

Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100821
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	376470
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2012
Lead inspector	Natalia Power

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	529
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bola Ogun
Headteacher	Mark Parsons
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Natalia Power	Additional inspector
Maura Docherty	Additional inspector
Avtar Sherri	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited each of the 21 classes twice over two days, observing all the class teachers present and conducting scrutinies of pupils' work. The inspectors spoke to parents and carers, listened to pupils read, and held meetings with staff and members of the governing body. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation documents and plans for improvement, the data collected on pupils' progress, safeguarding information and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered the responses in 90 questionnaires that had been returned by parents and carers, 100 pupil questionnaires and 29 from staff.

Information about the school

This school, which is larger than the average primary school, is moving from three forms of entry to two. As a result there are two Reception and Year 1 classes, but three classes in each of Years 2 to 6. Almost half of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this proportion is higher than usual. Around nine out of ten pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. Almost half of pupils speak English as an additional language, but currently few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning the language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average, and pupils who have speech, language and communication needs form the largest group. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school runs a breakfast club. The after-school club, run by the local authority, is subject to separate inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is strongly supported by parents and carers. One accurately described it as, 'A happy school where children love to come to school every day.' The strong provision for development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities ensures that they behave well and respect one another's values. Progress in English and mathematics is good, and this reflects the overall good teaching and curriculum. However, because there are pockets of satisfactory teaching and occasional missed opportunities for pupils to write on a range of topics, the school is not yet ready to be graded as outstanding.
- Pupils achieve well, reaching national averages by the end of Year 6. From their below-average starting points this represents good progress. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to develop their writing skills fully across the curriculum. This is reflected in pupils' lower attainment in writing than reading.
- The teaching seen in the inspection was mainly good, and occasionally outstanding. The pace of learning is generally brisk, and pupils' books are consistently well marked. In a few cases, however, teachers do too much for the pupils, and the pace of learning slows.
- Pupils are keen to learn, and behave well. They feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders and managers ensure that pupils are kept safe. Their plans to improve the school demonstrate their understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school and holds it to account. Although leaders' performance management procedures are good overall, in their programme of classroom visits, leaders do not always focus sharply enough on how well pupils are learning and this slows progress in improving teaching.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - making the pace of learning consistently brisk in every lesson, with more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
 - focusing more sharply in classroom visits on how rapidly and successfully pupils are learning.

- Encourage pupils to develop greater fluency in writing by providing as many opportunities as possible for them to write at length in all areas of the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or returned questionnaires agreed that their children were making good progress. Inspectors endorse these views. Pupils' attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6. Pupils, irrespective of ethnic heritage, make good progress from below-average starting points. Inspection evidence, obtained from looking at pupils' current and past work, talking to them and observing their lessons, confirms this pattern.

Where learning is particularly effective, this is because the challenge is stimulating and pupils are expected to do well. For example, Year 4 pupils acted out scenes from Ted Hughes's novel for children, 'The Iron Man', to stimulate them to write their own account of the story and characters. This excited and absorbed the pupils, so that they produced high-quality writing with an ambitious vocabulary. In a parallel Year 4 lesson, observed at a later stage, the pupils had the task of identifying statements from the novel and attributing them to the correct characters. This task promoted dialogue with one another and a challenging discussion with the class teacher. There are, however, occasional instances where teachers take over too much, preventing the pupils from contributing enough themselves. In these cases the pace of learning slows and the pupils are then not sufficiently motivated to produce their best work all the time.

Reading is a strong aspect of the school's work, and this is because of a consolidated focus on it from the earliest years. Adults introduce the children in the Nursery and Reception classes to sounds and letters through play, and throughout the school pupils are introduced to a wide range of good reading materials. Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Year 2, reflecting pupils' below-average starting points. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils' reading skills are average, because of the school's strong focus on improving their understanding of sounds and spelling. Pupils in Year 2 who read aloud to inspectors were able to show they understood the books they were reading. The good teaching they received gave

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them the tools to enable them to read unfamiliar words.

The school is skilled at removing barriers to learning so that all groups of pupils make good progress. Girls and boys perform equally well. The youngest pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes start school with language, number and social skills which are below those expected for their age, but learn new skills well, because of good, patient teaching. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well in class by the teachers and their assistants, who know their needs. The school's focus on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills is particularly helpful in raising the attainment of pupils with speech, language and communication needs, helping them to make good progress in line with others.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers consider teaching in the school to be good. One remarked, 'My child's teacher always responds to her needs, such as providing extension tasks.' Inspectors found teaching good overall. Teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils to think for themselves. They plan lessons carefully to combine whole-class activities with tasks adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, in a well-planned Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were asked to add numbers together to arrive at a set answer. All the pupils enjoyed the task and were fully engaged because they were finding out for themselves how different combinations of numbers can end up with the same answer. Each group received a set of exercises which were well adapted to their learning needs, to ensure a good level of challenge for all.

Pupils make the strongest progress where teaching is fast paced and where they play an active part in their own learning. In these situations, the curriculum has a positive impact. For example, in one information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, Year 5 pupils were enthusiastic about learning to use a computer program which enabled them to select pictures to illustrate their research on ancient Greece. One pupil said, 'It's great because I can learn history and ICT at the same time.' Occasionally, however, the teachers take too long to explain tasks to the pupils, or do too much that the pupils could do for themselves. In these cases the pace drops and pupils do not have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teaching actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, encouraging them to respect the views of others. For example, in an outstanding Reception class lesson, the children sat in a circle and were encouraged to think about feelings and how important it was to listen to the views of others. As a result of such consideration of others, pupils behave well in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils told inspectors that the good behaviour seen in and around the school during the inspection was typical of behaviour generally. They are aware of specific minor

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examples of restless behaviour when the speed of learning is slower than usual. They understand and generally respond well to the clear classroom rewards systems. Pupils told inspectors that there is no actual bullying, such as cyber-bullying or religious or racial abuse. One pupil said, 'Sometimes pupils have a fight over a football' but reported that in such cases they know which adults to turn to for support. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, and they are polite and welcoming to visitors.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and the older ones report that they enjoy their frequent opportunities to look after the younger ones. Those who attend breakfast club enjoy mixing with those from different age groups. Pupils show their enjoyment of school through their attendance which, though average, is consistently higher than for similar schools. All of the parents and carers who completed the questionnaire agreed that they would recommend the school to others. A typical comment from one parent was, 'The school takes good care of the children's mental, physical and social needs.'

Leadership and management

Strong leadership by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteachers ensures that the school's ethos is happy and cohesive. The staff show, through their responses to the questionnaire and through their generally long service to the school, that they feel valued as part of the team. The school is improving. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 is now securely average after a number of years when it was below. The school has met its recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection, so that, for example, the Nursery and Reception areas are now well resourced and inviting. As a result of this forward movement, together with the school's accurate understanding of its strengths and what remains to be done, it is well placed to continue to improve. Leaders and managers visit classes to ensure that standards of teaching are maintained, and the contribution they make towards teachers' professional development is mostly effective. However, leaders and managers accept that they tend to focus on teaching techniques, rather than on how well pupils are learning. This results in some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and ultimately pupils' learning.

Leaders, managers and the governing body are effective in ensuring that the arrangements to keep pupils safe are rigorous. Statutory requirements concerning safeguarding are met. Staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures and all adults are thoroughly checked and vetted before working at the school. Leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity well, ensuring that all pupils, whatever their social or ethnic backgrounds or needs, make good progress. Pupils respect one another, and those from all backgrounds get on well together, because discrimination is not tolerated.

The curriculum is good. Pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of schooling. However, they do not always have sufficient opportunity to practise

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writing at length on a range of topics, such as history or science, to improve their fluency and to bring their writing to the level of their reading. Pupils report that they enjoy the school's programme of clubs, trips and visits, which are designed to raise their aspirations. In assembly time pupils regularly perform short scenes to give their peers a taste of what they have been learning. The pupils' enjoyment of such shared experiences shows the strength of the school's development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oliver Goldsmith Primary School, London SE5 8UH

We very much enjoyed our recent visit to your school, and it was lovely to see how helpful you are and how nicely you play together. Thank you for making us welcome and for telling us your views, both in person and through your questionnaires.

- You go to a good school. You told us that your school keeps you safe. We saw how well you behave in lessons and around the school, and you told us this is how your school usually is, and that the pupils are kind to one another. You are polite and welcoming to visitors. All these good ways of behaving reflect the impressive contribution all the adults make to your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- You make good progress and leave school with results in English and mathematics which are very much like those of pupils across the country.
- Your teachers teach you well, asking you questions which really make you think. You told us how much you enjoy school and how the teachers help you and make learning fun. We saw how you learned really quickly and enthusiastically when you played an active part in your own learning. We have asked those in charge, when they visit your classes, to check even more carefully how well you are learning, and to make sure that all of you do as well as you can.
- We have asked your teachers to give you as much practice as possible in writing at length in subjects such as history and science, so that your writing improves.

You, too, have a part to play in improving your school. Work hard and always ask your teacher if there is anything you do not understand.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Natalia Power
Lead inspector

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