

Carlton Vale Infant School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 101498 |
| Local Authority | Brent |
| Inspection number | 323468 |
| Inspection date | 28 January 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Vanessa Ward |

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.

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 199 |
| 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 David Knight |
| Headteacher | Ms Helen Mooney |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 October 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Malvern Place Kilburn London NW6 5PX |
| Telephone number | 020 7624 0348 |
| Fax number | 020 7328 6293 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 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. They investigated how effectively the school is improving learning in mathematics; what contributes to the apparently rich curriculum; and how successfully the school uses its assessment procedures to raise achievement and accelerate pupils' progress. The inspectors gathered evidence from the school's records, planning and policies, and by observing teaching and learning. They also held discussions with staff, governors and pupils, and scrutinised parents' questionnaires.

The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included in the report.

Description of the school

The pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being Black African and Black Caribbean. A far greater proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language. Children are admitted to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the September after their third birthday. A higher proportion than is usually found join or leave the school other than at expected times. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. These include pupils with speech, language and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Carlton Vale Infant School provides a good education for its pupils. Its curriculum and the care, guidance and support that it provides for its pupils are outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Comments such as 'This school has given our child the opportunity to unlock and discover his potential' and 'Every single day our child has something to talk about that she has enjoyed' are typical of their views.

The headteacher, although not new to the school, has been in post for just a few months. During that time, she has established a strong sense of teamwork among staff and governors. There is a shared determination to improve the school. The process for school self-evaluation is secure and accurate, and the school sets challenging targets. All levels of leadership have a very clear understanding of what the school does well and of how it can improve. The developing leadership roles of the new deputy, the senior management team and subject leaders provide increased influence over developments in their areas of responsibility, and this is having a positive impact on school improvement. The governing body has an excellent understanding of, and involvement in, school improvement. The support and challenge that it offers to the school are outstanding. Recent improvements, combined with others since the previous inspection, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

The school's tracking data show that all groups of pupils make good progress. A large majority of children begin school with skills that are well below those expected of three-year-olds, particularly in speech, language and literacy. Good teaching and an excellent curriculum enable them to achieve standards, which, by the end of Year 2, are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to attain similar average standards. Results in writing are often above average, and the school is working to raise standards in reading and mathematics to a similar level. In 2008, following a fall in mathematics results, careful analysis revealed weaknesses in pupils' abilities to solve mathematical problems and to understand and use mathematical language. As a result, the school has begun an initiative to improve teaching and learning in mathematics, focusing particularly on these two areas.

The excellent and creative curriculum contributes much to pupils' positive attitudes and to their enjoyment of learning. They speak enthusiastically about art, dance, music and gardening, as well as the many visitors who come to school. They are looking forward especially to their dance festival. Teachers use the curriculum well to help them meet individual needs. For pupils who find learning difficult, including those with speech, language or behavioural difficulties, work is successfully adapted to meet their needs, so that they make good progress. Pupils whom the school has identified as more-able are challenged well. Similarly, the curriculum is adapted for children who are learning to speak English and also for those newly admitted to the school. Links between subjects are very effective, so that, for example, writing skills develop well through history or science. Pupils' personal development and well-being are integrated well into the curriculum.

Teachers know their pupils well and the school tracks their progress carefully. It is aware that it could do more to intervene where pupils make slower progress than expected. It has recently introduced a new process for assessing pupils' progress and is combining this with meetings between senior staff and teachers. These meetings review the effectiveness of the previous intervention, and plan further action to help teachers to accelerate progress. This initiative is

currently being used for mathematics, and there are good plans to extend it to English later in the year.

The excellent care, guidance and support that the school provides contribute much to the pupils' good personal development. Pupils who have speech, language or behavioural difficulties are identified early and are given excellent support, both academically and in their personal development. Similar consideration is given to the needs of pupils who are either new to the school or are learning to speak English. Pupils understand their learning targets and appreciate their own involvement in assessing for themselves how well they are doing. The school is developing this involvement further. The teachers give useful feedback when they mark pupils' work, and pupils comment that this is 'very helpful'. Procedures for health and safety are very well established and are monitored and reviewed effectively.

Pupils eat healthily in school and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They say that they feel safe and that the school's procedures to deal with bullying are effective. Pupils are very conscientious in carrying out responsibilities, such as helping lonely children at playtimes. They value the opportunities that they are given to contribute to school development through the school council. The basic skills they learn help to prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked tirelessly with parents and support agencies to improve attendance. This has been successful, with the large majority of pupils attending regularly and attendance levels, although fluctuating because of illness, being broadly average. The school is doing all it can to improve the attendance of the few pupils who do not attend regularly. Pupils' behaviour is good, as is their understanding of the school's system for rewards and sanctions. The few pupils who present challenging behaviour are managed effectively.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It focuses successfully on providing equality of opportunity for all of its pupils. The school uses the pupils' varied ethnic backgrounds particularly well to promote tolerance and understanding of other cultures and faiths around the world. The school's rich curriculum and links stemming from the different backgrounds of the staff enhance this understanding. Parents from different cultures also contribute through cookery, dance and the telling of stories from different cultures. The school acknowledges that it could broaden pupils' experiences by increasing its links with a local school with a contrasting population. The school successfully reaches out to the local population by means of coffee mornings, a family numeracy project, and courses for adults who wish to learn English.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children are given a good start to their education. Successful induction procedures enable the children to settle quickly and happily. Parents are encouraged to visit school and to be involved in their children's education, so that school and home can work together. From predominantly well below expected starting points, children make good progress because of good teaching and rigorous and effective assessment procedures. By the time they leave the EYFS, their skills have developed well, and are much closer to those of other five-year-olds. This learning is built on effectively in Year 1. The school carefully assesses the children when they start school, so that they can adapt teaching for individuals and groups of children. There is a good balance of adult-led and independent activities, and children clearly enjoy working both inside and outside the classrooms. Staff are supportive and sensitive to individual needs, and successfully promote all aspects of the children's care and welfare. They help them to develop confidence, independence and the cooperative skills on which their academic skills

can be built. The newly appointed EYFS leader has made a good start in bringing together the team, and is clear about the developments needed to improve teaching and learning further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school, with particular reference to problem solving and mathematical language.
- Increase the use of assessment data to identify where progress is slow, and intervene to improve achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|-----|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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**

10 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carlton Vale Infant School, London, NW6 5PX

I am writing to thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently and to tell you what we found out. You were very friendly and helpful. Many of you and your parents and carers told us that you go to a good school, and we agree.

Here are the things we liked most about your school.

- Your teachers give you lots of very interesting things to do, and this helps you to enjoy learning.
- All of the grown-ups take very good care of you, which helps you to feel happy and safe.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a good start to learning in school.
- You do well in your learning, and by the end of Year 2 you can read, write and do mathematics as well as most seven-year-olds.
- You eat healthily in school, enjoy taking exercise, and behave well.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working really well together to make your school even better.

In order to help your headteacher, teachers and governors to improve your school, we have asked them to do two things:

- help you to do better in mathematics, especially in learning how to solve problems and how to understand and use mathematical language
- look even more closely at how well you are doing, so that they can help you to be even better learners.

You can help by always doing your best and by making sure that you go to school every day unless you are ill. This is very important, because you will miss essential learning and you will not be there to share in the fun!

We hope you carry on enjoying school and learning many interesting things.

Yours faithfully

Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector