

Unicorn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134061
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	341426
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Pickles

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr A Sheppard
Headteacher	Sue Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected to monitor pupils' progress, school policies, including safeguarding procedures, strategic planning and children's work. In addition, 53 questionnaires were returned by parents and scrutinised by the inspection team, as well as pupil and staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following: the attainment of pupils on entry to the school in order to measure the extent of the progress made by the oldest pupils the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, particularly for writing and mathematics throughout the school the quality of provision and how well it responds to the needs of older pupils in Key Stage 2 the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in driving forward improvements based on self-evaluation

Information about the school

Unicorn Primary was opened in September 2003 and is now at capacity, with classes in all year groups. It is a smaller than average school and draws pupils from the local area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average but above average for pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual times is lower than the national average. An out-of-school club is run on the site. This is not managed by the governing body and was inspected separately.

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

2

Main findings

Main findings Unicorn Primary is a good school. Parents appreciate its work, particularly the care and support provided for the pupils and their families. The very large majority of the responses to the parent questionnaires distributed as part of the inspection were wholly positive. As one parent stated, We feel privileged that our child has had such a high standard of education but also been so nurtured and well cared for. Pupils attitudes towards the school are overwhelmingly positive and their high levels of enjoyment are demonstrated through their outstanding behaviour. This comment by one pupil is typical of many: I think our school is brilliant because we always have fun learning. The quality of pupils learning and the progress they make overall is good and they are keen to do well. From a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils continue to make progress, and standards for the oldest pupils are above average in the core areas of English, mathematics and science. Pupils outstanding behaviour contributes significantly to their learning in lessons. They take a pride in their work and respond well to the teachers helpful marking. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to assess their own work. In some lessons, pupils are given time to discuss and review their learning, and to evaluate their own progress, but this is not yet consistent across all classes. Teachers work hard to make sure that lessons are carefully planned to reflect pupils interests and levels of ability. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by additional adults. In a few lessons, activities are not sufficiently differentiated to match the ability levels of the more able pupils and those with special educational needs. Classrooms are calm and well ordered and pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their learning. Although the curriculum is still developing as pupils move up through the school, it provides a broad range of experiences which contribute well to the pupils development and well-being. The school has developed good provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils and their families and has been successful in raising attendance levels and providing support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils speak positively of the way all adults care for and support them. As a result of clear strategic planning and inspirational leadership by the headteacher, this new school is now well established. Senior leaders make good use of rigorous monitoring activities to accurately evaluate the schools performance and identify development priorities. There is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of pupils progress in English, mathematics and science. This is less effective in other subjects. Governors contribution to the school is outstanding. They are extremely well informed, supportive and provide high levels of challenge to raise achievement and improve provision further. Due to the effective systems in place and a clear vision, shared by all leaders and

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managers, the school has good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing good practice to improve pupils' learning and progress by: - increasing opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and to evaluate their progress against the objectives set for each lesson. Ensure that effective practice in monitoring and evaluating learning and progress is extended to all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils generally make good progress in lessons. They are well motivated and enthusiastic, particularly when given the opportunity to discuss their learning with each other. An example of this was seen in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 6, where pupils were discussing how their knowledge of number bonds could be applied to problem solving. Pupils displayed high levels of engagement and understanding when asked to evaluate what they had learnt. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary and they maintain high levels of concentration even when some tasks are not sufficiently matched to their ability level. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. In the majority of lessons, they are well supported in their work by planning which is based on their individual needs and by well-prepared teaching assistants. Although there is no comparative data for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, the school's assessment tracking indicates that standards are above average for the oldest pupils. This demonstrates good progress from average attainment at Key Stage 1. Pupils make better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is average, and improving. The school provides a calm and orderly environment where pupils feel safe and well cared for. They are confident that adults in the school will help them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and they respond well to the school's health promotion strategies. They enjoy being able to contribute to decision-making through the school council, for example by purchasing resources for the school playground. Their well-developed basic skills and above average attendance equip them well to meet the challenges of secondary school and future life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are enjoyable because teaching sustains pupils' concentration and engages them in their learning. Resources, including new technology, are used effectively to support pupils' understanding. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to assess learning and challenge misconceptions. Good lessons are characterised by a swift pace and a mix of listening to the teacher, responding to questions and opportunities for pupils to discuss their work amongst themselves. In the majority of lessons, assessment is used effectively to plan activities which appropriately match all children's abilities. Where teaching is less effective, the teacher talks for too long and tasks do not always sufficiently match the needs of all learners. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is used effectively to identify pupils who need additional support programmes, including those who have been identified as more able. Targets set for pupils' progress are challenging and their progress towards them is monitored closely. The school has been particularly successful in raising attainment in writing in all year groups through the Wicked Write initiative, providing regular opportunities for extended writing. The school's introduction of ability grouping in mathematics for the oldest pupils has been successful in accelerating the progress of those pupils who were in danger of falling behind. The curriculum, although still developing, is well organised and builds on pupils' prior experience. Cross-curricular links are made through topics which pupils particularly enjoy, for example, a topic on chocolate, where pupils had the opportunity to set up a business and use video technology. There is good modern foreign language provision for all pupils in Years 1 to 6. Curriculum provision is

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enhanced by specialist mathematics teaching from a local secondary school and links with a school in France. The curriculum responds well to the needs of older pupils and provides a broad range of experiences, particularly through extended visits which contribute well to developing their independence and well-being. A wide range of additional activities outside the school day, including dance, sport and music, enhance learning and are well attended. The good outcomes for pupils are a result of the well-targeted care and support which enables them to learn and develop in a secure environment. Adults are generally well deployed to meet the needs of identified groups of pupils but there is limited evaluation of the impact of specific additional support programmes. All adults show a good understanding of the needs of all pupils and the school is effective in consulting with parents and carers. Parents appreciate the availability of the headteacher at the start and end of the school day. Transition arrangements for pupils entering the school, including those who join other than at the usual time, are well organised.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

The headteacher is relentless in her commitment to drive improvement as the school grows and she has the full support of all staff and governors. She has been extremely successful in establishing a clear vision, based on high expectations, which is shared by all leaders and managers. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school, including those staff who are relatively new in post. Effective systems for self-evaluation lead to clear priorities for improvement. Senior leaders rigorously monitor progress, teaching and provision in English, mathematics and science. This good practice, however, is yet to be consistently embedded across all subject areas. Attention is securely focused on promoting equality of opportunity amongst all groups of pupils and tackling discrimination. In this, there is good engagement with parents and carers so that their views are taken into consideration. Leaders and managers are extremely well supported by the governing body, which makes an outstanding contribution to the work and direction of the school, through an excellent balance of support and challenge. The safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements well and the school adopts recommended practice across all areas of its work. The school also makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion and provides pupils with opportunities to learn about different cultures through visitors to school and trips in all year groups.

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Opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of different faiths are less well developed. Senior leaders have undertaken an audit of provision and have been successful in providing training for parents to support their children's learning.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children join the school with standards broadly in line with expectations for their age, but below in some aspects of communication and language skills, particularly writing, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress during their time in the Reception class, particularly in writing. Effective support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make progress in line with their peers. The spacious and well-resourced classroom and outdoor area support children's good creative and physical development. The children develop good levels of independence through a range of activities and tasks which allow them to make their own choices. Good relationships with adults enable children to develop confidence in their learning and acquire age-appropriate skills. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning and development and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children's progress over time is tracked carefully, including through observation. Planning provides good coverage of activities across all areas of learning, although the intended outcomes of learning are not always clearly specified. Children's safety and welfare is promoted well and there are good levels of supervision and support for activities. Leadership is good, with a clear understanding of

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what improvements are required, for example in the development of children’s problem-solving skills. The school has effective relationships with parents and they are well informed about their children’s learning.

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

From the returned questionnaires, it is clear that the school enjoys the confidence and support of the parental community. The very large majority of responses to questions were overwhelmingly positive and many added comments praising the school’s work. In particular, parents commented positively about the welcoming and friendly environment and their children’s enjoyment of school. A very small minority noted their concerns about the progress their children were making in school. From scrutinising school assessment and tracking data, the inspectors found that pupils make good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Unicorn 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 12 statements about the school. The inspection team received 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	71	37	30	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	83	44	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	54	21	40	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	54	18	35	5	10	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	67	16	31	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	53	22	43	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	66	17	32	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	54	23	44	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	52	22	42	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	60	20	38	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	47	23	47	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	69	16	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	75	11	21	2	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.



18 September 2009 Dear Pupils Inspection of Unicorn Primary School, Beckenham BR3 3AL This letter is to thank you for welcoming the inspection team when we visited your school recently and to tell you what we found out. We really enjoyed having the opportunity to talk to you and listening to your views about the school. Here are some of the things we think are good about your school: You make good progress with your work and reach standards that are above average. Your behaviour and attitudes to work and each other are outstanding and it is clear that you enjoy coming to school and want to do the best you can. The adults in school know you all very well and many of you told us how kind and helpful they are but that they expect you to work hard as well. Teaching is good and helps you make progress, especially when you talk about your learning with each other. You really enjoy all the different clubs that are available before and after school and lots of you attend them. The governors really help the headteacher and the staff to make sure you do as well as you can and are well looked after. To help the school become even better we have asked the headteacher to do the following: Ensure all lessons give you the opportunity to talk about your learning and find out how well you are doing. Plan activities in all lessons that help you all make as much progress as you can. Check how well you are doing in all your subjects, not just in English, mathematics and science. It was a real privilege to visit Unicorn Primary. Keep working hard and behaving wonderfully. Yours faithfully Linda Pickles

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