

Canonbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131773
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	341218
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Horten
Headteacher	Matthew Britt
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2010
School address	Canonbury Road London N1 2UT
Telephone number	020 72265020
Fax number	020 73598198
Email address	admin@canonbury.islington.sch.uk

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 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed and sixteen teachers seen teaching. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents, including safeguarding and equalities policies. They analysed 94 questionnaires that were completed by parents and carers and took into account questionnaires returned by pupils and staff.

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

- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and how effectively this is being used to promote improvement
- the effectiveness with which the school uses assessment information to support pupils' learning and help them to understand what they need to do to improve their work
- the extent to which the curriculum is tailored to the needs of different groups of pupils in the main school and the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the extent to which the school has improved pupils' attainment in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This larger than average inner-city primary school serves a culturally, ethnically and socio-economically diverse area of London. About 40% of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and about 15% speak English as an additional language. This is higher than in most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the proportion with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. A higher than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy School award. The school has been without a substantive headteacher for the last eighteen months and has, until very recently, been managed by an executive headteacher and two acting deputy headteachers. The current headteacher had only been in the school two weeks at the time of the inspection. The governing body is almost entirely new since July 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

4

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 special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Inadequate provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that children get off to a poor start and are not making the progress they should. Identified weaknesses in the provision have not been tackled with sufficient rigour. In Years 1 to 6, there are inconsistencies in progress between subjects and amongst different groups of pupils due to variations in the quality of teaching. There is not enough consistently good teaching to accelerate pupils' progress as they move through the school. This is due to weaknesses in planning, the pace of lessons and insufficient challenge for the more-able pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language reach similar levels as their peers, and their oral skills are supported by the good standard of spoken English across the school. However, there is no systematic assessment or tracking of their English language development. As a result, some of these pupils in all year groups underachieve, especially in their grasp of vocabulary which affects the quality of their written work.

Senior leaders' evaluations of the school's performance are over-generous in almost all areas of its work. The lack of a substantive headteacher for an extended period of time has had a negative impact on the school's development and it is now in a worse position than it was at the time of the last inspection. The school has not made enough progress in raising attainment in mathematics and science. It has not improved provision for ICT sufficiently to raise pupils' attainment in this area. In addition, the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage has declined significantly since the last inspection. The recently appointed headteacher has very quickly and accurately identified key weaknesses, but has not had time to get to grips with them. The roles of middle managers are not sufficiently developed to help lift the quality of teaching and senior leaders have yet to make a measurable impact on improving the school's performance. Consequently the school has insufficient capacity to sustain rapid improvement.

The relatively new governing body has moved quickly to address some of the most pressing issues, such as appointing a substantive headteacher and ensuring secure safeguarding procedures are now in place. Governors ask challenging questions and make demands of school leaders to support improvement. The acting deputy headteachers have successfully maintained the school's positive ethos, so that pupils continue to enjoy school and behave well. Pupils feel secure at school and most know

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 to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring there is effective leadership and management of the provision
 - ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of individual children
 - ensuring that activities challenge children sufficiently and that adults' questioning develops children's thinking and extends their learning
 - using assessment information more rigorously to inform planning and to set high expectations for children's learning and development
 - making sure that staff are more vigilant in spotting minor health and safety issues.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 in order to raise attainment in mathematics, science and ICT by:
 - eliminating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so that more of it is consistently good
 - improving teachers' use of assessment information to plan work that builds on the previous learning of all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are always given suitably challenging work
 - improving the provision for teaching ICT skills across the school.
- Develop an effective leadership and management structure across the school and ensure that all staff with leadership and management responsibilities fulfil their roles effectively, especially in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Although it varies from year to year, attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with age-related expectations. Inadequate achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage results in pupils not being adequately prepared for education in Key Stage 1. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is currently not rapid enough to compensate for this very slow start so that achievement is inadequate overall. Most pupils throughout the school are articulate and even the youngest speak well for their age. Pupils are keen learners who behave well in lessons. Many are capable of reaching higher levels of attainment than they do by the time they leave. The school's data show that progress is strongest in Year 6 and in reading, which is good across the school. In lessons, pupils listen and concentrate well, even when the pace is slow and they are not actively engaged. They work hard and always try to do their best. For example, in a mathematics lesson on directions, pupils were keen to answer questions and maintained concentration well, even though they spent too long listening to the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they are being given support that is better tailored to their needs.

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

Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and consciously adopt healthy practices. They take an active role in school life and are keen to take on responsibilities such as school councillor or peer mentor. However, the school council is not fully representative of the school community and some pupils feel they are disadvantaged by the selection process. There are few opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community. Pupils' social development is good and pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. Their appreciation of the diverse cultures that make up the school is less well developed.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching in Years 1 to 6, has a number of shortcomings. However, there are a few good features. Classrooms are well organised, pupils are managed effectively and relationships are good. This helps to create a good atmosphere for learning in lessons. Interesting activities are often planned. In many lessons, planning does not take sufficient account of the pupils' different needs and not enough use is made of assessment of pupils' work to support learning. Work is often too easy, especially for

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

more-able pupils. Learning objectives are not always explained clearly enough so that pupils know exactly what they are intended to learn. Teachers miss opportunities to involve pupils actively in their learning. For example, there is little use of pair-talk during whole-class sessions to keep all pupils involved. Pupils' books are marked regularly in most classes, but teachers' comments do not always focus sharply enough on key learning that needs to improve. For example, they are at times too general or refer mainly to effort or presentation. Where teaching is better, support staff are used effectively to help pupils, especially lower attainers.

There is good provision of extra-curricular activities and some good partnerships to help extend the curriculum. However, the curriculum does not provide sufficiently well for the development of pupils' knowledge and skills in ICT. Although there are good opportunities for pupils to use literacy skills in other subjects, links between subjects in general are not systematically developed. Sessions for literacy and numeracy are too long. This both reduces the time spent on other subjects and leads to a slow pace for learning. Late starts to lessons after break further reduce the learning time.

Good links with other agencies support pupils' personal development and learning. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a caring and safe environment for pupils. Adults give good attention to pupils' care and welfare. Pupils are appropriately supervised at lunchtimes and breaks. Closer monitoring of lateness and absences is helping to raise attendance levels.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The last 18 months have been a difficult period for the school. The acting deputy headteachers have supported staff well during this time and have addressed some of the most pressing needs, such as ensuring that the Nursery is adequately staffed and attendance improved. While there has been a push to develop teaching and learning, especially the use of assessment to inform planning and promote faster progress, this has had limited success. On the positive side, senior leaders have developed better systems for tracking each pupil's progress, which highlight individuals and groups that are underachieving. The school has devised some effective additional support to boost these pupils' progress but the systems have not been in place long enough for their impact to be seen. Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring their areas of responsibility and their roles in driving up standards are underdeveloped. The

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

leadership and management structure remains uncertain because many staff are on temporary contracts.

The school does not adequately promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. Leaders do not have a clear picture of the rates of language acquisition of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language and are therefore unable to tailor support accurately to their needs. Many parents have strong links with the school but a very small minority do not feel they have a voice. The governing body is actively reaching out to consult and include a wider group of parents in the work of the school. The school has yet to fully address its duty to promote community cohesion. There are gaps in provision at all levels and there is not a planned approach to develop these or an evaluation of the impact of the school's work in this area. Appropriate systems are in place to promote pupils' safety and well-being.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
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	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Current provision is inadequate because planning is not sufficiently detailed or robust to meet the children's needs or to enable in-depth coverage of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The space in the Nursery is not well used. It is too large for the number of children and this makes it difficult for staff to monitor, support and interact with them all effectively. In both Nursery and Reception, adults do not develop children's thinking sufficiently well. Questioning is superficial and does not move children's learning forward, especially that of the more-able children. While there is some useful work on developing children's knowledge of letters and sounds, the

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

activities provided do not focus enough on developing and extending their literacy and numeracy skills. Attainment at the end of Reception has been below average over the last two years. In 2009, children did well in physical and creative development, but were below average in literacy and numeracy.

The outdoor space is not used well to promote all aspects of learning. Children use the outdoor areas mostly for physical activities, such as riding bikes or climbing, especially in the Nursery. They interact with other children well in most cases, but sometimes fall out and this is not always noticed by adults. Adults also are not always vigilant enough about assessing risks in the classrooms, such as children standing on chairs to use a laptop. Healthy snacks are provided and children enjoy these and really enjoy taking part in physical activity outside.

There is insufficient day-to-day monitoring of the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage to lift standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Children's work is recorded too infrequently and the quality of ongoing assessment is variable. Home visits are carried out, but it is not clear how effectively information from these visits is used to inform planning or to feed into the school's overall knowledge and understanding about its pupils' backgrounds.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

Parents agree that their children enjoy school and are safe at school. A small minority are not happy with the progress their child makes and do not feel that the school meets their child's needs. The inspection evidence endorses these concerns. A few parents are also not satisfied with the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection, the school was found to deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour.

A minority of parents expressed concerns about the leadership and management of the school; however, most are pleased with the appointment of the new headteacher and are looking forward to a period of stability.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Canonbury 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 421 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	62	34	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	45	42	45	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	26	65	69	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	22	53	56	14	15	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	27	55	59	7	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	29	54	57	9	10	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	29	57	61	6	6	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)	17	18	44	47	11	12	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	18	57	61	14	15	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	21	51	54	13	14	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	15	57	61	11	12	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	7	7	47	50	16	17	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	21	62	66	9	10	1	1

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.



11 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Canonbury Primary School, London N1 2UT

Thank you for the way you made us feel welcome when we visited you at your school. We enjoyed talking with some of you and visiting all of your classrooms. Here are some of the things we found during our visit.

- Most of you behave well and know how to take care of yourselves.
- You make good progress in your reading and are good speakers.
- Adults help you if you are worried or have a problem.
- You know how to stay healthy and enjoy being active.
- There are lots of good after-school activities that you enjoy.
- You listen well in class and are keen to do good work.

The following list identifies important areas of the school's work that need to be improved in order to give you a better education.

- Improve learning for children in the Nursery and the Reception classes so you all get off to a good start.
- Help you to make faster progress in mathematics, science and ICT in Years 1 to 6.
- Make sure that the people who run the school help it improve quickly.

Even though your school has some good things about it, it is not providing you with an acceptable standard of education and has been identified as needing special measures. This means the school will get extra support. The headteacher, staff and governors want it to get better. Inspectors will visit the school regularly to see how much progress it is making.

You can all help your school to improve by continuing to work hard and coming to school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe

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.