

# Lathom Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102728
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	323679
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Butt

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	469
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Angela Adedeji
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Misbah Mann
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Lathom Road East Ham London E6 2DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8472 0386
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8470 1937

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- What the school is doing to reverse the downward trend in attainment of the higher attaining pupils.
- How well adapted the curriculum is to the needs of all pupils.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in raising standards and achievement.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, a governor and pupils also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

## Description of the school

This is a large school serving a diverse population. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. Almost all the pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, three quarters being Asian. Nine out of ten pupils speak English as an additional language, a very high proportion. Around a quarter are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is around average. These include speech and language difficulties. The school has the Activemark, Artsmark Gold, Investors in People and the Healthy Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Lathom Junior is a satisfactory school. Pupils enter Year 3 with standards that are broadly average to below average and make satisfactory progress. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are generally broadly average, although still below in English. This reflects the very high proportions of pupils who enter the school speaking English as an additional language and many who join mid-term speaking little or no English at all. Too few pupils attain the higher levels in English and mathematics because the work that they are given by teachers is not always sufficiently challenging. This has led to a downward trend in results, something the school is working hard to remedy. It is focusing appropriately on those pupils who gained above average results in Year 2 and monitoring their progress closely to ensure that they do not fall behind. The school has improved its tracking procedures in the past year and is now identifying much sooner those pupils who have not made the progress they should. This means that timely interventions can be put in place to help them catch up. A target group of underachieving boys made rapid gains in writing as a result of an innovative programme that was designed to motivate them.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with clear learning intentions for each lesson. Teachers share these with the pupils and often explain to them how they will know they have succeeded by the end of the lesson. At times, there is not enough emphasis on these criteria as the lesson progresses with a resulting loss of pace, or too much time is spent introducing the objectives so that there is not enough opportunity for pupils to practise the skills they are learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive, contributing to good personal development and well-being. Behaviour is excellent, as pupils have a real desire to learn and demonstrate this in their good attendance. There is an appropriate focus on speaking and listening, which supports the many pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress, including those with speech and language needs.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They take responsibility to support one another as peer mediators and play leaders and respect and embrace one another's cultural heritage. Events such as anti-bullying week and international month raise pupils' awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and their place as part of a school, local, national and global community. Pupils designed banners for a Singapore bank as part of the Olympic campaign. They run a school bank, which helps them to manage finances. One pupil said, 'It teaches you how to keep money safe - you don't just spend, spend, spend!' Pupils take part in plenty of sport and make good healthy choices. They say they feel free from bullying and would turn to an adult if they were worried. The school council plays an influential role in expressing pupils' views and has helped create a new garden. Pupils designed a new school logo that stresses its inclusive values. They have sung at the Barbican Centre and danced in Docklands. They mostly leave the school with the expected basic skills and are ready for their move to secondary school.

The school cares for its pupils well, ensuring each one is valued as an individual. A new multi-sensory room benefits pupils with specific needs. The social inclusion manager and learning mentor support vulnerable pupils well, and there is a good range of intervention groups to assist pupils' social and academic development. The school has good links with other agencies who provide support and advice. All safeguarding arrangements are in place. The new special needs coordinator has tightened up procedures and is ensuring that individual education plans

specifically state how pupils will be supported, with realistic targets for their development. Pupils are given good guidance in how to improve their writing, in particular, and a new marking policy is being implemented across the school. There are occasional variations in how this is being applied in different classes, although pupils are much clearer now than they used to be about what they need to do to improve. Parents are pleased with the way the school helps their children, and feel included. One said, 'Lathom takes an active interest in the perception of parents and allows them the opportunity to put this across.' They value the courses and workshops that help them support their children's education and the coffee mornings where they can make their views known. A 'Bollywood' night united the community in celebrating Asian culture, with pupils and parents joining together in the festivities.

The school makes satisfactory provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is aided by the availability of laptop computers for all Year 5 and 6 pupils, so that they can undertake research and practise their technology skills. The school is focusing on how to make learning more relevant for all its pupils, for example by devising its own programme of study in geography, featuring an Indian village known to staff. Some exciting special projects contribute well to pupils' good personal development and their enjoyment of school. For example, the French club visited Dover and met up with some French schoolchildren to exchange ideas. The school is now seeking to ensure that creativity is widespread across the curriculum. At present teachers from whole-year groups do not meet and plan together because of difficulties in arranging release time, but leaders recognise the benefits this could bring in sharing good practice. There is a good range of clubs including Spanish and Indian dance, and pupils enjoy visits to places of interest as well as residential trips where they can take part in adventurous activities.

The school has a stable leadership team after a period of change and has a clear picture of its strengths and areas to develop because more rigorous systems are in place for monitoring its work. Some of its judgements have been too generous, but leaders now have a realistic view of how the school needs to improve. The headteacher and deputy head are following the progress of pupils closely. The headteacher gains an insight into performance by meeting with pupils weekly to discuss their learning and to examine their work. The introduction of phase leaders means there are clear lines of communication and raised expectations of all staff, who are held accountable for the progress of their pupils. Many of the initiatives are recent, and the full impact of their effectiveness is not yet evident on standards and achievement. The leadership team is giving the school positive direction, and has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Governors are supportive of the school and recognise the need to put in place more formal structures for monitoring and evaluating its work.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Consistently set challenging work for the more able pupils so that more of them attain the higher levels in English and mathematics.
- Improve teaching so that all lessons are conducted at a brisk pace to become good or better.
- Build on recent improvements to monitor rigorously and systematically the impact of the school's provision on standards and achievement.

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.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	3

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lathom Junior School, London, E6 2DU

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school. Yours is a satisfactory school and here are some of the good things about it.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you are keen to learn.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe.
- You care for one another and take on jobs such as peer mediators responsibly.
- There are plenty of clubs and visits for you to enjoy.
- The school involves your parents well in supporting your education.
- You are well cared for and given good guidance and support in your work.
- The leadership team has a clear view of how the school needs to improve further.

More of you could attain the higher levels in English and mathematics, so I have asked your teachers to make sure that lessons really challenge you. You need time to complete your work, and you need to know exactly what is expected of you. I have asked staff to pace lessons so that this always happens. Leaders and governors are following your progress carefully, and I have asked them to make sure they keep on doing this really thoroughly, so they know exactly how you are doing. I am sure they would welcome your views about your progress.

Thank you once again for your help. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector