

Gallions Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131890
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	328655
Inspection date	14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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)	498
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 Alec Kellaway
Headteacher	Mr Paul Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Warwall East Beckton London E6 6WG
Telephone number	020 7476 9745
Fax number	020 7476 9758

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 particularly investigated:

- the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact of the innovative curriculum on pupils' personal development and in raising standards and achievement
- the effectiveness of school leaders' monitoring of provision and outcomes for the pupils.

The inspectors met with pupils, some staff and governors. Parts of lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including its self-evaluation, was scrutinised. Although some of the school's evaluations of its own effectiveness are a little high, the inspectors otherwise 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 the report.

Description of the school

In this large school, around a quarter of the pupils are of White British origin. Others come from a cosmopolitan mix of different backgrounds; the largest groups being of Bangladeshi and Black African heritage. There are many pupils who have come to the country as refugees. Over 30 languages are spoken, and two thirds of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have, mainly moderate, learning difficulties and/or disabilities has fallen in recent years and is now only a little above average, although it remains high in some year groups. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school part-way through their primary education is also reducing, although this mobility is still above average. The headteacher took over full-time in January 2009, although he had been joint headteacher for the previous two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gallions is a good school. What really stands out is its innovative and vibrant curriculum where virtually everything is taught through art, music, dance and drama. Throughout the school 'research projects' link work across a variety of different subjects. In Year 3, for example, pupils reinforced their knowledge about magnets through dance that represented the magnetic poles and the way magnets attract and repel. This certainly helped make the key scientific points very memorable for the pupils. Music permeates almost every activity. In a variation on musical chairs, for example, Year 2 pupils clutching numbers circulated to find a partner with the number they needed to add to reach 20.

It is activities such as these that help to make pupils' learning fun and is a key reason why pupils so greatly enjoy school. Parents certainly appreciate this. As one explained, 'The philosophy for children, music and arts focus of the curriculum add so much value to the excellent teaching environment'. Another wrote to report that their previously shy son 'is a confident and happy child who loves school due to the many educational activities on offer'. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because pupils have such a rich variety of opportunities to achieve in a range of activities that go beyond the 'core subjects' of English, mathematics and science. The standard of work in expressive arts is high. Every child learns a stringed instrument, funded by the school, and pupils' work in art and design is frequently impressive. The opportunity to produce large works of art, and the celebration of pupils' work, including the framing of pictures and their display around the school, contribute strongly to pupils' developing confidence and growing self-esteem. An interest in the environment has been harnessed to very good effect as pupils grow their own vegetables as part of their commitment to a healthy lifestyle.

Work in the expressive arts contribute strongly to progress and development in English, mathematics and science. Standards attained in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests are in line with national averages. This represents good achievement in relation to starting points, both for those who are at the school from the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the many who join the school part-way through their primary education. It is the good teaching throughout the school that enables pupils of all abilities and from diverse backgrounds to make good progress, preparing them well for when they move on to other schools and for future life. Teachers are especially effective in managing classes and motivating their pupils, so generally all are engaged and the behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Lessons move forward at a brisk pace, but work is not always matched as closely as it could be to pupils' often very different capabilities. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to pupils' progress, mostly working in close partnership with class teachers, but sometimes they are underutilised during lesson introductions and when the teacher is talking to the whole class.

Pastoral care is of a high standard. Working in close partnership with parents and outside agencies, the schools caters especially well for vulnerable pupils, those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the many pupils who are just beginning to learn English, including a number who join the school as refugees. Pupils feel very safe because they are confident that adults will sort out any difficulties they might have. The quality of care, guidance and support is good rather than outstanding, however, because pupils are not all given a clear enough understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers' marking gives just such guidance in some classes, driving improvement in literacy too by routinely correcting spelling and punctuation errors. In some classes, however, marking mostly just offers

encouragement. Sometimes teachers' marking poses questions to the pupils but these remain unanswered.

Parents are under no doubt that Gallions is a well run school. Although school leaders have too positive a view of the school's effectiveness, they are not at all complacent. They are aware that standards slipped after the last inspection and they have introduced changes that have this year accelerated the pace of improvement. Newly formed teams lead different aspects of the school, better sharing responsibility and expertise. The school has been highly innovative in giving pupils responsibilities in teams that mirror this leadership structure, allocating pupils an increasing voice in the school community. The pupils enthusiastically embrace the many opportunities they have to learn about their own and each other's cultures, and to learn about different ways of life and beliefs around Britain and abroad. Pupils are especially proud of the progress they are making in learning French. Governors and school leaders take a particular pride too in the key role that Gallions plays in promoting cohesion within the local community. They point to improvements in the immediate environment and local facilities that have flowed directly from the school's very active involvement. These, and a curriculum that has won national plaudits and continues to impress, show the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

From a low starting point, children make good progress in this well-run provision to attain standards that, taken overall, are in line with those expected for their ages. The excellent arrangements for children's welfare and the wide range of activities, both indoors and out, ensure that children greatly enjoy their experience in a calm but nonetheless stimulating environment. As a result, they make excellent progress in their social development. In several other areas of learning too, standards are above average, but standards in early writing skills are relatively low because few opportunities are afforded in the Reception Year for children to practise their early writing skills. Children play independently and collaboratively, making up imaginative scenarios, for instance in the home corner. Staff organise activities that are based on thorough and regular assessments of each child's progress. Where learning is planned based on a child's individual interests, they make especially rapid progress. This was seen when staff capitalised on a child's fascination with dinosaurs by setting them off to find 'dinosaur bones' in sand. The children develop listening skills very well, particularly through philosophy lessons, which encourage them to talk about and develop questions for problem-solving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that, in all lessons, teachers match work carefully to pupils' different capabilities and make the most effective use of support staff.
- Give all pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

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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	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	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?	2

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	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	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**

01 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gallions Primary School, London, E6 6WG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Gallions is a good school. It is well run and the teachers and other staff help you to make good progress from the start of the Nursery to the end of Year 6.

What stands out most in your school is the way staff use art, music, dance and drama to enliven every subject. This means you really enjoy lessons and it has led to some impressive artwork and accomplishments in music. Well done! You take a justified pride in your work and in the things that you achieve, and several of your parents told us how all the arts activities help you to grow in confidence. We were impressed by how well you all get on together and by the excellent behaviour throughout the school. This, and the very good way in which staff look after you, all help to make Gallions such a happy place to be.

One improvement that we have asked the school to make is to ensure that the work you have in lessons is always matched to your different abilities. You will make even faster progress if you are not sometimes doing activities that are too easy for you or, for some, too hard. Teaching assistants give you great help in lessons, but sometimes they could be asked to help you more when the teacher is talking to the whole class. We have also asked the school to make sure that the marking of your work and any targets that you have always show you what you need to do to make your work even better. This is something with which you can help too by always reading and doing your very best to follow the comments that teachers write in your books.

Thank you again for making our day with you so enjoyable, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector