

Star Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102746
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	335962
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Milton

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	583
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Thomas
Headteacher	Catherine Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	0 November 2006
School address	Star Lane Canning Town London E16 4NH
Telephone number	020 7476 5336
Fax number	020 7473 6522
Email address	info@star.newham.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and held meetings with the chair of the governing body, headteacher, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and analysed pupils' work, school policies and improvement plans, as well as 118 parental/carer and 84 pupil questionnaires.

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

- the progress of White British pupils across the school
- pupils' understanding of how to improve their work
- the impact of the creative arts partnership on improving pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy.

Information about the school

This large primary school has pupils from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups of pupils are from White British, Black African and Bangladeshi backgrounds. A well-above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. About half of the pupils have English as an additional language and a large proportion are at early stages of learning English. A large number of pupils are refugees and asylum seekers. An above-average number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although some of their special needs are complex. The governing body provides childcare before and after school. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and three Reception classes in a new early years building. In recognition of its work, the school has received several awards: Artsmark Gold, Healthy School, Activemark, Inclusion Mark and International School (intermediate level).

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

1

Main findings

Star Primary is a good school with outstanding features. When children join the Nursery classes, their knowledge, understanding and skills are well below the levels typically expected for their ages. However, they make good progress as they move through the school, including the White British pupils. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment matches national averages for English, mathematics and science, and their personal development is outstanding. Pupils' attainment has risen over the last two years. The current Year 6 pupils are making very good progress. Pupils' excellent behaviour makes an important contribution to their success as learners. They feel safe at school and know how to stay safe in different circumstances. At school, pupils live very healthy lifestyles, reflecting the school's national awards for Healthy School status and the Activemark. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding; for example, Year 6 pupils wrote about how they could use Martin Luther King's dream to inspire themselves.

Pupils make good progress and have outstanding personal development because of good teaching, a stimulating and well-planned curriculum, and excellent care, guidance and support. Common strengths of the teaching are effective class management, good use of teaching assistants, the use of interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils, the efficient use of time, and pupils' knowledge of what they need to learn during lessons. In a majority of classes, marking and teachers' oral feedback give pupils a good understanding of how to improve their standards in English and mathematics. However, in a minority of classes, the marking of mathematics and science does not make clear to pupils how to improve their work.

The curriculum has many strengths. It is well planned to meet the needs of the different groups within the school. The curriculum provides many opportunities for learning which motivate and inspire the pupils. There is some outstanding provision for French and music and, as a result, pupils make rapid progress. A wide range of partnerships enrich the curriculum, such as the creative arts and sports partnerships with local schools. The outstanding care, guidance and support enable pupils to make the most of the opportunities provided by the school. The school works very effectively with families and a wide range of agencies to support the learning and development of vulnerable pupils.

Over the last two years, many improvements have been made because of the headteacher's exceptional leadership. She works in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and has established a strong, committed staff team. All staff share the headteacher's commitment to providing pupils with high quality care and education. The school has a very accurate view of its successes and areas for improvement. It has used these evaluations effectively to make a wide range of improvements to provision and to

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raise standards. However, subject improvement plans are not always precise enough about actions to be taken and how the impact of actions on pupils' progress will be measured at different points in time.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding because many improvements have been made to the school since the last inspection; there is a very committed, well-qualified staff team; and the headteacher's leadership results in a relentless drive to improve pupils' attainment, personal development and well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help pupils to make as much progress as possible in English, mathematics and science by using the school's good practice in assessment to make sure pupils in all classes know what they need to do to improve their standards in these subjects.
- Sharpen plans for the improvement of pupils' progress in different subjects by:
 - making sure that planned actions are linked to improved learning
 - being clear about the measurable improvements to pupils' progress that are expected as a result of these actions
 - improving plans in a phased way, starting with English, mathematics and science by the start of the spring term.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

During the inspection, pupils learned well in English and mathematics lessons and enjoyed their work because much of the teaching was engaging and the activities were interesting. Pupils learnt a great deal in a French lesson because they enjoyed the rich variety of tasks and responded to the inspiring teaching. As a result, they spoke French in complete sentences. Year 6 pupils enjoyed using their information and communication technology (ICT) skills for research in science and presenting their findings. All groups of pupils make at least good progress because teaching and the curriculum are adapted to meet their learning needs, and action is taken to address any underachievement shown by the tracking of each pupil's progress. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly rapid progress because of the very effective support in lessons and the special teaching programmes.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary around the school. They know the school's values and are considerate and cooperative. They care for each other in the dining hall and playground. Pupils give strong support to British and international charities. About a fifth have the healthy breakfasts provided at the school, and almost all have the nutritious lunches that are provided free for all pupils. Many pupils are involved in the sports clubs and teams. Pupils report that isolated incidents of bullying are quickly resolved. They share the school's commitment against racism. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school's community but their involvement in the local community is not as strong. The school council helps improve the school. Pupils are proud to take responsibilities, with, for example, prefects in both Years 2 and 6, and they are involved in debates about

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topics such as what it means to be British. Their preparation for the future is enhanced by visits to the school by large local employers.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In the lessons where pupils' learning is good, the detailed, well-structured planning makes sure that there is a brisk pace of teaching and work is well matched to pupils' different learning needs. In such lessons, teaching provides a wide range of practical learning activities using a range of resources, and these engage and motivate pupils, including those with English as an additional language. In the few less effectively taught lessons, the pace of learning slows, the work does not build on what pupils already know or pupils have insufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas. In the majority of lessons, where assessment is good, teachers use questions to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and then adapt the lesson to pupils' learning needs. The school has found that Year 6 pupils make good progress in English and mathematics when girls and boys are taught separately.

There are often good links between subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils use ICT

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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effectively in science. The annual 'discovery month' links several subjects. Occasionally, however, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in science. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities both within classes and in specially taught groups. A good range of activities enrich the learning of gifted and talented pupils. The creative arts partnership enhances a wide range of learning, including English, mathematics and global awareness.

The school takes an excellent range of actions to promote regular attendance. The breakfast and after-school clubs are used very effectively to support the care and learning of some pupils who face particular difficulties. The school has consistent, thorough systems for managing pupils' behaviour and supporting those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is effective work with a wide range of agencies to provide specialist and coordinated provision for vulnerable pupils. There is excellent specialist support for families and, in addition, a large number of staff speak a second language and are able to communicate with parents and children in their home language.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the headteacher's outstanding leadership, the hard-working staff are committed to providing all pupils with high quality care and education. Since the last inspection, this has led to many improvements to, for example, the buildings and learning environment, the use of ICT, the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and provision to increase boys' rates of progress. Challenging targets are used to help raise standards. There is a systematic annual schedule for tracking pupils' progress towards their targets. Although subject leaders are fully involved in evaluation and take a wide range of actions to improve their subjects, their subject improvement plans are insufficiently precise. The childcare is well led and managed, with strong links with a group of local schools.

The school places great emphasis on securing good outcomes for all groups of pupils, reflecting its national award of the Inclusion Mark. It tracks the progress of different groups of pupils and takes action to remedy any underachievement. It raises pupils' aspirations through its rich curriculum and the use of many visits and visitors. There are excellent policies and procedures for making sure that pupils are safe. The school works exceptionally well with other key agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being. All pupils feel

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they are part of the school's cohesive community. The school makes an excellent contribution to the cohesion of its local community and is developing its links with the wider national and global communities. The school's outstanding partnerships with several groups promote pupils' learning and well-being very effectively. For example, through the Newham Music Academy, all Year 3 pupils learn the recorder and all Year 4 pupils receive violin tuition.

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

All groups of children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Children's skills when they join Year 1 have improved recently. Skills are as expected nationally for their personal, social and emotional development and their physical development but are below expectations for other areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy. There are good relationships among children and between adults and children. The children are very happily settled in the Nursery class and already sustain their concentration well when tackling activities. Children are motivated by the broad range of interesting learning activities. Their behaviour is excellent, and they work and play well on their own and in groups.

There is some outstanding provision in the Nursery. There are welcoming and stimulating learning areas both inside and outdoors, and these provide good opportunities for children to develop in all areas of learning. However, the outdoor area is not used for the full range of learning in the Reception classes and the school has rightly identified this as an area for improvement. There is an excellent balance between

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child-initiated and adult-directed activities, especially in the Nursery. Adults monitor children's progress carefully and intervene to extend learning without undermining their independence. Occasionally, adults miss opportunities to work with groups of children. The good teaching uses a wide range of resources. There are detailed, accurate assessments of children's learning, and these are used to match the good curriculum to the learning needs of individuals and groups of children. The planning makes sure that the curriculum meets the needs of children who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are excellent procedures to support children and make sure that they are safe.

The good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has created an effective team of adults who plan and work together well. The team knows the strengths of provision and key aspects for improvement. There are very good links with parents, who come into classes at the start of each day to play with and read to their children. Some Reception pupils attend the breakfast club. As well as providing nutritious food, staff offer a varied range of appropriate activities which children enjoy. There are very good relationships between older and younger children at the club.

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

The parents and carers are very pleased with all aspects of the care and education the school provides for their children. A very large majority of parents expressed positive views about the school. A few parents wrote about particular concerns or aspects about which they were particularly pleased. However, there was no common agreement to these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Star 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	64	40	34	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	60	44	37	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	65	55	49	42	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	52	46	39	7	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	49	55	47	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	53	48	41	5	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	42	64	54	1	1	1	1
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)	39	33	61	52	6	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	35	65	55	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	42	56	47	3	3	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	30	66	56	8	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	55	47	52	44	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	50	54	46	5	4	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.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Star Primary School, Canning Town E16 4NH

We really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting many of you and the staff. Thank you for making us so welcome. You are fortunate that Star Primary is a good school that is moving towards becoming an outstanding school.

Your school is excellent at helping you develop as people. All adults take exceptionally good care of you, especially if you need some extra support. We were impressed by your politeness and self-confidence. It was good to hear from you that you feel safe at school and know how to stay safe in different circumstances. You enjoy the interesting activities and visits. The school council is helping the school to improve. We were most impressed by your understanding of the school's values. Your behaviour is excellent. The school helps you to lead healthy lifestyles.

You make good progress with your learning because your lessons give you interesting and well-planned activities so that you can meet the success criteria you are set. As a result, you reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In a majority of classes, the marking and comments from teachers help you know how to improve your work in English, mathematics and science, but some of you are not as clear about this as you could be. We have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that you are all clear about how to improve your work.

The headteacher and staff work very hard to improve the care and education you receive. Many improvements have been made in the last few years such as the use of interactive whiteboards and laptops. As a result, you are making more progress with your learning. We have asked the school to make changes to some of its improvement plans so that the improvements focus more clearly on helping you to learn more.

You can all help your school to improve by making sure you come to school regularly. Also, you can help by thinking carefully about how you can improve your work and taking action when you have read teachers' comments in your exercise books.

Yours sincerely

Michael Milton

Lead Inspector

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