

West Acton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101876
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	323544
Inspection date	13 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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)	467
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 Gordon Telling
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Noel Road Acton London W3 0JL
Telephone number	020 8992 3144
Fax number	020 8896 0625

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage. In addition, the following issues were investigated.

- Do all groups of pupils achieve well?
- What are the key strengths in the quality of teaching and learning?
- What are the improvements that the school has made to the curriculum in order to now evaluate it as outstanding?

Evidence was gathered from the school's analysis of pupils' progress, a scrutiny of samples of their work and observations of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses to parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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

West Acton is a large primary school that serves an area of very considerable ethnic diversity. About half the pupils are of White British heritage and there are large numbers from six other ethnic backgrounds. Overall, there are 28 different cultural groups and pupils speak 25 different home languages, including a large proportion who are at an early stage of learning English. The most common first languages spoken are Arabic, Japanese and Somali. There is a very high turnover of pupils. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a 50-place part-time Nursery and two Reception classes. There is an after school club that is managed by a private provider.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or speech, language and communication difficulties. A new headteacher was appointed from September 2008. The school has gained a large number of awards, among which are Investors in People, Healthy School.

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. It has some significant strengths that underpin its success in ensuring that pupils' personal development is outstanding and they achieve well in their academic development. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and are pleased they have chosen the school for their children. Several parents praised its friendly and open ethos, making comments such as, 'The atmosphere at the school is inspiring...both my children love going to school and have positive learning experiences on a daily basis.'

The new headteacher already provides excellent leadership and management. Working in close partnership with the senior staff and governors, she has successfully built on the many strengths found at the previous inspection. There has, for example, been a focus on developing the school environment. Play spaces and changes in access to the field ensure that the site is used exceptionally well. There is a huge range of places for pupils to sit and chat, play, explore and enjoy themselves during break times.

The headteacher ensures that there is clear educational direction and staff have high expectations of both themselves and the pupils. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and this demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement. There is a deep commitment to strengthening the skills of all members of staff and this is recognised in the awarding of the Investors in People standard. Staff views' and contributions to school improvement are appreciated and this leads to close teamwork and high staff morale.

Pupils make good gains in their learning and all groups of pupils achieve well. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below expected levels and many children have very limited English skills. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. This continues in all year groups. Standards at the end of Year 2 are close to average, though they are below average in writing. Good progress is made in Years 3 to 6, and national test results at the end of Year 6 show standards that are in line with the national average and improving. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain standards that are above average. Following the previous inspection, there has been close attention paid to improving standards in writing because they were much below those in reading. The curriculum has been revamped and there is a strong focus on developing pupils' vocabulary, securing an understanding of how to improve the content of written work and to ensure that pupils enjoy writing. This focus has been successful and, in consequence, the gap between pupils' attainment in reading and writing throughout the school has closed. However, although pupils' knowledge of calculation is good, their skills in applying this knowledge to practical mathematical and problem-solving activities are more limited. The school is aware of this and a good-quality plan is in place to strengthen competence in these areas.

There is a strong sense of community cohesion with excellent partnerships between the school and parents and other schools in the vicinity, particularly with the local Japanese school. Pupils' horizons are broadening and are enriched by the school's twinning with a school in France and by having pen pals in an Australian school. Many parents commented on the school's responsiveness to community development, which has led to a range of extended school services including parenting workshops, in association with Homestart, and an after school club provided through the Young Men's Christian Association.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Behaviour is excellent with pupils behaving in a respectful way to others. They are polite, helpful and courteous. They have highly positive attitudes to school

and learning and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils become thoughtful, mature and confident young people. They have an excellent understanding of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and are proud to point out that they have gained Healthy School status. Exemplary attention is paid to ensuring pupils' welfare and well-being. Because so there is such an exceptionally high number of pupils entering and leaving during the school year, excellent induction systems have been set up, particularly for the very many pupils who arrive in school with no English. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being 'buddies' for these pupils and delight in the responsibility of caring and translating for them. Pupils very quickly make significant strides in learning English because there is closely tailored provision to support them, and pupils soon become confident speakers. Academic guidance is of high quality because there are excellent systems in place to track pupils' progress, for setting targets, and for ensuring that pupils of all abilities progress well. As a result, pupils who may be slipping behind are quickly identified so that they can be given extra support.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some lessons are outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have excellent relationships with pupils and ensure that classrooms have a calm and purposeful atmosphere. The recent focus on strengthening pupils' learning is paying dividends. In most classes pupils are helped to have a clear understanding of what is being learned and what they have to do to meet lesson objectives. Teachers generally use assessments very well to pitch work at an appropriate level. However, this is not always the case, and although these lessons are otherwise satisfactory, this leads to a drop in the pace of learning.

There have been considerable improvements in the curriculum since the previous inspection. It is now outstanding. Curriculum planning is thorough and staff ensure that plans are amended to meet West Acton pupils' needs, ensuring that themes and topics being studied provide first-hand experiences that include the linking of subjects. There are now many more visits out of school to support topics and excellent use is made of the rich range of opportunities available in London that help to make learning more meaningful. Additional activities are a particular strength. There is a wide range of before and after school clubs which focus on sports and games and the arts, particularly music and dance. In addition all pupils have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, and very many do so.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. The opportunity they have to visit and meet staff before they start school helps them to settle very quickly, form friendships and feel secure. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's education and has started to provide different workshops for games and activities to use with their children at home. Good use of the key person system in the Nursery provides children and parents with a central point of contact. Weekly drop-in sessions for parents are greatly appreciated. This close partnership contributes to the excellent level of welfare promoted in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children achieve well and particularly good progress is made in spoken language and linking sounds and letters. Story-telling and conversation with adults during activities helps children to quickly gain new vocabulary and become confident in their spoken language, especially those who are new to learning English. This was evident as children excitedly filled pots with soil and planted tomato seeds. The settings provide a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities in which children work and play happily together. Better-planned use

of the outdoor areas is helping to encourage children's greater independence and the choices they can make for themselves, but more work is yet to be done on this.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff work well together as a team. New procedures for monitoring and recording children's progress, along with regular meetings for staff to discuss this progress, ensures that the next steps in children's learning and development are readily identified and planned for well. They have also helped staff to accurately identify where provision needs to be developed further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Lift attainment in mathematics by implementing the good-quality plans to strengthen pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics.
- Improve satisfactory lessons by speeding the pace of learning.

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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?	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?	1
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	2
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	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	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**

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Acton Primary School, London, W3 0JL

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for helping us so well and making us welcome. We really enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school. We really enjoyed seeing your wonderful costumes for Red Nose Day and we hope that you managed to meet your targets for the amount of money you raised. We can see why you enjoy school so much because yours is a good school and some things are outstanding.

These are the things that are best about your school.

- You enjoy school and you all get on very well together. Your behaviour is outstanding. You all make sure that the many children that start school without being able to speak English are made welcome.
- You make good progress in your learning, particularly in learning English, and you want to do your best. Well done for this!
- The staff take excellent care of you and make sure that you are safe and very well looked after, so remember to say 'thank you' to them for this.
- Your teachers do a good job. Teaching is good and you thoroughly enjoy learning.
- You are lucky to have so many exciting activities to do and visits to make. We were particularly pleased to see that so many of you enjoy playing musical instruments.
- Your new headteacher is doing an excellent job. She is supported well by all the other adults in the school.

We have asked the school to continue to focus on two things:

- for you to do even better in mathematics through the teachers giving you lots of practical and problem-solving mathematics activities
- make sure that you learn quickly and well in all lessons.

You can help by making sure you work as hard as possible to meet your targets.

With best wishes,

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector