

Olga Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100916
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	335622
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gavin Stewart
Headteacher	Mary Smalley
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. In total, 13 lessons were observed. Inspectors observed the school's work and pupils at play. They looked at documentation including, pupils' books, the school's data on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and records of the school's monitoring of teaching and learning. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and protection of pupils, policies and procedures for promoting equality and countering discrimination and 81 parental questionnaire responses were evaluated. Informal discussions with staff, pupils and parents also contributed to the evidence gained.

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

- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures
- strategies for improving pupils' performance in basic skills
- the impact of the creative curriculum on pupils' independent learning skills
- how well leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and help it to improve.

Information about the school

Olga Primary School is an average-sized school. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, and a larger than average number receive free school meals. A large number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority have specific learning or emotional and behavioural needs but there are also a number with severe disabilities. The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school at times other than at the start of the school year is large. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is a Children's Centre, serving the needs of the local community and managed jointly by the local authority and the school, and an independent after-school club on the same site.

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

Olga Primary is a good school. Attainment is rising and pupils make good progress. Children enter the school with below-average basic skills, and performance in national tests in recent years shows that pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. The school met or exceeded its targets in 2008 and in 2009 and attainment in these core subjects was broadly average. Pupils acquire a very good vocabulary when speaking and listening throughout the school in frequent discussions with their 'talking partners'. Action plans are in place to improve higher-level language skills, including spelling and sentence structure, which are still relatively weak. Issues raised in the last inspection have been tackled effectively. Investment in laptops has led to a sharp rise in pupils' skill levels and confidence in information and communication technology (ICT).

The priority at Olga has been to remove barriers to learning by implementing a successful three-fold strategy. First, coaching and supporting teachers and support staff so that teaching is at least consistently good. Second, planning a creative practical curriculum which motivates and enables pupils to apply their learning effectively. Third, working closely with the Children's Centre to support families and their children's learning. Good leadership and management are underpinned by the outstanding leadership and vision of the headteacher. She is supported enthusiastically by her staff and by an excellent, well-informed governing body. Thus the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

All pupils feel valued, very safe and enjoy school. Pupils develop firm friendships with their classmates from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Teachers and support staff work very effectively as a team to provide excellent support for pupils with additional learning and/or disability needs. Support for the most vulnerable is exemplary, enabling pupils to come to terms with the significant difficulties their disabilities, learning needs and life experiences cause. However, there are differences between teachers in how well they use the good tracking and assessment systems to meet individual learning needs.

Pupils make excellent gains in their personal growth because of the outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils receive exceptional care, guidance and support. They are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. The school's learning mentor works with a host of external agencies to support families and their children in the local and international communities. Overall, the school's partnership with parents is superb. Through persistent work with families, attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment so that all teachers:
 - use assessment data in planning lessons to meet the variety of pupils' needs and provide them with more challenging targets
 - consistently apply the school's systems so that they use high-quality feedback and guidance to help pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Improve higher order language skills including spelling and sentence construction, and share best practice across teaching groups

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, pupils of all capabilities acquire new knowledge and skills at a good rate, and this was especially so in the lessons where teaching was outstanding. Achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because the school recruits specialist support as, for example, Sylheti speakers. All groups of pupils now make good progress in Key Stage 2 and in their ICT skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because their needs are met well by a range of adults and agencies. The focus in writing in 2008'09 was successful in raising standards and is amply demonstrated by writing samples on display in and outside each classroom. After a careful review, teachers are now placing an emphasis on raising expectations further by focusing on higher-order language skills. Parents have contributed to the trend of rising achievement. For example, in a mathematics session at school, children taught their parents how to extend their mathematical understanding using 'coloured bead strings'. Pupils make excellent gains in their personal development. They behave well. A striking aspect is the glorious harmony between pupils and adults from a multitude of ethnic groups and from pupils with considerable and complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Music and sport play a large part in their lives. Year 4 learn the violin and the sports festival day included golf, judo and tug-of-war. Pupils like having no uniform and also that all adults and pupils are known by their first name. The respect adults and pupils have for one another is exemplary. This gives pupils the confidence to talk freely with adults in the school and to work for others. Pupils have a mature understanding of their place in the world. For example, they took part in a sponsored walk to help provide solar panels for a school in South Africa. Pupils are very keen to take on responsibilities and speak proudly of their contribution as good citizens. They contributed recently to a very successful street party involving the school and local neighbourhood.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and support staff form impressive teams and all sing from the same song sheet. They are especially skilled at promoting pupils' speaking and listening. In an outstanding lesson, the pupils were shown two paragraphs allegedly written by their teacher. They were invited to analyse them and find errors. This they did with enthusiasm and then corrected them. With the teacher's further encouragement they improved them with skill and obvious enjoyment, producing work of real quality. Most pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because the work is very well matched to their needs. The use of assessment data to ensure tasks are matched to individual needs is developing but it is not yet used skilfully enough in all lessons. Opportunities to focus on the next appropriate stage of learning for an individual pupil are sometimes missed.

The stimulating, creative curriculum motivates and excites all pupils and engages them very well. It is continually evolving to match pupils' aptitudes and interests. It provides extremely well for the creative arts and sport, and reflects the cultural backgrounds of pupils. The success of vulnerable pupils is in no small part the result of carefully matched individual learning programmes. Many pupils take advantage of the exceptional range of clubs, and all enjoy numerous visits and visitors that make learning meaningful. These include a residential experience for older children. The afternoon topic-based curriculum gives time for the basic skills learned in the morning to be used and applied in different contexts. ICT is integrated into the work. For example, older pupils are developing impressive electronic story books and including digital photographs, illustrations and a range of technological techniques such as hyperlinks.

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The learning mentor plays a crucial role alongside teachers and support staff in providing outstanding care, guidance and support. She works continuously alongside parents to improve their children's attendance and emotional health. Pupils happily turn to her or another adult when they have a problem. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and given very good additional support where appropriate, enabling them to make considerable progress. Very good assistance is in place for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Over the past two years, the quiet but firm leadership style of the headteacher has been very effective in building on the strengths of her staff, so that all share in the running of the school. A good senior leadership team is developing well and is continuing to raise achievement levels. The scrupulous tracking and analysis of pupils' progress is used very effectively to identify and bridge gaps in pupils' learning, as well as, for setting aspirational targets for individual pupils. The rigorous monitoring of classroom practice has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

Governors and all leaders promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity both in and out of school. As a result, a very cohesive and supportive community has been established in the school and strong links have been formed with the wider and international community. Close attention is paid to ensuring that very rigorous safeguarding procedures are in place and that statutory duties are reviewed regularly and meet requirements. Well-organised documentation, risk assessments and detailed records ensure that the children are cared for appropriately. Policies and procedures and their impact are updated regularly to ensure that they reflect the best practice and are followed consistently by staff. Professional support and in-service training days are effective occasions and regularly used to raise awareness of child protection and teaching and curriculum issues.

The chair of governors and the governing body are passionate about the school. For example, a governor is a keen member of the popular parents' group that meets with the learning mentor every Wednesday and Friday mornings. In this meeting a Bengali parent related with great glee how she and her children had enjoyed a 'barn dance' organised by one of the local organisations. All possible sources of additional funding are investigated and used imaginatively to help break down the barriers to learning. For

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example, there have been particular priorities given to assigning additional support adults in the classroom and to buying laptops so that ICT can be built into teachers' lesson plans more effectively.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and her team are building a good knowledge of the children in their care. They work effectively as a team, tracking individuals, identifying learning needs and ensuring that their interventions support good progress.

Children entering the Nursery settle quickly and enjoy the range of activities indoors and outdoors. All staff ensure that children are successfully accustomed to the world of school. As a result they have already forged close and trusting relationships with the staff, and most arrive happily with their parents each morning. Many are already showing confidence in daily routines. Friendships are developing well and children are starting to play imaginatively in pairs and sometimes in larger groups.

The quality of provision is excellent. Children make good progress in their learning and development because the staff in the Nursery and in Reception class work closely with parents to provide high levels of care. There is a good partnership with other agencies, which enables the setting to meet the needs of the individual child. Children are safe and secure and have a stimulating spread of play experiences and activities. Staff continually strive to improve the provision through careful reflection on their practice. An impressive balance of activities, including bug hunting in the 'wood' and 'hard hat' road building, gives children options to choose for themselves alongside others that are adult

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led. There are thorough approaches to assessment, with all adults contributing information to children's individual learning profiles. Several children with specific learning difficulties and with more complex needs make very good progress from their starting points.

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	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

In their responses, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers were very positive about the school and its impact on their children's well-being. Their views reflect the inspection findings. They praised the quality of care and support for pupils who have specific learning or emotional needs and the assistance provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language. In conversation with the lead inspector, they commented often on how well their children had settled down and were 'so much better behaved at home now as well!'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Olga Primary 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 215 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	62	28	35	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	53	36	44	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	38	46	57	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	30	49	61	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	30	44	44	54	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	41	44	54	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	33	51	63	1	1	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)	24	30	47	58	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	35	48	59	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	36	45	56	5	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	36	42	52	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	32	48	59	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	57	31	38	1	1	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



15 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Olga Primary School, Bow, London E3 5DN

Thank you very much to all of you who spoke to us in lessons, around the school and in the special meetings we had. We know that your school takes your views seriously and so do we. We agree that yours is a good and improving school. Some of what we found was really excellent. You are a very friendly multi-ethnic community. We were also very impressed with the 'talking partners' routines which are developing your speaking and listening skills so well. These are some of the other things that we found:

- The governors, headteacher and all staff work very closely with you to give you every possible help in your learning.
- All the adults in school work hard to care for you and ensure you are safe.
- You enjoy learning and make good progress. We liked the displays around the school such as the photographs of you teaching your parents how to use the bead strings.
- A very high proportion of you take part in so many different activities during lunchtime and after school. You gave us a great many examples of your contributions to music, sport and drama and in the community.
- You help one another, as, for example, when Year 3 pupils were preparing instructions on how to make puppets for Year 2.

Your headteacher and her staff are determined to make Olga an outstanding school. We discussed with them the most important things they need to do and we have said that they should:

- ensure that all of you are very clear as to how you can improve your work
- improve your language skills even further.

They will need your help to do these things, which we are very sure you will give them. Thank you again and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector

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