

Slade Green Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101431
Local Authority	London Borough of Bexley
Inspection number	335715
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	John W. Paull

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Barker
Headteacher	Ms Catrin Cox
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2006
School address	Slade Green Road Slade Green Erith DA8 2HX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work, spending about three-quarters of the time looking at pupils' learning. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and some small teaching groups. Ten different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, teachers, governors, some parents and groups of pupils including school councillors. The school's documentation was scrutinised carefully and included documents related to safeguarding, pupils' attainment and progress as well as policies and planning. In addition, 69 parental questionnaires and 25 staff questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the accuracy of the school's own evaluations of what it provides, especially in relation to teaching, learning and progress and the resulting impact on the capacity to sustain improvement
- how far leaders and managers have raised the quality of teaching and the use of assessment for learning to raise pupils' attainment, especially in writing
- how well partnerships with parents and agencies work to the benefit of vulnerable and other pupils.

Information about the school

Slade Green Infant School has grown in size since its last inspection and now has a larger roll than most other infant schools. It caters for three- to five-year-olds in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its own Nursery and Reception classes. Most pupils who attend the school are from White British backgrounds, although a significant and increasing proportion come from Black African or other heritages. An above average proportion speak English as an additional language, most of these have Yoruba or Igbo as their first language. The school is situated in an area of social disadvantage. A very high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including a much higher than average proportion with a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils with a statement have places at a specialist base for communication, speech and language, additional disabilities and hearing impairment, which the school accommodates.

The school holds Healthy Schools and other educational awards.

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

This good school has improved considerably since its last inspection and has a strong capacity to sustain this improvement. For example, it has forged important links with the local authority, other educational and welfare services and its parents. These partnerships have had a strong impact on improving pupils' learning and rates of progress, including in the Nursery and Reception classes. A parent's comment sums this up, 'I don't have any real issues ' my child loves the school. She hates to be ill and away from it and she is learning such a lot'. Good achievement and enjoyment are evident in lessons, where pupils are nearly always attentive, happy and absorbed closely in what is taught.

Attainment throughout the main school is broadly average, although higher in mathematics and reading than in writing, which remains below average. Data indicates that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are all on an upward trend. Pupils' work in lessons indicates that this pattern of improvement is continuing. Pupils read with great enthusiasm, thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to show adults what they can do. Whenever individuals struggle or fall behind, extra help cuts in, ensuring that every child is a reader. Pupils similarly enjoy the many practical opportunities that are provided to acquire skills in counting, adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing and sharing, and learning about shapes. Pupils' writing, however, is less well developed because it lacks flexibility and richness in the use of vocabulary, which reflects pupils' patterns of speech. Pupils' art and craft are developed well and other subjects are taught effectively, although pupils' writing is not consistently prominent across the curriculum. Pupils with statements of special educational needs in the specialist base attain lower standards than other pupils, but they learn effectively and make good progress towards their own individualised targets.

Good leadership and management, including good strategies for self-evaluation linked to observation of lessons, feedback of findings to staff and professional development have embedded ambition for improvement. Planning, relationships with pupils and strategies to use formal assessments to adapt teaching are good. However, marking is inconsistent. It is invariably up to date and full of encouragement to pupils, but does not always convey information about what they could do to improve. Advice and support from other services and agencies, such as a local children's centre, are used very effectively to remove anything that might stand in the way of progress. Such partnerships support learning well, ensuring that pupils are fully included in activities in and out of classrooms.

Teamwork amongst all types of staff is very good and pupils emulate this, so their behaviour, sociability, co-operation and helpfulness around the building are good. All

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those asked felt that they had a member of staff with whom they felt particularly comfortable and to whom they could take any problem. Procedures for security and safeguarding are good and meet statutory requirements, as do those for the vetting of staff. Attendance, literacy and numeracy are satisfactory and this means that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future. The manner in which pupils of all ages carry out helpful jobs, routines in their class and around the building contributes much to the smooth running, pleasant atmosphere. Pupils also sign greetings and songs in assembly, so those who experience speech or hearing difficulty feel included and take part effectively. The signing choir also goes out to several localities in the community to share this singing and signing with a much wider audience.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing, by:
 - first, helping pupils to develop a richer spoken vocabulary;
 - improving pupils' handwriting skills;
 - using writing more frequently across the curriculum.
 - Ensuring that marking consistently provides pupils with information about how to improve their work next time.

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

It was good to see the way that pupils followed the advice and instruction of teachers in lessons, so they made good progress. This was equally true in the main school and in the specialist base. Understandably, the levels of attainment reached by pupils in the base are significantly lower than for other pupils. Nevertheless, the methods and resources employed to support their learning are of good, sometimes outstanding quality, so they progress well. The attainment of the majority of pupils is broadly average, although several struggle more with written work than with reading or mathematics. This is largely because many more than usual start with low levels of communication and language skills. The whole staff, led well by subject and senior leaders, have put much effort into the improvement of literacy skills since the last inspection, identifying the need correctly. This has resulted in year on year improvements, as seen in national assessments. However, during some lessons, less focus is apparent on the spoken word. Pupils often respond with brief, sometimes single word, replies to questions. This lack of extended sentences and restricted vocabulary holds back their writing, reflected in a variety of contexts across the curriculum, as well as in specific literacy or writing lessons. For some pupils, handwriting too appears a little laborious and therefore does not encourage a free flow of ideas on to paper. That said, the vast majority of pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school. They respond very well to all the adults who work with them and want to share the results of whatever they do, secure in the knowledge that they will be helped and encouraged accordingly.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils say that they feel safe

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and it was noticeable that the large majority walked sensibly inside the building. Nearly all of them behave well in class and strategies for managing pupils with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties are effective, so any loss of learning time is minimised. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy foods and the number who eat the school's well prepared hot lunches is rising. They also take part enthusiastically in physical education, including good attendances at after school clubs. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good, contributing to a very strong climate for learning and well-being.

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?

In lessons, teachers' careful planning, shows how teaching is adapted to meet widely ranging needs and circumstances of pupils. This is especially the case in reading and mathematics, where tasks are often very clearly pitched at different levels and, during lesson introductions, the difficulty of questions is tailored to meet individuals' different prior attainment. In all subjects, it is evident that expertise acquired from others, such as specialists in English as an additional language, behavioural experts, and the

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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knowledge of how to approach pupils with special educational needs and disabilities on its own staff, is used to benefit pupils' learning. As a result, progress is good. Lessons usually flow at an appropriate pace, speeding up when it is clear that pupils understand and then slowing when they need more time to absorb what they have learnt. Formal assessment of how pupils are getting on is thorough and targets are set in ways that help pupils to understand them. However, marking does not consistently tell pupils what they should do next in order to reach these targets.

The curriculum contains all that it should and much enrichment besides. For example, outings take place and visitors are invited to help to bring learning to life, such as when a 'Victorian nurse' came to school to explain how things were done in her age. Opportunities are included to learn about different religions and cultures, sometimes celebrating the backgrounds of the several pupils with an African heritage who attend. A good range of well attended after school clubs enrich learning and progress further. Several, such as gymnastics, football and cricket are sports based and reflect the Healthy School award, while a gardening club has a strong impact on eco-awareness and feeds into recognition as an eco-school. Care and guidance of pupils are based on a strong ethos of support and inclusivity. Much of this stems from excellent work in the specialist provision base. As a result, expertise is on hand to help staff to identify pupils' needs early, wherever they are in the school. The special needs coordinator is also adept at accessing services and forging links to the benefit of pupils' learning, helping to reduce the impact of problems and barriers that arise and setting individualised targets. Parents commented positively on this and they are correct. Policies and procedures related to safeguarding and security are clear and meet statutory requirements effectively. This also helps in making pupils feel safe.

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are good at identifying what needs to be done to bring about improvement. For example, many procedures have been introduced to improve attendance since the last inspection. Members of staff confirm that they feel valued as a team and that this has raised their confidence, so everyone is more enabled to take on initiatives, try new approaches and then to share what works with others. As a result, teaching and pupils' learning and progress are improving well.

Governors are very supportive of the school's direction and willing to fight its cause

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whenever they feel it is necessary, although their challenge within the school is less developed. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. An audit and plan with clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding of local, national and global perspectives. Pupils find these activities interesting and the choir has thoroughly enjoyed opportunities to perform locally in shopping and community centres and to a senior citizen's group.

Management of safeguarding procedures includes, for example, staff vetting, up to date first-aid training and safer recruitment policies is of good quality and governors are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities. The whole staff is effective in tackling any social or other barriers that might affect learning for pupils, demonstrated by their action to ensure the involvement of pupils with significant learning difficulties in all activities and whenever possible in lessons in the main school. The school's positive features and ongoing improvement show that the school provides good value for money.

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	3
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

The profiles of pupils entering the Nursery show that most arrive with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding lower than those usually expected nationally. This is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy skills and mathematics. Good induction procedures, including home visits to children's families, ensure that children settle quickly. A strong emphasis is placed on personal, social and emotional development in all Nursery and Reception classes which, linked to careful assessments of children's needs, ensures that learning and development proceed effectively. Progress is good, although many children do not reach the age-related expectations by the start

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of Year 1. That said, for their age, they are very mindful of safety. For example, just a word about the possibility of tripping resulted in a Nursery aged child returning immediately and pushing all the chairs under her table. In Reception classes, children know 'what is good for you' and 'things that are not' and they choose pieces of fruit as a snack when they wish. Overall, outcomes are good.

Good teaching and a carefully planned curriculum provide well resourced activities balanced between those led by staff and those chosen by children. Sometimes the quality rises to outstanding. A session for Reception aged children in the main hall, for example, provided children with remarkable opportunities to acquire new vocabulary, exercise their hand and eye coordination with ribbon sticks, and to dance and move like a Chinese dragon at the start of the year of the tiger. Well equipped outside areas engage children's interest and enjoyment. However, shelter is limited and this sometimes prevents their full use during inclement weather, especially in the Reception classes. The adults are developing procedures by which they take responsibility for groups of children, recording how each child responds to activities. This information is used well to plan the next stages in learning. The staff are skilled practitioners who manage children's learning and developmental needs well. Systems to monitor and track progress are very thorough. Teachers, nursery nurses and assistants alike know how to target the needs of individuals across all areas of learning. Welfare arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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

Parents' questionnaires indicate that their partnership with the school is strong. All report that overall they are happy with what the school provides. Very high levels of satisfaction were recorded with only very few critical comments, from which no pattern of dissatisfaction emerges. Those parents to whom inspectors spoke directly were also very pleased with what the school provides and raised no concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Slade Green Infant 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 271 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	75	15	22	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	62	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	39	41	59	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	49	24	35	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	64	24	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	54	28	41	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	49	33	48	0	0	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	35	40	58	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	42	36	52	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	36	38	55	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	28	44	64	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	42	37	54	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	54	31	45	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



11 February 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Slade Green Infant School, Slade Green, Erith, DA8 2HX

Thank you for your helpfulness during the two days when my colleagues and I inspected your school. You were very polite and well behaved. We enjoyed speaking to you outside in the playground, in the classrooms and seeing your work. It is great that so many of you told us that you enjoy school a lot. We enjoyed speaking to your school councillors. They told us that they think your school is good. We agree with this comment. It is indeed a good school.

Here are some important things that we found out about your school:

- Your learning and progress are good, including those of you who attend the base, and those in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You are considerate of each other.
- All the staff care for you a lot and the teachers teach you well, although we have asked them, when they mark your books, to give you more written notes about what to do next.
- You know how to stay safe, eat healthily and know that exercise is important.
- You are very willing to do little jobs that help your teachers.
- Your achievement is good, although your writing is not as good as some of your work in the other subjects. We have asked the staff and governors to keep concentrating efforts on this subject, helping you to learn lots of new words, to improve your handwriting and to write more in all the subjects.
- Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and other staff have good ideas about how to make your school even better. You can help by telling them your ideas through the school council and at other times.

All three of us wish you every success in the future and hope you will always enjoy school as much as you told us you do now.

Yours sincerely,

John W. Paull

Lead Inspector

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