

Snowsfields Primary School incorporating the Tim Jewell Unit for Children with Autism

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100811
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	335597
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Kekshan Salaria HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terry Parkin
Headteacher	Ms Katherine Wooder
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2009
School address	Kirby Grove Bermondsey London SE1 3TD
Telephone number	020 7525 9065
Fax number	020 7525 9066
Email address	kwooder@snowsfields.southwark.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed 11 teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of Governors, the School Improvement Partner, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school improvement plan, assessment records, individual education plans, and minutes of meetings and the report of the School Improvement Partner. The responses from 62 parents' questionnaires were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of pupils in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of teaching in ensuring that it challenges all learners, including higher-attaining pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in contributing to the school's improvement.

Information about the school

Snowsfields Primary is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly a half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly linked to difficulties in communication, behavioural, emotional, or social needs, is well above the national average. In addition, 18 pupils attend the unit for children with autistic spectrum disorders and often these pupils have extremely complex needs.

At the last inspection in February 2009 the school was issued with a Notice to Improve because significant improvements were required in relation to standards, achievement, teaching and learning and the curriculum. The school received a monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspector in October 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. Snowfields Primary is providing a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils and is making rapid and sustainable improvement. This, in the main, is due to the good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher who have high aspirations for the school. Despite recent staff changes, an increased momentum for school improvement has successfully been created through the establishment of a strong leadership team. The leadership team has used their considerable expertise to drive developments in key areas, create a culture of continuous improvement and to encourage staff to take a lead in trying new ways of doing things to improve the school. Systems work well because of good teamwork and communication. Good targeted support from the local authority has contributed to building good capacity for continuing improvement. School leaders know the school well. Together they have accurately evaluated the school's work. As one parent noted: 'My child is very happy and enjoys going to school. Any problems which have arisen have been dealt with very quickly and satisfactorily.'

By the end of Year 6 pupils leave the school with standards well below the national averages in all subjects. However, there is a clear trend of improvement. This can be clearly seen in the increased proportion of good teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, which has resulted from closer liaison between teachers and a greater awareness of the pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils' progress is accelerating. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and sometimes good, in relation to their very low starting points. Vulnerable pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make the same progress as their classmates because of the effective additional support they receive. Pupils in the Tim Jewell Centre make satisfactory progress. However, the pace of change, particularly in teaching and learning, staffing and accommodation, has not been as effectively led or managed in the centre.

Within an overall picture of satisfactory teaching and learning, there is a growing proportion of good practice. In the best lessons teachers link subjects together to make them more meaningful for pupils. They engage pupils fully in active learning and tailor the work carefully to meet pupils' particular needs. They are able to do this because they keep track of how well pupils have understood each stage of learning. This good practice is becoming more widespread but is not yet consistent in all classes and all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are developing an understanding of how their targets in reading, writing and mathematics can help them to improve their work. Teachers mark pupils' work well and comments are often linked to the purpose of the lesson and to

pupils' targets. As a result, pupils are becoming more aware of the next steps in their learning.

In the less effective lessons there is too much direction from the teacher and too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently and take responsibility for what they do. In particular, teachers spend too much time talking, allowing insufficient time for pupils to develop their speaking skills or explore issues for themselves and consolidate their understanding. Some good strategies for engaging pupils in their learning, such as paired talk, are used, although these lessons still rely on a 'question and answer' approach that focuses on individuals and restricts the participation of the majority. The school provides high levels of additional adult support and has provided intensive training. However, the quality of adult intervention in lessons and around the school is variable.

The curriculum has been satisfactorily adapted and modified so that it better matches pupils' needs and interests. The school has moved away from a subject-based approach to planning the curriculum around themes that appeal to the pupils. There are good examples where creative planning makes meaningful links between different subjects. Good partnerships with parents, the local community and other primary and secondary schools provide benefits for pupils' learning and contribute to the satisfactory promotion of community cohesion.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities conscientiously and challenge the school to do its best for its pupils. They fully recognise that the school needs to do more to raise pupils' achievement from satisfactory to good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning so that more of it is good by creating greater opportunities for pupils to contribute to their learning
 - ensuring more effective questioning techniques are used in lessons to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills
 - ensure all support staff impact positively on the welfare, learning and progress of all pupils.
- Increase the pace of change in the Tim Jewell Centre to ensure better outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The school is on course to meet the targets set in English and mathematics for the first time in five years. Progress is accelerating. This begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage where good learning is now starting to be transferred into Key Stage 1. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make at least satisfactory and often good progress. For example, a good range of writing was seen in lessons in Years 5 and 6, demonstrating good progress in these year groups since September, particularly in structuring writing to suit different

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

audiences and purposes.

Teachers are gradually eradicating the legacy of underachievement that was caused by weak teaching in the past. The introduction of more frequent and rigorous checks on pupils' progress by both teachers and senior leaders is ensuring that early signs of underachievement are dealt with promptly. Inspectors observed some excellent practice in a Year 5 mathematics lesson in which pupils were encouraged to use geographical knowledge and to apply it to problem-solving tasks.

Pupils are polite, thoughtful and generous towards one another. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. The older pupils reflect thoughtfully about complex issues such as racism and prejudice. The school is a happy and friendly community where pupils from different ethnic groups form positive relationships with each other. They work well collaboratively, sharing ideas willingly and listening to each other's views considerately.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They show a willingness to take on responsibility by raising money for several charities and by being elected to the school council. Pupils benefit from an extensive programme of personal, social and health education. Events such as 'Enterprise week' help to expand pupils' horizons and their awareness of financial management. These add greatly to their strong enjoyment of school. Attendance is now average. The school has worked successfully to reduce the levels of persistent absences by introducing a rigorous monitoring and reward system and by encouraging pupils and their families to see the importance of good attendance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The focus on raising achievement by monitoring and evaluating classroom practice has had a positive impact. Many good lessons were seen, and these have translated into improving standards throughout the school. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of assessment information in their planning to enable pupils to achieve as well as they can. The warm relationships between teachers and pupils and between the pupils themselves create an environment conducive to learning. Where teachers have high expectations, pupils work productively both individually and in groups. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, the pace was brisk, work was challenging and pupils were fully engaged. In other lessons learning is less successful because introductions are too long, so pupils are not fully engaged and do not get down to their work as quickly as they should.

The curriculum is balanced and flexible in responding to pupils' needs. Pupils learn well because they are presented with a range of different experiences. For example, the focus on enhancing speaking and listening in a Year 2 lesson ensured learning objectives were made explicit and pupils had opportunities to reflect, discuss and share ideas and outcomes. This was an ambitious and challenging session which ensured pupils were motivated, focused and engaged through the session. The use of information and communication technology helps to make learning stimulating. A range of visitors and visits enriches pupils' understanding of the wider world and helps bring learning to life for the pupils. There is a range of outings and after-school activities, which pupils appreciate and which contribute to their enjoyment of school. However, the pupils in the Tim Jewell Centre have limited access to school clubs, but more importantly to everyday inclusive experiences such as assemblies, playtimes and lunch in the main hall.

Care, guidance and support are good and enhanced by the well-established links with a range of external agencies and with parents. Staff know individual pupils well. A range of different intervention strategies are used to support pupils' different needs, including their social and emotional development. The work of the assistant headteacher and the learning mentor is particularly effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2
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How effective are leadership and management?

The school leadership has ensured greater stability in staffing, and high-quality training for staff to increase their skills. While a strong focus on improving standards in English and mathematics remains, there is a concentration on the generic aspects of high-quality teaching and learning which has an impact on all areas of the curriculum. The systems senior staff use to regularly track pupils' progress are good. They give a clear picture of attainment and progress in relation to national standards and are a useful tool for identifying those pupils who need additional support. Middle leaders play a key role in leading aspects of improvement. They are actively involved in monitoring, reviewing and planning for improvement. The quality of governance is equally good. Governors are well informed and effectively challenge and support the school in its quest for further improvement.

The school promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily. It is strongly committed to inclusion and removing barriers to success. However, senior staff in the Tim Jewell Centre have missed opportunities to build on the inclusive practice elsewhere in the school. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. There is a strong cohesive community within the school. However, the promotion of cohesion within the wider community is at an early stage of development.

Partnerships with parents are very strong and the large majority are very pleased with the school. Understandably, they have the same high aspirations for the school as it has for itself. The school's procedures for safeguarding are secure. Checks on new staff are carried out correctly and recorded well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to school and achieve well. While their skills on entry are well below the expectations for their age, well-planned activities carefully matched to their needs and a lively and stimulating environment enable them to make gains in independence, social skills and confidence. Parents agree that their children settle happily into school because of the strong nurturing environment. Good parental relationships are maintained because parents are welcomed into school.

Adults work well together as teams in classrooms. The environment is stimulating and activities are carefully planned. Adults provide good routines, have high expectations of behaviour and achievement and relationships are good. Opportunities for extending learning, such as developing children's speaking and vocabulary skills, are planned well, particularly for those children who are learning English as an additional language. Staff consistently encourage children's literacy skills by modelling language so that they learn how to speak in correct English. Topics are planned in detail, and the individual needs of children are considered very carefully.

Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children are well prepared for the transition to the next phase of their learning. This, together with good teaching, is the reason why children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents/carers who responded to the questionnaires are very positive about the work of the school. A very few parents raised concerns about the quality of pupils' learning and their progress; the findings of the inspection team did not match their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Snowsfields Primary to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	65	21	34	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	56	24	39	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	56	26	42	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	50	28	45	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	52	28	45	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	55	26	42	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	42	33	53	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	35	35	56	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	37	30	48	9	15	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	39	32	52	5	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	31	39	63	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	34	39	63	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	53	27	44	2	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Snowsfields Primary, London SE1 3TD

It was lovely to meet you when we came to visit your school. Thank you very much to all of you who spoke to us in lessons, around school, in the playgrounds and in the special meeting we had. It really helped us to find out all about the school. We know you enjoy being at Snowsfields.

These are the things we liked about your school:

You are very well behaved in lessons, which means that the school is a safe and happy place.

We think you are doing much better in your learning. You particularly enjoy the range of clubs and other activities on offer.

You take care to make sure that you help and support each other and know that if you have a problem there is always an adult to talk to. You make healthy choices about food and exercise, and make visitors to your school feel very welcome.

The headteacher, governors and other staff work really well together to make your school successful. They are working hard to make it an even better place to learn.

We have asked your school to work on a few things to improve the school even more: making sure that teachers increase the opportunities for you to contribute to your learning in lessons

making sure that all support staff work with you to have a positive effect on the welfare, learning and progress of all pupils

making sure that all of the good changes and developments in your school include the pupils in the Tim Jewell Centre.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector

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