

# Larkswood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134178
<b>Local Authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	328847
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Olson Davis

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	649
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Malcolm Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Wright, Mr Paul Ellis-Howe (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 December 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	New Road London E4 8ET
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8529 4979
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8506 3649

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This very large school serves a diverse community. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and whose home language is not English are much higher than in most schools. However, the percentage of pupils at the early stage of learning English is small. The largest minority ethnic groups are of Turkish and other White backgrounds, Asian backgrounds, Black Caribbean and Black African backgrounds, and mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Their range of needs includes specific learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties and autism. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) for pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has achieved a number of national awards including the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award. There is a privately run after school club that takes place during term time. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by the deputy headteacher while the headteacher was on medical leave.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Larkwood Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is improving because the headteacher provides clear direction to the work of the school, ensuring a strong focus on improving achievement and providing good standards of care for pupils. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who ensures that the school runs smoothly during the headteacher's absence. The school works closely with the local authority, who provide valuable support and guidance. This link is helping to improve achievement, teaching and aspects of leadership and management. Parents are generally satisfied with the school's work. As one parent wrote, 'Both of my children have enjoyed their time at Larkwood and I am happy with their progress. All the staff from the headteacher to the caretaker are all very helpful and do really care for the children.'

Pupils respond well to the caring attitude of adults, which helps them to behave well and to feel safe. The staff work hard to include all pupils in school life. Pupils of all abilities and from different backgrounds feel welcome at the school and work well together. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy their school and participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities, including 'Activate' before morning lessons. This contributes well to pupils' good understanding of how to keep healthy.

Pupils attain standards which are broadly average by the end of Year 6. This is satisfactory achievement overall for boys and girls. However, more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should in Key Stage 1 because they are not set sufficiently challenging work. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' progress to find those who need additional help and those capable of reaching the higher levels. In some instances they do not make the best use of this information when planning learning activities, particularly for more able pupils. The quality of marking varies and pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets. As a result, pupils do not always have a clear idea of what they need to do next to improve their work. The school provides a curriculum which is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to plan and carry out investigations in science. Consequently, standards in science are lower than in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. School leaders identify areas of weakness and take appropriate action to bring about improvements, for example, the successful measures to improve English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. However, not enough has been done to ensure that initiatives are fully effective. The school rightly recognises that subject leaders do not have sufficient influence on teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Home visits mean that relationships between Nursery staff, children and families get off to a good start. This supports children's well-being and eases their transition into the school. Staff meet children's welfare needs well. Children are well cared for and happy. They make good progress in their attitudes and their willingness to become involved in learning.

Children enter the Nursery with skills which are generally below those expected for their age. The classrooms and outdoor areas are spacious and well resourced, with attractive displays to

promote and sustain children's learning across all the different areas of learning. There is a satisfactory balance between adult-directed activities and those chosen by children. Teaching is satisfactory and, as a result, children make steady progress in their learning. Nonetheless, many children do not reach the levels expected for their age in some areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers have accurately identified that not enough has been done to raise children's skills in communication, language and literacy, and in numeracy, as these are often weak when children start school.

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

- Raise standards and achievement at Key Stage 1 by providing an appropriate level of challenge for more able pupils.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out investigations in science.
- Make better use of assessment, marking and target-setting to inform the next steps in learning and increase pupils' awareness of how they can improve their work.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have more influence over the quality of teaching and learning 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**

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in reading and mathematics. Writing has improved because of the special focus it has been given by teachers. This represents satisfactory progress overall in the light of pupils' relatively low starting points in Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 6 had been declining since the last inspection. Prompt action by the headteacher brought an improvement in English and mathematics in 2008. Standards are broadly average, but pupils do not as well in science because they do not have enough opportunities to plan and carry out investigations. Children make uneven progress across the school because teaching is inconsistent. Older pupils make better progress because teaching is more consistent in older classes. The shortcomings in the use of assessment information result in more able pupils not being challenged sufficiently and so not doing as well as they should, particularly by the end of Year 2. Pupils from different ethnic groups all make similarly satisfactory progress. Pupils who have behavioural difficulties or who find learning difficult make similar progress to their classmates because they are given effective support by teaching assistants.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Adults successfully promote respect and tolerance among pupils. As a result, the school is a harmonious community in which pupils know that bullying and racism are wrong and know what to do if they do occur. Pupils work well independently and in small groups, demonstrating curiosity and a keenness to learn. As one pupil said, 'Coming to school is so much fun.' Attendance is satisfactory. The school council makes a good contribution in bringing forward ideas to improve the school. Pupils show a growing sense of social responsibility by successfully raising money for charities. Older pupils take their responsibilities seriously, be it as librarians or as Reception helpers, keeping an eye

on the younger children during lunchtime. Pupils' sound basic skills and good personal and social skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Relationships are good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. As a result, classrooms are calm and supportive environments in which pupils can develop. Teachers make the purpose of the lesson clear and they explain tasks well so that pupils know what they have to do. However, in some lessons assessment is not used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. This means that teachers sometimes expect too little of pupils, who find the work lacks challenge. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but comments in books are not often linked to the purpose of the lesson or to pupils' targets. As a result, individual pupils are not always aware of the next steps in their learning. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide good support for individuals and small groups who find learning difficult.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. As a result, achievement is improving in these areas. Focus events, such as 'Art Week' and 'International Day', promote interesting and relevant links between subjects as well as contributing to pupils' cultural and social development. Pupils say that they enjoyed the science day when the whole school investigated 'Flight'. However, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' investigative skills in science. Pupils' learning and personal development benefit from a well-structured personal, social and health education programme. Through it, they learn how to stay safe and to lead healthy lives. A wide range of after school and lunchtime clubs, including dance and modern languages, develops skills, promotes fitness and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall and the school provides good pastoral care for its pupils. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are securely in place and are implemented well by adults. Good links with outside agencies, such as the Speech and Language Therapy Service, benefit vulnerable pupils and those who need additional help. There is a strong commitment to include all pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties and those with autism, in all aspects of school life. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Systems for keeping track of pupils' progress and evaluating how well they are doing are developing. Teachers are making satisfactory use of this information to set targets for pupils. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets. Consequently, they do not always know exactly what they need to do next to improve their learning and make faster progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

School self-evaluation is satisfactory. Regular monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has led to improvements in teaching. This is already having a positive impact on standards at Key Stage 2, but not enough has been done to ensure that teachers are making the best use of assessment information to accelerate the progress made by pupils, particularly the more able. Some subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's work. For example, their role in monitoring teaching and working alongside colleagues is underdeveloped. This means that they are not fully aware of the strengths of teaching and those aspects that need improving within their particular subject areas across the school. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, so pupils have a good understanding of diversity in the local and national communities. Parents are generally positive about the school. However, a number would welcome more opportunities for involvement and for their suggestions and concerns to be taken into account more by the school. Governors are supportive. They recognise that their role in monitoring the school's work is not developed sufficiently for them to fully hold it to account for the progress made by pupils.

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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

**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 <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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	3

## 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**

26 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Larkwood Primary School, London, E4 8ET

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms and talking to you. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- The adults take good care of you, which makes you feel happy and safe.
- You enjoy your learning and the other activities in school.
- You behave well and want to do your best in lessons.
- You take lots of exercise and know a good deal about healthy living.
- The school council represents your views well and you all help the school to run smoothly.
- The school works well with outside people to make sure that you get the help you need.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make your school better for you by doing four main things.

- To help those of you in Key Stage 1 to make faster progress by giving some of you work that is more challenging.
- To help you do even better in science by giving you more opportunities to plan and carry out investigations.
- To make sure that teachers give you tasks that are at just the right level for you and to help you know what you need to do to improve your work.
- To let some of the teachers in charge of subjects visit classrooms more often to see their subjects being taught. This will help them to check that things are going well in their subjects and that you are making good progress.

You can help by always trying your hardest and doing your best work.

Yours faithfully

Olson Davis

Lead Inspector