

Dormers Wells Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101938
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	323555
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	369
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	99
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Minni Dogra
Headteacher	Ms Angela Briggs
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dormers Wells Lane Southall UB1 3HX
Telephone number	020 8574 6999
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Dormers Wells is much larger than the typical infant school. Almost all pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Somali origin. Most pupils speak English as an additional language, often at a very early stage. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is much higher than average. Mobility is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. There is also an independently managed club on the school site which provides breakfast, after school and holiday care. The school has been awarded the Activemark and has achieved Healthy School status. Over the past few years there has been a very high turnover of teaching staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Dormers Wells is a satisfactory and improving school. It has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and is working hard to improve the satisfactory education it currently offers. The headteacher's determined leadership, combined with good support from senior staff, has begun to secure improvements in the quality of teaching, standards of behaviour, Early Years Foundation Stage provision, subject leadership and the school's assessment and tracking systems. The many changes to teaching staff have hindered continuity and progress. A number of parents are understandably concerned about the disruption in teaching staff in some classes, although the great majority of parents are very supportive of the school. One comment, typical of the views of others was, 'I am very pleased and happy that I have chosen Dormers Wells and I am very happy with my son's progress.'

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there is still too much variation, which the school is working hard to tackle. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. From their very low starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress but not at a sufficiently fast rate to raise standards. Hence, standards remain well below average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. A significant factor contributing to the low standards is the very high level of pupil mobility. Substantial improvements have been made to the school's systems for tracking individual pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and teachers are now beginning to make use of the tracking information available to them to plan work for different groups of pupils. However, this is at an early stage of development and the more able pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work. The school is aware of this issue and is working hard to raise standards. Subject coordinators are developing a better understanding of their role but are not yet utilising tracking data to its full extent in order to identify weaknesses in provision in their areas of responsibility.

Staff care for pupils' social and emotional needs well. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe and healthy and take responsibility for themselves and others. One school council member said, 'I think we should be role models for the younger children.' They behave well and the great majority of pupils attend regularly and punctually. Older pupils act as 'playground buddies' for the younger children and take part in fundraising events for local charities. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced although the curriculum for the Reception children is currently restricted by the lack of opportunities for children to develop independent learning skills.

The school has made limited improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher and other senior staff have worked hard to introduce a series of initiatives that are beginning to show early signs improvement. However, the continued staff disruption means that it is still too early for these initiatives to have had the necessary impact in improving standards. Governors are supportive of the school but have only recently become more effective in holding school leaders to account. As a result, the school currently has only a satisfactory capacity to make the necessary improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below expectations for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. They settle into the school routine well. Good relationships are established with parents through daily contact and this has a positive impact on the partnership between home and school. Day-to-day assessment is used to build a clear picture of how well the children are doing in the Nursery although this is not used as consistently or rigorously when children move into the Reception classes. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning overall given their low starting points. By the time they enter Year 1, standards remain well below average, particularly in communication and language. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills in the Nursery. However, this is not built on consistently as children move into Reception where there are currently insufficient opportunities for children to develop their independent learning skills through selecting their own activities. Children's personal and social development improves significantly during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is satisfactory by the time they enter Year 1. Children develop an increasing awareness of how to keep healthy through initiatives such as 'walk to school week'. They learn to take turns and work cooperatively in their learning and were observed during the inspection using the outdoor area to develop their musical and dancing skills with great enthusiasm.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that teaching takes more account of tracking data to consistently challenge pupils to achieve as well as they can, particularly the more able.
- Develop the role of subject coordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching and standards in their areas of responsibility.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From their low starting points in Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, and standards remain significantly below average by the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in English, mathematics and science is below average. The impact of mobility is illustrated by the current Year 2 group; more than one in three of these pupils did not start their education at the school. There is also a very high number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this year group. Most of these pupils have made good progress towards their targets, however, because of skilled support. Nevertheless, these factors, coupled with the continued instability in staffing, particularly in Year 1, have had a detrimental effect on pupils' overall progress and standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Work undertaken to gain the Healthy School and Activemark awards ensures that pupils are well aware of the importance of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. Pupils say they feel

safe in school and show care and consideration around school and in the playground. They are confident, polite, friendly and helpful. They say they enjoy school but are understandably concerned about the number of staff changes. The school has rigorous systems in place to improve attendance, including a weekly celebratory assembly which motivates pupils well. Pupils confirm that behaviour has improved following a whole-school review plus training for teachers and ancillary staff. Pupils are well-behaved in lessons and interested to learn. In the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils listened carefully, answered questions thoughtfully and tackled their work with enthusiasm. They know how to make sensible decisions about their actions. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community; they are responsive to the needs of others and willingly set about raising funds for charities, although their contribution to the wider community is more limited. Although pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are below average, their positive attitudes and good behaviour ensure that they are satisfactorily prepared for junior school and the world beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While all teaching is at least satisfactory, not enough is good or better to ensure that all pupils achieve well and standards improve rapidly. Where teaching is good, there are high expectations of all pupils and work is matched well to their abilities. The level of challenge for the more able pupils, however, is inconsistent across the school. Teachers make it clear to pupils what is to be learnt and good support is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's efforts to improve the consistency and quality of teaching are beginning to show signs of success. Assessment and planning are now much more consistent across the school and provision for children with additional needs has improved. Despite these developments, however, steady improvement is made more challenging due to the continued difficulty in recruiting and retaining experienced staff. While most pupils in the early stages of learning English receive effective support, there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of the strategies used across the school. The school is working to overcome this weakness through training and support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily and enrichment activities contribute well to learners' achievement and enjoyment. However, the curriculum is not always effective in providing sufficient challenge and stimulus for the more able pupils. A priority for the school has been to develop a skills-based curriculum which is more suited to the needs of all pupils and reflects the diversity of the school. To this end, themed weeks have been introduced each half term, which have motivated pupils well and improved links with parents and the local community. For example, Year 2 children have been involved in investigating ways to improve their school environment through a survey. Children, staff, parents and the local community worked together on this project and have plans to do further work as part of an initiative for eco-schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The safe environment and the good relationships throughout the school reflect the good pastoral care given to pupils. Induction procedures for the very youngest children are good. Child protection procedures are secure and the school looks carefully at how it can make the environment safe for pupils. Pupils say that staff respond quickly and effectively to any concerns. Liaison with external agencies is used efficiently to secure pupils' welfare. Arrangements for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities ensure that they are fully integrated into the school community. Vulnerable pupils and their families are successfully supported through regular discussions with staff. The school is now systematically gathering useful information on individual pupils' progress. However, the data gained is not yet being used to its full advantage to enable rapid, early identification of any pupil who is falling behind or not making the progress he or she is capable of.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The strategies introduced by the leadership are focused on accelerating the progress of pupils throughout the school and improving the accuracy and effectiveness of the school's self-analysis. This work is at an early stage of development but it has resulted in improvements to pupils' behaviour and in provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. A new assessment system is helping the school to move forward and a programme of staff training is showing signs of improving teachers' subject knowledge and encouraging higher expectations. However, the impact of these important changes has yet to be reflected in higher standards. Some pupils during the current school year have been taught by a series of temporary teachers. This is a situation that understandably concerns parents and pupils and inevitably slows the pace at which planned improvements can take effect. Subject coordinators are beginning to develop an overview of their subjects, although their monitoring role is still at a very early stage of development. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It has strong links with the local community but the national and international dimensions are more limited.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	3
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	3
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?	3
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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

08 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dormers Wells Infant School, Southall, UB1 3HX

Thank you for helping me and my colleagues to find out about your school. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You go to a satisfactory school. Your headteacher and staff have lots of ideas about ways to improve your school, and staff work hard to make sessions interesting. They care for you well and listen to you thoughtfully. You all try hard with your work, you behave well and enjoy all the things that you do at school.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things better. The most important things are to make sure that:

- you all do better with your reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school
- teachers plan lessons carefully and give you plenty of interesting and challenging things to do
- teachers who are responsible for different subject areas have a better understanding of how well you are all doing.

Yours faithfully

Clive Lewis

Lead Inspector