

Alderbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100995
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	335637
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Haddon
Headteacher	Kate Baum
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Oldridge Road Balham London SW12 8PP
Telephone number	020 8673 4913
Fax number	020 8675 8866
Email address	info@alderbrook.wandsworth.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Inspection number	335637

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, safeguarding records, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and the minutes of governors' meetings. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and more than 50 parents were analysed.

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

- The impact of strategies to improve English throughout the school, particularly for boys.
- The effectiveness of support for pupils who speak English as an additional language in helping them to make good progress.
- Whether pupils' behaviour in class promotes good learning.
- The impact of staff turnover on the consistency of teaching and assessment.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders and systems for monitoring and evaluation in driving school improvement.

Information about the school

Alderbrook Primary is an average sized inner-city school serving an ethnically diverse area of South London. More than three-quarters of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and more than half speak English as an additional language. Just over a quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The headteacher took up her post at the beginning of the autumn term, and the deputy and assistant headteachers are both temporary. Half of the class teachers were new to the school in September 2009. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. There is also privately run childcare provision on the school site. The school is an Investor in People organisation and has gained a number of awards, including the National Healthy Schools award and the Primary Quality Mark for basic skills.

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

Alderbrook Primary is a good school where pupils enjoy learning and, educationally get off to a good start. The new headteacher and her senior leadership team have quickly got to grips with what the school does well and what needs improving by establishing good, systematic processes for monitoring and evaluation. They have already started on the main priorities in the new school development plan. One member of staff commented, 'The change in the school under the new leadership is exciting and positive.' At present, subject leadership is carried out mainly by senior staff, but they have recognised the need to spread responsibilities more fully. Proposals for a new structure to enable teachers to develop these roles as subject leaders have already been devised for staff consultation.

Most pupils enter the school with well below average, or low, starting points, but thanks to the good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes, they make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although they move into Key Stage 1 with levels of skills that are mostly still below average, pupils make good progress through the rest of the school. Their progress is more rapid in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1 as many are new to learning English when they arrive and take more time to grasp the basic skills. Nonetheless, by the time pupils leave, all groups reach broadly average standards. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive good, targeted support so that they make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils' performance in mathematics and science is better than in English. The school has identified that many pupils find writing difficult and lack confidence and skills to achieve well in it. A new approach to writing is planned as a result.

Pupils are happy at school, and enjoy what is on offer. Attendance and behaviour have both improved since the last inspection, not only because of the hard work of the school to achieve this, but also because the quality of the teaching and the curriculum means that they want to be at school and make the most of the opportunities available.

Teaching is consistently good across the school, and staff share an energetic and lively approach which engages and involves pupils well ensuring they work hard. However, staff turnover has meant that teachers do not all yet share the same expectations, so that some pupils, particularly the more able, are not always sufficiently challenged, and the feedback they receive does not always help them improve. The school has just introduced a new marking policy and is holding teachers to account for their pupils' performance through termly pupil progress meetings.

Parents, too, are happy with the school. Several commented on the improvement they had noticed within the school and on the progress their children had made. One said, 'I

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

think the school is getting better and better year after year.' Another remarked, 'The school has exceeded our expectations.' The school is in a good position to move forward rapidly. It has the support of all its stakeholders, has identified its strengths and weaknesses accurately, and has made good improvement on the key issues from its last inspection. Systems for self-review are secure and teaching is good. Consequently, the school has good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve progress in writing by:
 - increasing pupils' opportunities to write at length across the curriculum
 - improving pupils' grasp of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure
 - helping pupils develop their ideas for writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school by:
 - ensuring marking helps pupils improve their work
 - increasing the level of challenge for all pupils, especially the more able
 - raising expectations of the quality and quantity of work produced by pupils.
- Reorganise the structure of leadership and management to ensure that subject leadership responsibilities are spread beyond the senior leadership team.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' attainment in recent years has been broadly average, with improvement at both key stages in 2009. At Key Stage 1, pupils' assessments were below average but showed good improvement from the previous year, particularly in writing and mathematics. The limited skills in English of many pupils affected their performance in reading comprehension tests. At Key Stage 2, test results improved to broadly average from the previous year. Pupils perform consistently better in mathematics and science, where results are generally above average. School information shows that, with the challenging targets set, the current Years 5 and 6 are on track to reach above average standards across the board.

Pupils progress is good. In the lessons observed, they were interested, motivated and keen to learn. Pupils displayed good work habits and were able to carry out their tasks with a minimum of supervision. The school has identified that many pupils, of all backgrounds, but especially boys, do not feel confident in their understanding of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. They also lack the experience and vocabulary to write confidently.

Pupils feel safe in school. Although some pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that not all pupils behaved well or treated others well, they felt sure that problems would be handled well by adults. One said, 'We're always going to have our differences, but they're sorted out really well by our teachers.' Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. There is no longer any evidence of pupils' behaviour interfering with

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

their learning. In one lesson observed, pupils were exuberant and excited, but this was because of their eagerness to take part.

Pupils understand what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. They know what constitutes a balanced diet, and welcome the opportunities the school gives them to be active such as by using the swimming pool. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Year 6 pupils in particular have a well-developed sense of responsibility towards the younger pupils. They say that having a different colour uniform from the rest of the school makes them realise that they have a duty to help make the school run smoothly. Attendance is now average and pupils arrive at school punctually. Pupils develop satisfactory workplace skills. They have good teamworking and social skills, and their standards in literacy and numeracy prepare them appropriately for secondary school. Pupils respect and value other people and their differences, but do not have many opportunities to reflect on their experiences. Assemblies are not well used in this respect.

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	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	2
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
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?

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

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

Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and manage their classes well, so no time is wasted establishing order. Lessons move at a good pace, and pupils get good opportunities for speaking and listening, so that they can develop their ideas and understanding. Teachers select resources carefully to interest pupils and teaching assistants work well with their groups. Good use is made of assessment to target this support. As so many of the teaching staff are new this year, expectations are not yet uniformly high, and sometimes teachers are satisfied with written work which is brief or poorly presented. In some classes, pupils are given good guidance on the next steps in their learning, but in others marking is limited to praise or corrections. Teachers take care to use good visual aids and resources to support writing for those pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils appreciate this. One commented, 'The thing I like is that in each class, they put up displays for people that do not know much English or need help with spelling or more ideas.'

The school has worked hard on improving its curriculum in recent years, taking it from inadequate five years ago to good, with outstanding opportunities for enrichment, now. There are good links across the curriculum and a focus on learning subject skills through topic work. Older pupils can remember different projects they have worked on in the past and speak warmly of special events which have been a highlight. The school's recent international evening and partnership links with a school in China, motivate pupils to find out more about different cultures, developing a curiosity about the wider world including the opportunity to learn Chinese. When asked what was the best thing they learned at school, though, one pupil said, 'We learn to believe in ourselves.' The school has identified that the English curriculum does not offer pupils enough opportunities to practise their writing skills, and is reorganising the teaching of writing from January 2010.

The school takes good care of its pupils. They are well looked after on a daily basis, and a robust attitude to safeguarding ensures that they are kept safe. Those pupils who have additional needs are quickly identified and supported. Pupils are aware of this. One commented, 'If you're a person who needs extra help, your teacher will set you up with someone who can help you.' Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised and managed. The school makes outstanding use of outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils, resulting in great improvements in progress for many of these children. Educational guidance for all pupils to ensure they make the best possible progress is rightly the next area for development.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully communicated a desire for rapid improvement. Secure systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have been established, designed to carry on the proposed staff restructuring and operate effectively irrespective of future changes. In one term, senior staff have thoroughly reviewed teaching, learning and planning, and refined assessment and tracking processes producing more useful in-depth analysis. As a result, their self-evaluation is clear-sighted and accurate. Subject leaders are developing their role, though the key posts of literacy and numeracy have been in the hands of senior staff until very recently. There is a strong belief that pupils can reach high standards, and a common sense of purpose that this can be achieved. The school works well to promote equality and tackle discrimination. It keeps a close eye on the performance of different groups of pupils, and provides extra support where needed. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements fully. Procedures for child protection are thorough and staff training up to date.

The governors fulfil their role well. They have gained experience and expertise since the last inspection, having a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have well structured arrangements and high expectations of senior staff including plenty of challenge. The school engages well with parents and carers, and has good outside partnerships which benefit its pupils. It has made particular efforts this term to involve parents more fully with their children's learning and to help them support this at home. The school works closely with the local authority to boost improvement. This has been especially useful in the Early Years Foundation Stage where both teachers, including the stage leader, were new to the school in September. Community cohesion is well promoted. The school has excellent international links with its partner school in China, and works well within the local community. Exciting new links on a science project with a school in Hertfordshire have begun.

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

<p>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</p>	
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

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed by skilled practitioners, who are bringing about positive changes and ensuring good progress across all the areas of learning. There is a good focus on helping children to learn English, in a word-rich environment with good opportunities for learning phonics in short, well-structured sessions, and for developing writing skills. Parents are welcomed into the Nursery and Reception classes and are encouraged to be involved in their children's development. They are kept well informed of their progress. All welfare requirements are met, and children's personal, social and emotional development is carefully fostered through well organised routines and clear expectations. There is a good blend of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff work very effectively as a team, and interact skilfully with children.

The outdoor area provides well for children's physical development. However, the space is dominated by large, fixed apparatus, and this limits the space available for promoting other areas of learning outside. The school is aware of this, and has started work on plans to redevelop the area.

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

Fifty-three parents responded to the questionnaire. A very large majority of those expressed satisfaction with the school and what it offers their children. However, a small minority felt that their child's needs are not well met and that the school is not well led and managed. Others felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and does not take account of parents' concerns. Inspectors did not uphold these views. The school is well run and staff are always happy to talk to parents. Pupils' behaviour is well managed and their needs are well met.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alderbrook 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	66	17	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	53	20	38	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	43	26	50	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	43	26	50	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	51	22	41	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	45	20	38	5	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	53	21	40	2	4	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)	18	34	20	38	3	6	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	30	28	53	7	13	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	32	22	42	2	4	4	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	25	22	42	6	11	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	34	21	40	6	11	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	57	16	30	3	6	4	8

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.



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alderbrook Primary School, Balham SW12 8PP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

We found that your school is giving you a good education, and that there are many good things going on in your school. These are the things we liked best:

- Your school is well run and senior staff understand how to make it even better.
- You make good progress in your learning as you move through the school.
- You are well taught and enjoy an interesting curriculum with some outstanding activities going on.
- You behave well and respect one another's different backgrounds.
- Year 6 pupils in particular make a very good contribution to the school community.
- Staff care for you well and make sure you get extra help if you need it.
- You know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.

To help the school improve even more, we have asked the staff to:

- make sure that you all do as well as you can in your writing
- give you lots of challenge in your work and good feedback on how to improve
- reorganise their responsibilities to spread them more evenly.

You can help by taking a pride in your written work and always presenting it neatly. Try to write as much as you can and be confident about yourselves as writers. You know you can do it!

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.