

Colindale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101269
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323434
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Paula Protherough

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)	462
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 Christopher Mortimore
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Lajalati
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	30 Poolsford Road Colindale London NW9 6HP
Telephone number	020 8205 8706
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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

Colindale is a larger than average two-form-entry primary school, with a nursery. The school has specialist provision for pupils with physical disabilities, who are supported in the mainstream classes. In addition, there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and other learning difficulties, such as autism and speech and language, and emotional and behavioural, needs. The school contains a broad ethnic mix, the largest groups being from European, Asian, Pakistani, Black African, and Chinese backgrounds. Over two thirds of pupils speak a language other than English at home and half of them are at an early stage of learning English. A higher than average number of pupils is eligible for free school meals.

The school has achieved several awards including the Healthy School Award and Activemark.

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 which cares effectively for its pupils. The highly diverse community is harmonious and calm; pupils of all ethnic groups and abilities are well provided for, and hence feel included and valued. As a result, pupils achieve well. The senior leadership team is focused on and clear about how to improve all aspects of the school. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and improvements in teaching, led by the development of a team of subject coordinators, have resulted in higher standards. The school is well placed to continue to flourish.

The results of the Year 6 national tests for 2008 show that standards were above the national average in mathematics, average in English and below average in science. Pupils made good progress from their starting points in Year 2. The inspectors' analysis of the work of the current Year 6 shows an improving picture. Pupils' good achievements in mathematics are being matched by their work in English. Support and training for the staff is improving the work in science. Throughout the school, the well-focused support for pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for those who are vulnerable, ensures that they are able to play a full part in the life of the school and to achieve outstandingly in relation to their personal targets.

The senior leadership team have set clear expectations and guidelines for teaching and learning that have supported the improvement in pupils' achievement. Close teamwork and the effective deployment of teaching assistants mean that pupils are well supported in the classrooms. There are pockets of excellent teaching where teachers motivate the pupils with exciting, purposeful tasks that encourage independent thinking. These teachers are clear about what the pupils need to learn and set them realistic challenges. They provide good verbal feedback and their marking offers helpful comments about how to improve further. However, these features are not firmly established across the school, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics. This is because some elements of the school's curriculum framework lack a clear progression of knowledge and skills and the ways that these can be applied in other subjects. For instance, the school-wide focus on literacy has resulted in some year groups incorporating writing into other subjects with great success. The project work on China in Year 4, for example, gave pupils the opportunity to write in a wide variety of styles and genres, but this type of practice is not a consistent feature in all classes.

Pupils are happy in school. They are friendly and kind and their personal development is good. They are very well cared for and feel supported; they report that they always have adults available to help them and listen to their problems. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school but a few raised a range of issues, which the inspection team investigated. Inspectors agree that the school needs to explore other ways of improving communication with parents and the wider community. Governors know their school and families well. They offer good challenge and support to the leadership team.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably since the last inspection, helped by effective support from senior managers and the local authority. The

recent appointment of a new Early Years Foundation Stage leader and new Reception teachers has accelerated this good progress.

The attainment of children entering the Nursery is well below that expected nationally of three-year-olds. Their knowledge and skill in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development are particularly weak. From the outset, the adults provide a language-rich environment, engaging with children's play and modelling the skills of conversation. Because of this, children's understanding and use of language develops well and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language grow in confidence and comprehension. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and structured play activities and good use is made of the excellent and stimulating shared outdoor area. The adults have a very good knowledge of the children and have established clear routines and expectations that help the children to settle swiftly at the start of each day. As a result, children feel safe emotionally and quickly learn to how to play with each other and to form good relationships with the adults.

The children's achievements are carefully recorded and tracked across each of the areas of learning. The information from these assessments is used successfully to inform the teachers' planning and the transfer from Nursery to Reception and then to Year 1. As a result of the good and, occasionally, excellent teaching they receive, children are making increasingly rapid progress and achieving higher levels. Thus, this year, the majority of the present cohort are likely to reach the expected levels in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers use consistent approaches to assessment, marking and feedback so that pupils have a clearer understanding of how to improve their work.
- Improve curriculum planning so that learning builds progressively as pupils move through the school and they learn to use their skills and knowledge independently between subjects.
- Develop better communication with parents and carers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision mean that, by the time pupils enter Year 1, they are approaching levels similar to those of five-year-olds nationally. This was not previously the case. The teachers' assessments of Year 2 in 2008 show that, for the first time, pupils achieved results which exceeded the national average in reading and writing and were just below average in mathematics. They achieved well in relation to their below-average starting points. The current Year 2 are also achieving well, with an increasing number of pupils reaching the higher levels in all areas, especially writing.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have shown steady improvement in recent years. In 2008 standards were average in English and above average in mathematics, where a good number of more able pupils achieved the higher levels. The impact of the school's sustained work on improving writing can be seen in English and pupils' story-writing. However, the consistent development of writing in other subjects lacks rigour. Results in science are improving but at a slower rate than in English and mathematics. Well-focused support from the local authority has started to improve achievement in this subject, with a newly appointed coordinator to continue this work. Pupils are enthusiastic about the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and make good progress in acquiring these important skills.

The excellent support for the significant considerable proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities ensures that they make excellent progress towards their targets and work happily and productively alongside their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school. They are inquisitive and complete tasks with enthusiasm. Many pupils echoed the views of a Year 4 pupil who said, 'We love school, it's fun.' After-school clubs are well supported and offer original ways to keep fit, such as karate. Outdoor play spaces are adventurous and pupils use these for their imaginative play and strenuous exercise. Pupils know how to keep healthy; they have an excellent understanding of healthy eating and the benefits of physical exercise. One pupil was keen to explain her understanding, 'It is more than healthy food and PE - it also includes understanding feelings.' Effective health and safety policies and excellent role-modelling by adults support pupils' understanding of keeping safe both in and out of school. Pupils who feel lonely are reassured that they soon become involved in games through the support of junior play leaders.

The school community is harmonious. Behaviour is good because relationships are positive and adults have consistently high expectations of the children. Pupils develop a good awareness of their future economic well-being through fund-raising, group work and good basic skills including ICT. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils have a good appreciation of the importance of being a good citizen. For instance, the school council makes important decisions about the school community. They understand and value the responsibility they have been given, although opportunities to show this type of initiative and leadership are less evident in lessons. Attendance is broadly average, but figures are lowered by those parents who take their children for extended holidays during term time, despite the school's best efforts to discourage this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The key to the teachers' success lies in the positive relationships established between adults and pupils. Teachers strive to ensure a good match of task to the wide range of backgrounds and abilities present in every class. Inspectors found lively teaching throughout the school. The best lessons offer pupils exciting activities that are meaningful and capture their interest, with opportunities to share ideas and plan their own work. For example, in Year 5 pupils are writing and making films. Year 6 pupils use drama and role-play to explore methods of transport to school. Here pupils' achievement is better because they are able to use their skills and to develop initiative. However, these types of opportunities are not a consistent feature in all classrooms.

The increased teamwork among staff benefits learning. Teachers plan together and deploy the many well-trained teaching assistants most effectively. As a result, pupils of all abilities, and especially those with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and disabilities, are supported in lessons and in the variety of special programmes and catch-up arrangements offered throughout the school.

The impact of the work to improve writing is evident across the school, and especially in Years 2 and 4, where pupils are writing interesting stories in a fluent joined script and spelling and punctuating their work with increasing accuracy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Since the previous inspection, the school's focus on improving literacy and numeracy has been successful. Pupils engage more frequently in writing and this has led to significant improvement in their achievements in English. Opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subjects, such as history and science, are less well developed. This is because the school does not yet have a sufficiently coherent framework to ensure that knowledge and skills are built systematically as pupils progress through the school. The school is beginning to develop a more creative curriculum, where subjects are linked, and there are signs that provision in science is improving and accelerating pupils' achievements. The use of ICT has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, especially the creation of a virtual learning environment which allows them to access work and support from their home computer.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits to places of interest and by visiting experts, such as singers and musicians. Pupils say how much they enjoy these activities. They also say how much they value the large number of extra-curricular clubs available to them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults throughout the school provide excellent care and support for the pupils. Safeguarding procedures are secure and meet statutory requirements. Pupils say they feel safe and are happy to approach adults in the school to help solve any problems. Vulnerable pupils are effectively supported by the school's innovative and well-planned systems which ensure regular and rigorous review involving all key partners. The school's work with external agencies, such as health and social services, helps staff to meet the wide range of pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Consequently, pupils flourish and most parents feel well supported.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for individuals and groups of pupils. However, approaches to day-to-day assessment lack consistency and, as a result, teachers are not always successful in ensuring a close match of task to individual ability, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics. Similarly, while most teachers offer helpful oral and written feedback to pupils, practice varies across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since the previous inspection, standards have risen and the quality of provision improved as a result of the effective work of the senior leadership team. In particular, the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage is accelerating the progress made by three- and four-year-olds so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they are better prepared for work on the National Curriculum. The enthusiastic team of middle leaders is now more fully engaged in the development and monitoring of their areas of responsibility and is more aware of how it can influence improvement. Its action plans contribute to the larger plan for school improvement.

Its successful leadership of ICT, literacy and the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to raised achievement in these areas.

Improved tracking of pupils' progress and the more rigorous monitoring of teaching have been important developments in the work of the leadership team. While the quality of teaching has improved, inconsistencies remain, especially in relation to the use of assessment and the marking of pupils' work.

The school itself is a harmonious community that is sensitive to the many cultures from which it draws its pupils. It works well with other agencies and schools in the area to support individual pupils and to provide opportunities to develop their wider interests, such as cricket and arts festivals. Links with the school's immediate and wider community, including parents, could be developed further.

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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	1

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	1
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?	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	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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Colindale Primary School, London, NW9 6HP

A team of inspectors came to your school recently to see how well the school helps you learn. It was a very enjoyable visit because you all made us feel welcome and helped us by telling us what you thought about the school. We were impressed by your good behaviour in assemblies and lessons, going around the school and at playtimes. We thought that you were very kind to each other and helpful, and that you work hard. Part of this is because the adults in the school look after you very well. You told us that you enjoyed school, especially your interesting work and visits, when you have them. You also said that you found the adults easy to talk to. The headteacher and all the other teachers try to make the school welcoming and plan interesting lessons and activities for you. It was good to see the cricket team going off to play in a local tournament and we know that many of you are looking forward to your 'Colindale's Got Talent' show later this term.

Since the last time inspectors came to the school, many things have got better because the staff have helped you to get better at writing. You are now making good progress with your English and mathematics from the Nursery right through to Year 6. From your work in books, it now looks like the standard of your work will continue to improve. We think that your school is good, but it could be even better if the headteacher and teachers do the following:

- make sure that they all talk to you about what you are learning and mark your work so that you understand what you are learning and know how to improve your work
- plan a more exciting curriculum which gives you more chances to write and use computers and mathematics in other subjects and more opportunities to use your own ideas to plan your own work
- find more ways of telling your parents and carers what is happening in school and how well you are getting on.

Good luck in the future.

Yours faithfully

Paula Protherough

Lead Inspector