

Waterside School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133401
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	341386
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Offerman
Headteacher	Susan Vernoit
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited eight lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils and a local authority adviser. She observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' files and previous class work, evaluations and examples of work from the outreach service, policies and other information relating to safeguarding, school policies and action plans, and minutes of meetings. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and 16 parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at three areas.

- How effective is the school's assessment and tracking procedure and what does it tell the school about pupils' academic and personal outcomes?
- Is the curriculum sufficiently broad, balanced and enhanced to meet the pupils' complex needs?
- How involved are governors, senior leaders and subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision?

Information about the school

Waterside School provides for boys and girls who have behavioural, emotional and social needs. Of the 28 pupils currently on roll, 20 attend full time; the part-time pupils are dually registered, attending their local mainstream schools for three days each week and at Waterside for two days. New pupils are admitted to the school throughout the year and others move on at different times. At any one time the majority of pupils are boys. Pupils come from all over the borough and represent a range of different social and cultural backgrounds. The school does not currently provide education for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although it is considering the possibility for the future.

The school runs and manages an outreach service on behalf of the local authority. This service is funded for all primary schools within the borough and involves 17 of the school's staff. For the past year, the school has also been responsible for running a new off-site facility at a Charlton Manor Primary School to provide full-time education for any primary-aged pupil within the borough who has been excluded from school for more than five days. This facility is currently under review and has no pupils at this time.

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

3

Main findings

Waterside School is a good school where all members of the school community are as firmly focused on pupils' learning as they are on improving their behaviour. The pupils respond very well to the positive management of their behaviour and the good attention given to their general emotional well-being by staff. Since the last inspection, staff and governors have improved the provision, ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching and a sharper focus on raising standards of attainment alongside improving pupils' behaviour. In addition, the school's outreach role is now better integrated into its overall work and has grown in strength and influence within the borough. The development of the roles and responsibilities of senior staff and subject coordinators has focused the school's attention on the management of teaching, learning and the curriculum successfully, thus enabling the pupils to make good progress in their academic and social skills. Expectations and aspirations for pupils, as well as for their own day-to-day professional work, have remained very high amongst staff. As a result, many important aspects of their work, including teaching and the curriculum, are good and have a significant impact on pupils' achievements.

However, the school's recent improvement plans lack attention to detail and the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching has been too informal. As a result, strategic planning for aspects such as promoting community cohesion and reducing rates of absence and exclusion is currently no better than satisfactory. The attendance of a significant proportion of pupils is inadequate and this has not been given sufficient priority, and the limited opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school and wider communities are constraining their independence. This recent lack of rigour has adversely affected the way that senior staff and the governing body are able to provide evidence to support the evaluations that they make of their work, or to show how their actions are linked to what they know about how well the pupils are achieving. This does not mean that the pupils have suffered, because staff and governors have good ongoing debates about how to improve their work and they take the appropriate actions. This, together with outstanding partnerships with others, has ensured that pupils continue to do well. Senior staff have a clear awareness of what needs to be done to get improvements back on track, and have satisfactory capacity to do so.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Inject more rigour into the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work by:
 - targeting strategic improvements more specifically so that aims are clear and measurable

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- collecting and collating sufficient and suitable evidence against the success indicators to prove whether or not the improvements are good enough.
- Improve assessment so that:
 - the tracking of pupils' attainment and personal development clearly shows the amount of progress that they make over time
 - specific targets are set for the amount of progress that each pupil will make during each academic year
 - teachers use tracking information to inform their lesson plans
 - subject leaders monitor and analyse the tracking information to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and inform their improvement plans.
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - interrogating the data more thoroughly
 - setting challenging targets for pupils' attendance.
 - Develop the contribution that pupils make to their own and wider communities by:
 - providing more opportunities for them to take responsibility and demonstrate their skills independently
 - providing sharper plans to promote community cohesion.

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

Pupils of all ages are polite, proud of the work that they produce, keen to complete the tasks set in lessons and take good care of property and resources. In all classes, pupils were seen to be reading and writing with confidence even when they struggled with the skills required. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were very pleased with their powerful verbs about dogs and in the Key Stage 1 class pupils were keen to read what they had found out from books about different animals. In both instances, the writing was very well presented and showed good progress in the short time during which they have attended the school.

As a result of their disruptive behaviour and fragmented school experiences, pupils often start at the school having underachieved academically. For some, this is compounded by additional learning difficulties. Accordingly, the range of attainment across the school is wide. However, the longer the pupils are there and the more they develop strategies to manage their behaviour, the more this variation narrows. As a result, by the time they either leave the school to return to their local mainstream schools or reach the end of Year 6, pupils attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents good progress and prepares them well for their next school.

Although it wavers from time to time, pupils' generally good behaviour in school enables them not only to focus on learning and do well, but also to hold their own socially with one another and with their mainstream peer groups. They know and respect that staff work in their best interests to help manage their behaviour. This helps pupils to keep

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themselves and others safe and also ensures that they can take part confidently and actively in the full range of play and curricular opportunities on offer. For example, resources and equipment are used properly, pupils patiently take their turn and stay out of trouble when their friends are having problems. Outbursts of inappropriate behaviour are generally isolated incidents and pupils respond quickly and positively to prompts from adults. Pupils report that bullying does occur. They say that it is often by the same few pupils and acknowledge that those who used to be bullies and badly behaved are now very good. They know that the adults will listen to them and help to sort things out. Pupils who attend part-time and those supported by the outreach service respond similarly well to the help and guidance offered and this makes a significant contribution to their ability to stay successfully within mainstream education. Exclusion rates are relatively low overall but are a significant issue for a minority of pupils, and the school has not sufficiently thought through the links between its management of the most challenging outbursts when they do occur and its policy on exclusion. This applies equally to pupils' attendance, which for some is well below national averages.

The work of school councillors is well organised to represent the views of others in their classes and they believe that they have made a difference to the condition of the toilets, the quality of food at lunchtimes and the things that they have to play with at break times. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities more widely are limited and this reduces the contribution that they can make to the school community and the wider local and global communities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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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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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was of good quality and all lessons had good elements to them. Characteristically, behaviour management, subject knowledge and the use of information and communication technology to enliven learning are good. The work in pupils' books and on display shows that opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills are successfully raising standards in English and mathematics. The use of assessment by adults to promote pupils' progress is satisfactory. While marking and oral feedback are used well in helping pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve their work, tracking information is not used well enough to assess and target their attainments in teachers' plans.

The curriculum is good because it provides a robust framework with flexibility to satisfy different purposes for different groups of pupils. For outreach workers, this framework supports their role as hands-on practitioners. For teachers of part-time pupils it enables a personalised approach to provide programmes in tandem with those at the home school. For pupils who attend full time, the curriculum provides a broad range of subjects, with age-appropriate content, while also giving priority to literacy, numeracy and extended programmes for personal and social development. Pupils like their lessons and enjoy the work but say that they would like more physical education and clubs.

The ratio of staff to pupils in class is high, particularly at this time of year before numbers on roll steadily increase. This enables staff to know and understand their pupils well, manage their behaviour successfully and ensure a strong focus on learning. On some occasions there is a tendency to control pupils' behaviour to an extent that overcompensates for their difficulties and reduces opportunities for autonomy, independence or taking risks to learn from the consequences of their mistakes. In other respects, staff are very good role models to the pupils and this helps to shape their behaviour, as seen, for example, when pupils readily and genuinely celebrate the good behaviour of others. Pupils respond very well to the behaviour management reward system because staff implement it fairly and consistently. This is very effective in allowing pupils to acknowledge their successes and mistakes, to maintain good relationships with adults and friends, to move on successfully to the next thing and to make reparation for any inappropriate behaviour.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Many aspects of the school's work are clearly at least good and pupils are well prepared, academically and socially, when they move on to their next school. On the other hand, the school's inability to substantiate its judgements about the quality of provision and its impact on the outcomes for the pupils was a dilemma for senior staff and the governing body during this inspection. This is because over the past year there has been a lack of attention to detail and an over-reliance on informal monitoring and evaluation. Equally, the senior staff and the governing body have not kept up to speed with current developments and guidelines for what good quality provision looks like. They have ensured that government requirements for safeguarding, equal opportunities and the promotion of community cohesion are adequately met, but these areas have not been sufficiently planned and reviewed in relation to the school's particular context. The way that the school monitors teaching and learning lacks rigour and has been too informal. The monitoring of pupils' achievement relies on tracking attainment rather than measuring and targeting it. The tracking of attainment in subjects other than English and mathematics is not well developed and the tracking of personal skills is at an early stage.

Despite these weaknesses, sound building blocks have been put in place to promote further improvement. For example, a revised assessment framework has been implemented and a new system to track attainment is about to be put in place. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team have been reorganised and the outreach service is now more fully integrated into the work of the school. Furthermore, as a very close-knit team, the staff have ensured the smooth day-to-day running of the school, successfully maintaining good development for pupils. The needs of the pupils are very much at the centre of the school's daily work for staff and governors alike. They are all very clear that the difference that they can make to pupils' life chances depends on the quality of what goes on in the classroom, and by this they mean the ongoing quality of teaching and relationships between, and amongst, adults and pupils.

Partnerships with others, as evidenced by many comments from other schools and the local authority, are outstanding. The school has strong partnerships with other special schools and its local mainstream schools and leads the way in organising and providing specialised training. In addition, the outreach service also runs the local authority's social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme for primary schools, already training staff in approximately half of the schools in the borough. The service also runs a short programme for newly qualified teachers on behaviour management. The outreach service monitors its activities well and gets very good feedback on its work.

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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	1
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. Several wrote about how their children's behaviour has been turned around by the dedication of staff. Some did not agree that the school takes account of their views, prepares their children well for the future or manages behaviour well. This was not substantiated by the evidence collected during the inspection. Opportunities to take account of parents' and carers' views include regular written contact, coffee mornings and invitations to school events. There are times when pupils' behaviour continues to be unacceptable. Nevertheless, the management of pupils' behaviour is good, ensuring that it improves over time and does not stop other pupils from getting on with their learning. Many pupils move on to their next school well prepared to succeed because their behaviour has improved and their learning accelerated.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Waterside 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 inspector received 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 28 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	38	85	50	1	6	1	6
The school keeps my child safe	8	50	8	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	56	4	25	2	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	50	4	25	2	13	1	6
The teaching is good at this school	9	56	5	31	2	13	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	50	6	38	2	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	38	10	63	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	38	6	38	3	19	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	44	6	38	2	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	63	3	19	3	19	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	31	8	50	3	19	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	63	5	31	1	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	50	6	38	2	13	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.



5 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waterside School, Plumstead SE18 7NB

It was a pleasure to come and inspect your school recently. I saw as many of you as I could in class and I spent some time looking at your work in books and on display. I know that some of you were not in school on the days that I came because you were at your other schools. I looked at your work too to see how well you are doing when you come to Waterside. I also spoke to some of the school councillors and others during my two days with you.

First of all I want to say thank you because you made me and the other inspector very welcome. I want to tell you what we learned about your school.

Waterside is a good school because it helps you to change your behaviour and do well in your work so that you can move on to your next school and do well there. I know that you work really hard to manage your own behaviour and that you do this very well most of the time, especially when you remember all the things that help you to stay calm and talk about it.

Miss Vernoit, the rest of the staff and the governors work very hard to make sure that you do your best. I have asked them to look at some things that will help you to do even better. They need to check out the work that they do more carefully so that they can see more clearly how it is helping you to succeed. They also need to track and measure the progress that you make from one year to the next in more detail. Finally, I have asked them to ensure that your attendance improves because some of you are absent from school too often. It is very important that you come to school every day, and you can help the school to improve by making sure that you do.

I know that all of the hard work that you put in to changing your behaviour and doing well in your lessons is helping you to learn lots of new things and to grow into sensible children. My best wishes to you all for all that you wish for yourselves in the future.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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