

Liberty Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102656
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	335943
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Eugene Symonds

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	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandra Peddy
Headteacher	Mrs Irene Smith
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, policy documents, data on pupils' achievement and records of meetings. They considered responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils, and 44 parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's new teaching and learning policy to achieve consistency in the use of assessment to inform teachers' planning
- the school's use of data to identify and tackle underachievement
- the use of challenging targets to raise standards in English and mathematics
- the effect of attendance on achievement.

Information about the school

Liberty Primary School is a larger than the average primary school where a higher than average percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost two thirds of pupils come from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs are above average. The school runs breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs which offer support and 'wrap-around care' for pupils. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. The headteacher took up her post in April 2009.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their attainment, particularly in English, and in pupils' attendance at school.

The recently appointed headteacher has worked hard with the staff to ensure that the school's self-evaluation is based upon secure evidence. As a result, staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is still required. The school has correctly identified that pupils do not achieve as well as they should and that attainment is low, particularly in English in Key Stage 2. Teaching, although satisfactory, is not good enough to enable pupils to make sufficient progress and raise attainment. Poor attendance has been identified as a contributory factor in the underachievement of a significant minority of pupils. Swift action has been taken by the headteacher to secure improvement. Working with the local authority, staff have received training to help improve the quality of their teaching and implement a new policy for teaching and learning. As a result, teaching is beginning to improve, but too much remains weak. The school, in partnership with the education welfare officer, is working with families to reduce absence. As a result, pupils' attendance is beginning to improve. Nonetheless, too many pupils do not come to school regularly. These early and positive outcomes of action taken demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils say they enjoy school. They like the activities that are organised for them and Year 6 pupils said that they are very much looking forward to their trip to France next year. A Year 2 pupil told an inspector that 'learning is fun' and a group of Year 6 pupils agreed with the comment made by a classmate that 'teachers want to help you here'. Pupils who attend the before- and after-school provision enjoy the range of activities and the good levels of care. Pupils feel safe at school and most pupils, although not all, behave well in lessons. Most pupils show consideration for each other and adults and respond positively to opportunities given to develop cultural awareness. The school council meets regularly and members are proud of their role. They are beginning to take on more responsibility around the school and contribute to decisions made to try to improve the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve achievement throughout the school, particularly in English in Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of all pupils to achieve their best, especially in their written work
 - focusing on spelling, and the correct use of punctuation and grammar.
- Ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory and 75% is good or better by the end of the summer term 2010 by:
 - ensuring that the needs of all pupils are consistently met effectively in lessons
 - planning activities that will challenge all pupils to achieve their best.
- Improve pupils' attendance by working with families and external agencies so that absence is reduced by 50% by the end of the summer term 2010.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils enjoy their work and are usually well behaved. When lessons are planned well and teaching is effective, they have good attitudes and make good progress. However, teachers do not consistently plan lessons to meet pupils' individual needs. Too many lessons lack challenge and pupils' learning slows. Although pupils' progress is generally satisfactory, it is not good enough to raise their attainment. Consequently, achievement overall is inadequate. Of particular concern is pupils' low attainment in English in Key Stage 2. One of the reasons for this is that there is an inconsistent approach throughout school in how staff model the acquisition of good language skills. As a result, pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling are not as good as they should be. Pupils' low attainment is reflected in national assessment results at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, and from the wide range of backgrounds represented in the school, have all performed similarly and there is no evidence of an improving trend.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They say instances of bullying or racist behaviour are rare. Pupils are confident that staff will take immediate steps to address any issues which do arise. The school gives good advice on how to keep safe, including protection from cyber bullying and road safety. School lunches are healthy and pupils are encouraged to eat fruit and drink water. Most pupils have a good understanding of how lifestyle choices can promote better health. Pupils enjoy physical activity and take part enthusiastically in the range of sport activities, as well as 'walking Wednesday'. However, a significant minority of older pupils choose not to heed this guidance, preferring instead to make unhealthy eating choices and not take part in health-related activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is promoted effectively through the curriculum and assemblies. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 responded extremely well in an assembly about Advent where an excellent atmosphere for reflection was created through the use of carefully-chosen materials. The diverse background of pupils supports an appropriate understanding of life in a multicultural society. The school has recognised that attendance for too many children is poor; this compromises their learning and development of future life skills

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that contribute to economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is of variable quality and too little is good enough to enable pupils to make good progress and raise attainment. In the most effective lessons, teachers use appropriate strategies to assess pupils' progress and to challenge them in their learning. In a Year 5 lesson, where pupils developed design and technology skills and were making sundials, the teacher had clear expectations of her class. She provided them with opportunities to discuss and reason the outcome of their work. As a result, pupils made good progress. However, such qualities in teaching are uneven across the school. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language is appropriately planned. Teaching assistants are suitably deployed to provide good support to individuals and groups of pupils. End-of-year targets for pupils are set and this is helping teachers consider carefully where intervention to aid learning is required. However, pupils are not aware of their personal targets and only a minority are clear about the levels at which they are

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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working and what more they need to do to improve. Where they are clear about their targets, it is making a difference. For example, in a Year 3 English lesson, the pupils knew what was required of them to achieve Level 3 as they considered the use of complex sentences in their written work. Pupils enjoy such challenging tasks; they also enjoy their topic work and opportunities to develop their skills in art, music and French. The use of information and communication technology, however, requires further development in order to aid teaching and learning effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a strong lead for the school's development. She is supported by new leaders who contribute effectively to the senior leadership team. Their work, supported by the governing body, is fundamental to the school's drive and ambition to raise standards. Changes have been made and most staff are supportive of the action taken. Procedures to track pupils' progress have been implemented and staff are held accountable through progress meetings. These determine whether or not pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets that have been set for them. Teachers' understanding of assessment information and what needs to be done to enable pupils to improve is developing. However, the analysis and use of data is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can and the impact of action taken is not yet evident throughout the school.

Safeguarding arrangements and procedures are satisfactory and most parents appreciate the school's efforts to ensure their children's well-being. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and promotion of diversity is exemplified in its work with families and others to ensure that intervention and support is planned appropriately to meet pupils' needs. Through the curriculum and family learning opportunities, the school endeavours to support the community that it serves and raise pupils' awareness through international links. Evaluation of the school's provision to promote community cohesion is, however, at an early stage.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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	
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery with skills that are well below typical age-related expectations, particularly in communication and language. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. The range of resources and stimulating environment, both inside and outside, support children as they become independent learners. However, opportunities to learn outdoors are not as extensive as those indoors. Staff work and plan together, supporting children as they choose tasks and activities. Regular assessments are made but these tend to be over-generous. Consequently, it is difficult for teachers to plan the next steps of a child's learning accurately. In the absence of an Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the headteacher provides direction and improvement for the setting. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but some less effective teaching was observed, where children made limited gains in their learning. Opportunities to develop the relatively poor language skills of children are sometimes missed, especially with children whose first language is not English. Staff have high levels of commitment to the children in their care. Children who attend the before- and after-school provision are looked after well and respond to the high expectations asked of them. In the nativity production for parents, the children's behaviour was very good and they performed with confidence and enjoyment to the many parents in attendance.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers are happy with the school and say that their child enjoys school. They feel that children are kept safe and are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. A significant minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the way the school deals with behaviour issues, the way it communicates with parents and carers about pupils' progress and the extent to which their suggestions and concerns are dealt with. Inspectors found evidence that the school tries hard to deal with issues raised by parents in a fair and consistent way and that communication is appropriate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Liberty 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 468 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	41	25	57	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	30	37	61	2	5	2	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	7	22	50	15	34	4	9
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	9	28	64	9	20	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	20	26	59	8	18	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	18	25	57	7	16	3	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	14	36	82	1	2	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)	3	7	27	61	8	18	3	7
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	7	32	73	5	11	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	5	28	64	10	23	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	5	21	48	11	25	6	14
The school is led and managed effectively	4	9	23	52	6	14	8	18
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	18	25	57	6	14	2	5

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 pupils' 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.



10 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Liberty Primary School, Mitcham, CR4 3EB.

Thank you for being so helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and watching you prepare for the end of term festivities while still getting on with your learning. We found that although most of you enjoy being at school, it is not yet as good as it should be and needs to improve.

You told us that you feel safe in school and that you know who to go to if you are worried about anything. You enjoy the opportunities you have in school, such as being able to go on a residential visit when you are in Year 6. I know that you enjoyed your multicultural day and such events help you to learn about the way your friends, and people in different parts of the world, live.

Many of you feel that lessons are fun. However, they are not all as good as they could be and we have asked your headteacher and all the staff to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best. This is so that you all achieve as well as you can, because at the moment many of you could do much better in your English lessons and some of you find your work too easy. We have asked the teachers to help you improve, and in particular, to help those of you in Key Stage 2 to improve your reading and writing.

We have given your school a notice to improve. This means that the school will be inspected again in about a year. In the meantime, one of the ways that you could all help is by making sure that you attend school regularly. We particularly want your parents to help you to do that and we have asked the headteacher to work hard with you all to help you get to school every day and on time.

The inspectors and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Eugene Symonds

Lead Inspector

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