

George Spicer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101993
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	323563
Inspection date	11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	418
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	Mrs Kathy Swatton
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Ballantine
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Southbury Road Enfield EN1 1YF
Telephone number	020 8363 1406
Fax number	020 8367 1411

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

- the current rate of pupils' progress across the school
- the impact of the new leadership team on the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of the school's partnerships in supporting pupils' personal qualities
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors; observations of teaching and learning; views of parents; and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average, popular primary school in the Southbury Ward in Enfield. The school serves an increasingly diverse community, with 50% of pupils coming from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Of the 418 pupils on roll there are a high and increasing number of pupils who are new to learning English, and over 25 languages are spoken in the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average but can be much higher in some years. Most of these are moderate learning difficulties. Children start in the EYFS with skills that are below those expected for their age. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The school provides extended provision for pupils before and after the school day. The school has achieved National Healthy School Status and possesses the Primary Quality Mark, Activemark and the Leading Parent Partnership Award, together with the Investors In People and International School awards, Learning Through Landscapes, the Extended Schools Award and Bronze Eco-Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good and improving school enjoys a well-deserved reputation. Pupils' personal development is outstanding, and this, together with the outstanding curriculum, contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their increasingly good progress in lessons. The school works very closely with outside agencies to meet the diverse needs of pupils, and all adults in school provide high levels of care. Parents are closely involved in the life of the school and parental partnerships are outstanding. The involvement and engagement of parents in their children's learning is seen as a key element in the development of community cohesion, which is also outstanding.

Parents have extremely positive views of the school. 'George Spicer is a community-centred school with a very caring and committed staff,' is typical of their comments. Parents also noted the thriving, warm, friendly environment and cohesive atmosphere within the school. They feel that they are able to contribute to their children's education, as the school has actively sought and acted on their views. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They talk enthusiastically about their teachers and the exciting things they do in lessons; these include making films and the opportunity to learn French. They also appreciate the opportunities to learn a musical instrument, to garden, and to join in the many clubs available to them. They are keen to take part in the daily activity session, which includes singing, music and movement, Brain Gym, and yoga. Those who attend the well-organised before- and after-school activities are well provided for. Pupils have a very good understanding of different cultures, and everyone gets on exceptionally well together. Pupils feel safe and well looked after, and are confident that their views are listened to and acted on. From an early age, pupils know how to eat healthily, and they speak enthusiastically about the many opportunities to take exercise. Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in their good attendance and their outstanding behaviour around school and in lessons.

The new headteacher has identified how to make the school even better and has introduced new initiatives, which are already having an impact on improving teaching and learning, the rate at which pupils make progress, and their understanding of how to improve their work. The headteacher's effective leadership and management has ensured that governors and parents work well together. There are excellent induction and transition programmes, and user-friendly guidance and information on how parents can support their children's learning. A team of well-trained teaching assistants supports pupils extremely well. Children make good progress in the EYFS; they enter Key Stage 1 with skills which are average, although they are weaker in aspects of language and mathematical development. There is a strong programme of phonics teaching and this, together with the daily guided reading, has had a positive impact on pupils' reading throughout school. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average, reflecting good progress when pupils' initial weaknesses in literacy and numeracy are considered. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average, which represents good progress overall in relation to their starting points. Mathematical development has been a weaker aspect of pupils' attainment. The strategies adopted by the school are beginning to improve pupils' skills, although they have not yet had time to make a consistent impact on standards.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, having clear learning objectives and appropriate pace to allow pupils to understand clearly what they are learning. Lessons contain a good range of activities, and teachers use questions well to check what pupils have learned. In less successful lessons, the pace is slower and the lack of challenge offered to pupils results in slower progress. Good use is made of 'talk partners' and group work so that pupils can learn together and develop their speaking and listening skills, which they use with increasing

confidence. Allied to good development of skills in information and communication technology, this prepares them well for their future education.

The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified, and appropriate strategies adopted to ensure that they thrive in school. Teachers' marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work, and procedures for setting targets for pupils, and tracking improvement in their work, are having an effect on pupils' progress and standards. All necessary safeguarding requirements are in place.

The strongly focused leadership of the highly respected headteacher has established key priorities for school improvement based on accurate evaluation of the school. The headteacher receives very good support from highly professional senior staff. She has offered all leaders extra responsibility and more accountability, and they are rising to the challenge. There is a rigorous focus on equality of opportunity in this very inclusive school. Governors offer high-quality levels of support and challenge to the school. They are well informed. The school has shown strong improvement since its last inspection. There is greater emphasis on pupils' progress, the setting of challenging targets, and detailed analysis of what happens in classrooms. This is leading to more consistent teaching across school and a consequent rise in the rate of pupils' progress. The very good strengths in the quality of leadership, as demonstrated by these recent improvements, and the marked impact on pupils' learning already noted, together confirm that the school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle into the good provision quickly, because effective liaison with a large number of pre-school settings produces good quality information and ensures that a rich and stimulating curriculum meets their needs. Children enjoy exploring and investigating a wide range of materials and resources that mirror all the early learning goals. They also benefit from planned activities that link knowledge through particular themes such as Christmas. Stories, painting, designing cards and using computer art programmes all linked back to The Christmas Story or Santa and his sleigh. Children have time to organise their own interpretation of a story, but also have opportunities to work together and talk about their discoveries. They behave very well and play together happily. Relationships with adults are good, and children show that they feel safe, both inside and out on the playground, as they develop confidence and independence. They share toys and look after each other well. Knowledge and skills are extended by very good adult-led sessions, which develop further early reading, writing and number skills. Leadership and management are good, and all adults work well as a team. Welfare and care are exemplary. All procedures are robust and followed consistently. Children are assessed continuously through close observation, and key learning moments are captured on camera. At present, the accuracy of early assessments shows some inconsistency, but the school is aware that moderation will help to improve these judgements. Very good links exist with external agencies such as the Parent Support Service and social services. Staff welcome parents and carers into school so they can gain more insight into what their children are doing, and how they can support them at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in mathematics.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	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?	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	1
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	1
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	1
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?	1
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**

06 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of George Spicer Primary School, Enfield, EN1 1YF

I thoroughly enjoyed the day I spent with you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. Your view that some parts of your school are excellent is true. Looking at the exciting displays of your work, and seeing you enjoying so many activities, confirmed that we were in a good and improving school.

Your parents and carers like the school very much - they feel very much part of the school team, and they especially like the way your teachers care for you. Learning is enjoyable because the teachers make your lessons interesting and arrange many exciting activities for you. They encourage you to know what you need to learn in each lesson. Apart from your learning in lessons, I was particularly impressed by your personal development and the way you are so well looked after. I so enjoyed talking to some of you about your work and what you like most. You certainly have a healthy outlook, are free from bullying, and take part in school activities with great enthusiasm. You said you really like the activities the school provides for you, such as the visits, clubs and sporting activities. I really enjoyed seeing the film on the Fox and the Mouse that some of you had made, especially as the mouse spoke perfect French.

You do your best by behaving considerately to each other, and you work hard. I know everyone wants to do even better and I have asked your school to do one thing to help: give you more challenging work in mathematics so that you can make even greater progress.

Thank you for all your help and I wish you success in everything you do in the future.

Yours faithfully

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Lead Inspector