

Blue Gate Fields Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100915
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	335621
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amjad Rahi
Headteacher	Jan Atkins
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 22 lessons and parts of lessons, saw 13 teachers and held meetings with governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and the progress they are making, the school's development plans, monitoring records and the 98 responses to the questionnaires received from parents and carers.

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

- how effectively more-able pupils are challenged to reach their potential
- how successfully the school has secured consistency in the quality of provision.

Information about the school

Blue Gate Fields Infants' is a larger-than-average-sized school. Almost all the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the very large majority of pupils are from Bangladeshi backgrounds. Almost all the pupils are speaking English as an additional language and few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties or hearing impairment. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards, including the Healthy Schools Award. The school operates a breakfast club.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Blue Gate Fields Infants' is a good school. It is a happy and harmonious place, where staff know pupils well and ensure that all pupils including those most in need of help are well cared for. Behaviour observed in lessons and around the school is extremely good because staff make their expectations consistently clear. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good work are regularly acknowledged, for example through reward points and in celebration assemblies. This helps their self-esteem and self-confidence to grow. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves healthy, as the school's success in achieving the Healthy Schools Award reflects. Pupils thoroughly appreciate using the wide variety of climbing and sporting equipment that is available in the playground at break-time. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy doing keep fit exercises for five minutes at the start of each school day. Together with opportunities for all pupils in Years 1 and 2 to participate in basketball and multi-skills clubs at lunchtime each term, the exercises foster their very positive attitudes to keeping fit. Although the school works hard to harness the support of the parents and carers, attendance remains broadly average. Some pupils also miss valuable learning at the start of the school day because they arrive late to school.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attainment in teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 is above average. The school has good whole-school systems to check the progress each pupil is making. This assessment information is analysed and reviewed regularly, so that additional support can be put in place for any pupils needing extra help. Rates of learning and progress are good and the school's tracking data show some pupils make outstanding progress because teaching is good. Marking and target setting are generally used well to help pupils to improve their work. However, in a few classes, some pupils are occasionally given tasks that are not sufficiently challenging.

Through perceptive self-evaluation, the school's leaders have good understanding of its strengths and have ensured that appropriate developments have resulted in improved outcomes. For example, the school's tracking suggests that action to enhance writing is successfully raising attainment. Strong multi-agency partnership supports pupils needing additional help and their families. These strengths reflect the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teachers consistently set suitably challenging tasks for all pupils in all classes.

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- Improve attendance by raising parents' and carers' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. For example, at the start of a mathematics lesson, pupils were observed learning and progressing well because the teacher challenged them to recall halves and doubles of numbers in less time than they had taken to do the same task the day before. In a literacy lesson, pupils were practising their letter writing skills by identifying all the deliberate mistakes in a model letter that the teacher had written. They particularly enjoyed challenging the teacher's assertion that her letter was of good quality by pointing out all the errors they could find and suggesting how it could be improved. Well-led and managed support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they learn well and make similar progress to other pupils. The school rightly prioritises developing listening and speaking skills, which ensures pupils at an early stage of learning English make strong gains in their English.

Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will help them should any problems occur. They are keen to take on responsibility, for example for distributing milk and fruit snacks to classrooms. The school council is proud of the red play-bus in the playground that the whole school has helped to finance. Activities during Black History month and opportunities for pupils to learn African drumming support pupils' good cultural development. Fundraising for charity develops pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' good personal development, and good achievement and enjoyment, prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils who need extra help are well supported by skilled additional adults so that they make good progress. Pupils make swift gains in their learning when work in lessons is well matched to their needs. In a few lessons, teachers' explanations are too lengthy or pupils are expected to do fairly similar tasks despite the range of abilities in the class. As a result, in these classes, the pace of learning is not as consistently brisk, particularly for more-able pupils. Teachers generally make good use of computers to explain new learning clearly.

Pupils are motivated to do well and have positive attitudes to learning because the curriculum ensures they have interesting work to do. Although not consistently in place, themes that link subjects together are developing and helping to capture pupils' interest. For example, pupils in a literacy lesson were learning to use time phrases by writing the instructions for making chapattis. Themed weeks, such as science week, bring the curriculum to life. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs at lunchtime and after school, including art and crafts, computing and a boys' book club. Good links with a variety of outside agencies promote pupils' well-being and learning well. The popular breakfast club welcomes pupils, parents and carers, and ensures a healthy start to the school day. Very recently introduced initiatives to improve attendance have not been in place long enough to show their impact.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is a strong leader and works successfully with the staff to put the pupils at the heart of all the school's work, demonstrating good ambition and drive to improve the school. There remain a few inconsistencies in the quality of provision because the monitoring of teaching does not always ensure that the necessary

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improvements are secured swiftly. The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well, so that pupils achieve and progress well in their learning. Parents and carers appreciate workshops organised by the school to help them support their children's learning at home. The safeguarding of pupils' health, safety and welfare is good because leaders and governors are watchful and procedures are rigorous. The supportive governing body took an active part in the recent building work to enhance the school buildings and ensure the security of the school site. The governors are challenging the school to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality and encouraging the school to work with parents and carers to improve this. The promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils' awareness of themselves as part of the school and their local community is strong. In assembly during the inspection, a Year 1 class explained to the whole school what they had been learning about life in Bangladesh. Links with a local primary school are helping pupils to develop an awareness of those who live in communities other than their own in the United Kingdom. The school has plans to develop pupils' awareness of other global communities.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-established routines help children to settle quickly when they start at the school. For example, they learn that they need to put their coat on before they go outside and that when adults clap their hands repeatedly it is time to come to the carpet. Children work and play well together because their personal, social and emotional skills are fostered well. For instance, some children in the Reception year consider what it feels

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like to be a tiny caterpillar. There is a good balance between adult-led tasks and those that the children choose for themselves. Good use is made of the outside areas. During the inspection, children were observed using chalks to practise writing on the ground outside and watering the plants. Encouragement to take responsibility, such as for tidying up the painting table, promotes children's independence.

Literacy and numeracy skills are rightly prioritised. Children enjoy using computers to practise calculations and more-able children were observed making a book together by writing about themselves. Detailed records of continuous observations are kept. These records are used to tailor adult-led tasks to children's specific needs, for example in literacy. As the school is aware, opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and explore differences are more limited.

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

In the survey, almost all the parents and carers confirmed that they are happy with their children's experience at the school and agreed that their children enjoy their time at school. Most are confident that the school keeps their children safe. Almost all are happy with the progress their children are making and feel that the teaching is good. The inspection findings uphold the positive views of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blue Gate Fields Infants' School 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 346 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	61	35	36	1	1	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	46	47	48	49	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	47	48	49	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	42	54	55	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	56	40	41	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	37	59	60	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	38	55	56	1	1	2	2
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)	34	35	53	54	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	33	59	60	1	1	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	34	57	58	5	5	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	31	58	59	6	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	35	36	58	59	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	50	47	48	2	2	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.



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blue Gate Fields Infants' School, London, E1 0EH

Thank you for your very friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to all that you had to say. Blue Gate Fields Infants' School is a good school. I am writing to tell you about the judgements that we reached.

- You enjoy coming to school and many of your parents and carers told us they like the school too.
- You behave extremely well, are keen to learn and get along with one another and the adults.
- You are making good progress in your learning.
- Those of you who need extra help are well supported so that you make good progress.
- By the time you leave the school at the end of Year 2, you are well prepared for the next stage in your learning.
- You appreciate the interesting work your teachers plan for you.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and know how to keep yourselves fit as well
- You are well looked after by the adults

We left your school confident that it will continue to get even better. We have asked the teachers to make sure that all of you are set work that is just the right level of difficulty for you. We have also asked the school to work with your parents and carers to ensure that each of you comes to school every day and that you arrive on time for the start of the day so that you don't miss valuable learning.

Finally, we would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine G□rard

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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