

Cuckoo Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102018
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	323570
Inspection date	8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	660
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 Andry Efthymiou
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Sowter
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cuckoo Hall Lane Edmonton London N9 8DR
Telephone number	020 8804 4126
Fax number	020 8804 2739

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	8 May 2009
Inspection number	323570

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the accuracy of the school's own evaluations and focused on the following areas:

- the extent to which the school is improving the achievement of boys, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- the opportunities the pupils have to reflect on and assess their own learning in lessons
- the extent to which the school seeks and acts on pupils' views, as well as the opportunities pupils have to contribute to the work of the school and to show initiative.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, work in books, the analysis of test results, teachers' assessments and records of pupils' performance, as well as parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

Cuckoo Hall is a very large primary school and is expanding to accommodate an increasing demand for places. Nursery and Reception children join the school in the year in which they will be three or four years of age respectively and both year groups comprise the school's Early Years Foundation Stage. The Nursery children attend part-time and there are currently three full-time Reception classes with plans to expand to four classes in September 2009. Throughout the school there is significant diversity represented by a wide range of minority ethnic groups. In addition to the majority who are from White British, Black African, Caribbean or Turkish backgrounds, other groups include pupils of Asian or Eastern European heritage. Compared with other schools, a much higher proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning English and most of these are in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in Years 1 and 2. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The main areas of need are in speech and language, or pupils have specific learning difficulties such as autism or emotional and social difficulties. The school has extensive links with other schools, colleges and organisations, including business partnerships. The school has a number of nationally accredited awards, including the Healthy School, Activemark and the Leading Parent Partnership awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The pupils and their families benefit enormously from the high standard of care and education provided. Cuckoo Hall is an outstanding school whose pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for all that their teachers and support staff offer them. Highly effective leadership and excellent teaching enable the pupils to achieve extremely well and reach high standards by the end of Year 6. The vast majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire paid tribute to the dedication and commitment of staff and governors. One parent summed up the views of most: 'The school has such a lovely feel to it. When I have been in school for assemblies and coffee mornings, it feels like going to a friend's house.' Parents have expressed their complete satisfaction with the progress their children make and at the same time confirm that the school incorporates fully their views. Pupils, too, are very satisfied; as one stated, 'This is the best school, it's fantastic', and another added, 'It is very easy to make friends and the teachers are very supportive.' The strong and dedicated leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers has encouraged the staff and governors to evaluate the school accurately in all areas of its work. The staff are very committed to pupils' all-round development, which underpins the school's success so that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities thrive.

The majority of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join with skills and abilities that are well below those expected of three- and four-year-olds. They make rapid progress, which is sustained throughout Years 1 and 2. Consequently, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds, reflecting excellent rates of progress in the short time the pupils have been in school. This strong foundation is built upon throughout Years 3 to 6 because excellent teaching continues and is never less than good. This is reflected in the results of national tests for Year 6 pupils, which show that, for some time now, they have consistently reached exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. This strong track record accounts for the school's popularity and high demand for places which has led to the school's expansion. Nevertheless, the staff are not complacent and continually strive to improve pupils' achievements. For example, an accurate analysis of pupils' performance identified gaps in the achievement of boys in writing. As a result, a successful programme of intervention, staff training and innovative projects such as the current 'Big Write' programme, have boosted the performance of all pupils in writing. It provides excellent opportunities for pupils to write independently and extensively. Pupils' books and excellent displays of their work reflect how well the school has succeeded in raising achievement in all elements of English through extended writing projects, drama, reading workshops and an excellent range of topics combining creative subjects in stimulating ways. 'It's great fun', said one pupil, when describing how he was improving his writing by using adventurous and descriptive vocabulary to create an atmosphere or particular effect in poetry.

The teaching of letter sounds (phonics) is highly effective, so pupils develop their reading skills exceptionally well. The pupils learning English as an additional language are very well supported because lessons are structured consistently well to provide a wealth of opportunities for them to explain their ideas and assess their own learning. Teachers provide excellent opportunities for pupils to investigate challenging tasks in mathematics and science. Practical and engaging activities are planned in lessons using talk partners to very good effect. In an excellent mathematics lesson observed, two pupils helped each other to work out averages by arranging paper cups to work out the 'mean' and then checking that each understood how they arrived at their agreed answer.

The curriculum is stimulating, varied and challenging. An excellent range of enrichment activities broaden pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. Sport and healthy exercise are encouraged through the excellent range of clubs, team games, athletics events or swimming galas, so the pupils learn to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils study artefacts, art and sculpture from a range of cultures that extends their understanding of the wider world and ethnic diversity in Britain. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to learn to speak modern foreign languages and they particularly enjoy the many visits and visitors the staff incorporate into their studies. There is outstanding racial harmony in this diverse school community with excellent opportunities to celebrate a range of customs and festivals. These contribute extremely well to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents attend weekly coffee mornings, such as the one visited by an inspector who was pleased to hear from parents of Turkish heritage that they valued these opportunities to meet other parents, and on this occasion to share a coffee and delicious baklava! There are outstanding partnerships with other organisations and schools that include joint arts projects, links with a professional football club as well as strong partnerships with colleges and businesses. Pupils are encouraged to learn about democracy when campaigning for safer roads or litter-free communities using links with local councillors and the Member of Parliament. Pupils show initiative or take responsibility when appointed as prefects, monitors or school councillors. Consequently, they mature into extremely well-behaved and considerate young people who actively care for others. One pupil explained, 'I've got three jobs now you know', when appointed as a playground buddy. Pupils thrive on the opportunity to become head boy or head girl, so taking on additional responsibilities for representing other pupils or helping the school to improve. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because they are encouraged to pursue their interests and talents. There are many opportunities for them to participate in an excellent range of musical events or dance and drama performances. Excellent use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning and this has also contributed significantly to raising the achievement of boys through visually stimulating resources using interactive technology.

The staff value pupils' efforts, which is reflected in the supportive comments made in pupils' workbooks and the praise given for their achievements. Teachers and support staff provide excellent care, guidance and support that contribute significantly to pupils' outstanding personal development and enable pupils to feel safe and secure. This is particularly effective for those pupils who find learning challenging or for those who need particular learning or emotional support. Attendance rates and punctuality are outstanding with very little persistent absence. Pupils are very attentive in lessons and show maturity beyond their years.

Governors are a real asset and make an outstanding contribution to the school. Together with the staff, governors seek pupils' and parents' views and keep them very well informed. The headteacher is continually broadening the scope for teachers to manage subjects and to take more responsibility for monitoring pupils' performance. The senior leadership team has encouraged staff and governors to assess accurately the impact of the school's work on the pupils as well as to evaluate its excellent impact on community cohesion. The school's very strong track record since its last inspection demonstrates that it has outstanding capacity to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes thoroughly enjoy a stimulating range of activities. Consequently, they make excellent progress and, by the time they start Year 1, the large majority

are working close to the early stages of the National Curriculum in all areas of learning. Excellent resources in the Nursery are used very well to provide rich opportunities for the children to engage in role play and reading and writing activities. This is built upon successfully in the Reception classes where children are taught their letter sounds extremely well, and this helps them to make excellent progress in identifying common words. Stories and role play are used very well throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage with children having easy access to well-resourced reading, graphics and mathematics areas, so they gain confidence in reading, writing and number work. There are regular opportunities for the children to work and play and there are excellent plans in place to expand these even further to include more covered outdoor areas so they can play and learn in all weathers. The children do particularly well in developing their personal and social skills with many opportunities for the children to share and exchange ideas. The children assess their own learning by using smiley faces to show that they understand and this also improves their speaking skills as they explain what they have learned. Systematic assessments of children's progress, performance and welfare are maintained very well and these help to inform parents how well their children are doing. All children develop their confidence and communication skills outstandingly well and the overall provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement. Inspectors agree with the school's current priority to extend opportunities for pupils to write independently in order to consistently reach high standards in writing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cuckoo Hall Primary School, London, N9 8DR

Thank you for being so welcoming when the inspectors came to see you. We really enjoyed talking to many of you during the day. We agree with your parents who say that you go to an excellent school. We can see why because it is such a successful and lovely school. Well done to you and all the staff and governors.

The inspectors were very pleased with your excellent behaviour and the way you all play and work together so well. The inspector who visited the Nursery and Reception classes saw that the children are doing exceptionally well. They are very good at learning their letter sounds and numbers, which is helping them to learn to read, write and count. This is especially good for them when they start in Year 1 because many children can recognise their name and can read stories to each other. In Year 1 right through to Year 6, the inspectors think that all pupils are doing extremely well in all subjects. We would like you all to keep working hard because your teachers are providing you with very good challenges and we can see from your test results that you are all doing very well and reach excellent standards. All the staff and governors are doing a fantastic job, especially in helping the school to grow and develop still further. They have some excellent plans that they have shared with parents about further improvements and expansions to the school.

We have asked your teachers to carry on helping you do even better in writing by giving you more opportunities to write at length in different ways. The 'Big Write' is an excellent programme which we can see you all enjoy, especially when you write lively and imaginative stories and poetry. Well done. You can all help, too, by carrying on trying hard and coming to school every day to keep up your excellent attendance rates.

I wish you and your parents the very best and I am so pleased to have met you. I would also like you to thank the people who organise things like the lovely breakfast club and the parents' coffee mornings. I really enjoyed meeting some parents and please pass on my thanks to them for allowing me to have a lovely cup of Turkish coffee and delicious baklava!

Yours faithfully

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector