion with English as an additional language. A lower than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities which are related mainly to speech, language and communication and moderate learning needs. There are 180 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with 78 children attending the Nursery on a part-time basis and the rest taught in four Reception classes. There is an after school club on the premises which is managed by a private provider. The school gained a Healthy School Award in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where parents agree that their children are well cared for and make good progress. One parent wrote, 'I am very pleased with my child's progress, I feel she is listened to and valued as a member of the school.' The school's inclusive ethos and good care, guidance and support make a positive contribution to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils say they think their school is good and they enjoy learning. Attendance, while still below average, has improved as a result of the very effective strategies the school uses to promote regular attendance and punctuality. There are, however, children who are persistently absent and, as a result, they miss out on important learning.

Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and secure and confident that teachers act quickly should any untoward behaviour occur. This is because the school has established effective strategies to support pupils who find it difficult to moderate their own behaviour, meaning that their learning and the learning of others are not disrupted. Relationships between children and adults are very good and, as a result, pupils trust their teachers and say they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. The work the school has done to gain a Healthy School Award ensures that pupils have a good understanding of the need for a healthy, balanced diet and regular exercise to keep fit and well. One child said that to keep fit 'you have to get your heart beating fast'. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory but are not as well supported within the curriculum as their moral and social development, which are good. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of the jobs they are given around the school, such as collecting registers. There are not enough opportunities for them to become involved in decision-making and in school and local community initiatives to help raise their awareness and aspirations for their futures. The school council is active and its members were very proud of a school prayer they had written.

The senior leadership team has been very successful in creating a school where standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. Since 2005 there has been an important focus on reading. The school made a substantial commitment to improving reading by appointing and training a senior teacher to implement a programme of daily one-to-one support for identified pupils. Standards in reading have improved considerably and the proportion of children reaching a level higher than that expected nationally is well above average. This reflects the positive impact of the school's work in this area which includes early identification of those at risk of underachieving, rigorous tracking and monitoring of progress, and specific learning and teaching approaches. The school has rightly extended these effective approaches into writing and its work to raise achievement for all children. This is beginning to have a similar impact as the quality of writing improves. Pupils, especially boys, are more motivated to write and are on track to reach their targets by the end of Year 2. Effective intervention and support ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities, whatever their backgrounds or abilities. As a result, pupils with specific learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to others. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning as they are well trained to provide good support to individuals and small groups.

Good teaching contributes well to pupils' good achievement. The purpose of each lesson is carefully explained and, because teachers know their pupils well, lessons are effectively planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. On occasion, the pace of lessons is not brisk enough to ensure that pupils remain on task. Some pupils said that they got 'fed up waiting to do something'. The progress each child makes is carefully tracked and recently introduced systems

set clear targets for pupils' learning. Pupils in general know their targets and many know how they can improve their work to achieve them because of effective marking and feedback. This is not consistent across all classes. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched with a good range of additional activities and clubs. These, as well as the school's programme for social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), make an important contribution to pupils' good personal development. There is a good focus on basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The curriculum is carefully and sensitively modified and additional support is put in place for vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A weakness in the curriculum is that it does not develop pupils' creativity as well as it might. The school has identified this and the curriculum is currently being reviewed and developed to provide more creative links across all subjects and make learning more meaningful for pupils. Intervention programmes, which provide extra support for pupils in their basic skills, are established as part of the curriculum and help pupils to make good progress.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, staff and governors constantly strive to improve things further. The headteacher's effective leadership and management ensure the school continues to move forward. The governing body provides good strategic leadership, supports the school well and holds it to account for its performance. The headteacher is well supported by an effective and strong team of senior leaders and the impact of their work is considerable in school improvement. The headteacher's firm belief that everyone in the school community matters motivates staff and pupils. Staff feel valued and supported in developing their skills and expertise. Most parents are very supportive of the school, and parents appreciate the opportunities provided to further their own skills for example, in ICT and English sessions. One parent said, 'These things really help as it brings parents together to talk and make friends which leads to a better community and understanding about different cultures and backgrounds.' Monitoring and evaluation procedures are robust and enable staff to have a very clear view of the school's strengths, and to keep track of initiatives they wish to develop. For example, the school has clearly identified the need to build on its work to engage more effectively with the local and wider, global community. The school's self-evaluation is accurate though not always clearly recorded to reflect this, but demonstrates the school's determination to build on its success. There is good capacity to improve further as demonstrated by the successful drive to raise standards while ensuring that pupils' personal development is not overlooked. The issues from the last inspection have been dealt with well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the EYFS. Children join with abilities that are below those expected for three-year-olds especially in communication and social skills. Many have English as an additional language and start school with little spoken English and limited understanding. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery. Progress accelerates in the Reception classes and is good. By the end of the Reception Year, almost all reach the goals expected for their age and many exceed them. This is because of good teaching and effective implementation of the new EYFS curriculum, helping the children achieve well. Children make good progress in their early skills of linking sounds and letters (phonics) because of a consistent approach and skilled teaching. This is having a very positive impact on their reading, writing and communication skills. They use their phonic skills confidently to write and spell independently and, as a result, skills in writing are above average. There is limited access to the outside area, which restricts opportunities for children to learn and play in the fresh air and promote their physical health

and well-being. The school has identified this and the lack of resources to use outside and has secured a grant from the local authority to support the ongoing developments in this area. There is a good balance between activities directed by the staff and those where children make their own choices. Children benefit from a carefully planned induction process, including visits and links with other Nursery providers, and settle well once they start school. One parent wrote, 'During the short time that my daughter has attended the school, she has grown in confidence, her speech has improved and her listening skills are developing well. She particularly likes the songs she is being taught.' Children quickly learn to work together and develop independence. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses play a valuable role in promoting learning because they are involved in planning the curriculum and assessing children's responses and progress. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Effective systems are established to track and analyse pupils' progress rigorously in order to ensure that all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum so that it provides more creative learning opportunities for pupils and takes into account cultural diversity.
- Build on the existing successful strategies to reach its attendance targets.

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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	2
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	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	3
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?	3
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**

04 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Dorothy Barley Infants' School, Dagenham, RM8 2LL

I am writing to let you know how much my colleague and I enjoyed our visit to your school and to tell you what we found out. Thank you for making us welcome, for talking to us about your work and telling us what you think about your school.

We found out that yours is a good school and here are the reasons why.

- You enjoy being at the school and get on well with each other and all of the staff.
- Your behaviour is good and this helps you learn well in your lessons.
- You work hard and achieve well. Well done for this as it means that the standard of your reading, writing and mathematics work is above average when you go to the junior school.
- Your teachers make sure that they know exactly how well you are learning and what you need to do to next.
- Teachers have helped you to really improve your reading and now your writing is getting much better too. Well done for this.
- You are very good at eating healthy food and doing lots of activities to keep you fit.
- Everyone in the school looks after you well and helps you to succeed.
- Your headteacher and the senior leaders do a good job in running the school.

These are the things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do to make your school even better.

- Make sure you learn new skills in interesting and exciting ways.
- Improve attendance. You must help by coming to school every day and being on time, otherwise you will miss important learning.

I really enjoyed reading your wonderful 'Jack and the Beanstalk' stories.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so interesting and friendly to talk to.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector