

Seven Sisters Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132253
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	341327
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Davies
Headteacher	Denise Patrick
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, governors and some parents. They observed the school's work, looked at progress records, teachers' lesson plans, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed 73 pupils' questionnaires, 26 staff questionnaires, 200 parents' questionnaires and undertook a case study of several pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable.

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

- any variation in the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils, such as those who do not speak English at home as their first language and less able boys
- learning and progress in science at Key Stage 2
- the quality of teaching and if it is securing good progress and higher attainment
- the effectiveness of leaders' plans, for example to improve teaching.

Information about the school

Seven Sisters is a larger than average school. Half of all pupils are of Black African or African Caribbean heritage. The remainder are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils that speak English as an additional language is above average. Half of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Nearly all have either learning, speech, language or communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is also above the national average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises of a full- and part-time Nursery and three Reception classes. The school has recently been awarded the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Seven Sisters Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education within a safe and caring atmosphere. This helps pupils grow into confident and mature young people. The inspection found that:

- pupils' attainment is average and their achievement is satisfactory
- the learning and progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes are good
- the learning and progress of pupils in other years are satisfactory overall and improving, for example, in reading, where progress is good
- pupils feel very safe in school and their behaviour is good
- pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average
- teaching is typically satisfactory and there is clear evidence of better teaching in reading and in some years
- the curriculum is good and provides a wide range of experiences pupils enjoy
- pupils, including those whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable, are cared for very well
- those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language receive very good support
- parents are mostly happy with the quality of education the school provides
- leadership and management are satisfactory.

Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in tackling its record of low attainment. The drive to improve attendance has been most effective. Progress in reading, which has been slow for some pupils over the past three years, is now consistently good. These successes demonstrate the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

There are three key areas in which the school is not fully effective:

- teaching is not yet consistently good or better because the pace of learning in lessons is not always quick enough to ensure pupils are working hard and make good progress
- the quality of the feedback pupils receive through marking is too variable. As a result, pupils are not always really clear about what they need to do next to improve their work to accelerate their progress
- leaders are not consistently evaluating the information the school has on pupils' attainment and progress in enough detail to judge the success of its improvement plans and to identify where further gains can be made.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspection before their next Section 5 Inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure good or better teaching in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - ensuring learning proceeds at a demanding pace so that pupils are fully challenged giving pupils better guidance through marking about how they can improve their work matching work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Improve marking for pupils in Years 1 to 6 by: helping pupils know precisely what they need to do to make their work better to accelerate their rate of progress.
- Improve school development planning by:
 - ensuring leaders at all levels use progress and attainment data rigorously to check the success of action plans and to pinpoint areas where the school can become better.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Last year, children started school with skills and knowledge at levels below those expected for their age. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach standards that are average by the time they start Year 1. Learning and progress in English, mathematics and science are satisfactory overall and sometimes good, for example last year for those pupils now in Years 2 and 4.. Attainment in most years is average, but it is low in the current Year 6 because here there are many pupils who have joined the school recently and who are still catching up with their peers. The progress of pupils who do not speak English as an additional language is satisfactory overall, but is not even across all year groups. Pupils of African heritage make good progress but for some pupils from Turkish and Kurdish families, progress is slower. The school works with increasing success in guiding parents about how they can support their child's learning. The progress made by lower-attaining boys in Year 6 is inconsistent because the tasks teachers provide do not always closely match their needs. The small number of pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable achieve as well as their peers.

Inspectors saw good learning and progress in nearly half of the lessons that they visited. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were really thinking hard about formal and informal speech and what style of language they should use in letters, stories and reports. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, well-informed individual guidance from adults ensured pupils of all abilities were working hard to improve their word recognition and understanding of the text in books they were reading.

Progress in reading is good because teachers provide books that both challenge and interest pupils. Those who struggle with reading are given effective extra help that speeds their progress up. In science, pupils in some classes made slow progress last year; because of better teaching and subject leadership, this has improved and is now satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They reflect maturely on

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their feelings and the feelings of others. A clear moral code underpins their good behaviour. Occasionally pupils fidget when they spend too long listening to the teacher talk. Pupils have a deep respect for people from different backgrounds and have a good understanding of diversity within British culture.

Pupils feel very safe because the school deals quickly and effectively with the rare cases of bullying. Pupils confidently approach members of staff with a concern, knowing their worry will be quickly and effectively resolved. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, when crossing the road and when using the internet. Most of them eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise. They have a clear understanding of the dangers of taking drugs, alcohol and smoking. Many pupils readily take responsibility in school, for example, as members of the school council. The council is beginning to help make decisions about learning and the curriculum. Pupils generously collect for charity and work hard to improve the local environment, for example, by helping with the upkeep of a public open space. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and try their best. However, average attainment means their preparation for secondary school and future employment is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

There are many signs that teaching has some good aspects. Relationships in lessons are very positive and pupils are keen to learn. The frequent opportunities teachers provide for pupils to discuss and clarify their ideas in small groups reinforce learning well and promote good understanding. In well-taught lessons, learning proceeds at a lively pace and pupils are kept busy and work hard. Where teaching is less effective, the rate of learning and progress is more measured because, for example, the teacher talks for too long, which means pupils sit listening too passively. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of acquiring English. The quality of marking is inconsistent. It does not always provide specific guidance to show pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of their challenging targets, but pupils in other years are less sure of them and are therefore not able to take responsibility for their own progress.

The curriculum supports many aspects of personal development well. For example, swimming lessons promote healthy lifestyles and the sharing of each other's festivals helps pupils develop a good understanding of religious and cultural differences within the community. There are signs that the measures to improve pupils' use of vocabulary in written work and more opportunities to practise solving mathematical problems are beginning to improve progress in these subjects. The many educational visits successfully broaden pupils' horizons and add to their enjoyment of school. Pupils talked excitedly about their recent trip to Hampton Court Palace and all the history that they had learned about it. Most pupils keenly participate in drama productions, sports and other clubs, which raises aspirations.

Adults use their detailed knowledge of each child expertly to provide a high standard of individual care. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective and ensures they settle quickly into the school's routines, gain confidence and behave very well. The school works very effectively with outside agencies to support pupils' education. For example, close liaison with the educational welfare officer has enabled the school to exceed its challenging attendance targets. The needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English are assessed accurately and their effective programmes of support ensure they rapidly develop skills in the language. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very sensitive support that ensures they take a full part in school life.

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	2

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership's drive to improve the quality of education provided is enthusiastically shared by staff. The strong team of subject leaders take full responsibility for raising standards in their areas. They have been proactive in sharpening staff's teaching skills, for example, in the use of progress data to plan activities that match closely the needs of each pupil in reading. Together with senior leaders, they regularly check the work of teachers and pupils. Governors work hard on behalf of the school. They are not afraid to challenge the school over its standards and the quality of teaching, which has helped promote improvement. However, leaders do not always use data effectively to judge the quality of school's successes and to identify areas in need of further improvement. The school's system for regularly checking each pupil's progress towards their challenging targets is effective. If any pupil's progress slows, the school quickly provides them with effective additional support, often on an individual level, so that they can catch up.

Child protection procedures are robust and of high quality. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with children and pupils are most rigorous. The school is thoroughly committed to ensuring equal opportunities. The inconsistencies in the progress of some groups of pupils mean that some policies are not yet entirely effective and that this area of the school's work is satisfactory. The school has evaluated its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context thoroughly. Community cohesion provision is satisfactory rather than good, because links with communities further afield and overseas are limited. The school supports local people well in many ways, especially through its close ties with the local community centre.

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
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Last year, children entered the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those typically expected for their age. Children make good progress to reach standards that are average by the time they start Year 1. Children really enjoy school and boys and girls progress equally well. They are polite to each other and to adults and their personal, social and emotional development is good. Children are well cared for and are very safe in the classroom and the outdoor learning area. Parents appreciate the regular and detailed feedback they receive about their child's progress. The well-structured induction procedures ensure children settle quickly into the routines of school.

Teaching is good in both the nursery and Reception classes. There is an appropriate balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by children. The best learning is in the Nursery, where highly skilled teaching and support staff ensure children are challenged very well by work that closely matches each child's needs. In the Reception classes this aspect of planning is not as well developed and children's progress is not as rapid. The outdoor learning area is used effectively, for example in promoting children's gaining of independence and in developing their physical abilities.

Leadership provides effective training to sharpen adults' Early Years Foundation Stage teaching skills. Outside agencies are used well to promote children's welfare and education. Development plans are appropriate and ambitious but do not show staff clearly enough which areas have top priority.

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 majority of parents are happy with the school. Most report that children enjoy school and are very well cared for. One carer who met with an inspector talked about being very impressed with the care and support the school provided. Inspectors agree with these views. A small number of parents indicated in their responses that they have concerns that the school is not meeting the academic needs of their children and as a result, it is not making sufficient progress in preparing them for the future. The

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inspection found that progress is satisfactory overall but that the progress of some groups of pupils was sometimes slow.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seven Sisters 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 200 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 420 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	112	56	79	40	7	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	103	52	89	45	4	2	3	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	92	46	87	44	11	6	5	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	75	38	95	48	18	9	6	3
The teaching is good at this school	81	41	96	48	15	8	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	79	40	93	47	14	7	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	36	98	49	12	6	6	3
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)	71	36	91	46	11	6	8	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	30	101	51	19	10	6	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	73	37	97	49	1	12	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	30	100	50	11	6	7	4
The school is led and managed effectively	76	38	97	49	7	4	6	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	85	43	95	48	7	4	7	4

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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seven Sisters Primary School, London N15 5QE

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think that Seven Sisters is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Teaching helps you do as well as expected in English, mathematics and science.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- Your behaviour is good.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you try hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.
- Adults look after you very well and are always ready to help you.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Make sure teachers keep you all working hard so that you make better progress.
- Tell you precisely what you need to do to improve your work and improve your progress.
- Use information about your progress to check how well the school is improving and to pinpoint where further improvements are required.

You can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, attending regularly and behaving well.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector

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