

Cubitt Town Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100932
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	354913
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Hockley
Headteacher	Nicola Daly
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2008
School address	Manchester Road Isle of Dogs, London E14 3NE
Telephone number	020 7987 3373
Fax number	020 7093 1018
Email address	head@cubitt-inf.towerhamlets.sch.uk

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Inspection number	354913

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They made visits to 14 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and members of staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school development plan, assessment records and safeguarding policies. They analysed completed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 88 from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do all groups of pupils, especially boys and White British pupils, make enough progress in Key Stage 1?
- How effectively is the school tailoring its provision to the needs of different groups of pupils in the school?
- Is the school doing enough to improve attendance?
- Are governors effective enough in monitoring the work of the school and challenging it to do better?

Information about the school

The school is a larger-than-average-sized infant school serving a densely populated urban area in the Isle of Dogs. Children attend nursery part-time and the nursery class is a purpose-built unit separate from the three Reception classes. The large majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these pupils speak English as an additional language and a significant proportion are at the early stages of learning English when they begin school. A comparatively high number are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. A breakfast club, run by the school, is available each morning. The school has a number of awards, including the Kitchen Nutrition Award and Activemark.

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

Cubitt Town Infants' School is a good school which provides a good quality of education for its pupils. The strong sense of community within the school provides a positive climate within which pupils grow in confidence and thrive as learners. They enjoy being in school and participate enthusiastically in the activities provided. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on extremely well together.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education, especially in the Nursery, which provides a very lively and stimulating range of activities that children really enjoy. Teaching and learning are good overall in Reception but activities are not always structured enough to enable pupils to gain the most from them. In both the Nursery and Reception, there are occasional missed opportunities to extend and encourage children's writing through the activities provided. Nonetheless, the practical curriculum, together with the excellent outdoor facilities, promotes overall good progress for all groups of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children with English as an additional language make rapid progress in learning and are quickly able to understand and respond in English.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 also make good progress. They make particularly good progress in reading in Year 2. Different groups of pupils make broadly similar progress from their starting points, which are low overall, and very low for some groups. Overall, pupils achieve well to attain in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 1. It is best, and a little above average, in reading. Lessons engage pupils actively in their work but the activities provided are not always tailored closely enough to the needs of different groups or individuals. Hence, work is sometimes a little too easy or too hard. Pupils are given useful and effective oral feedback about their work but day-to-day marking of work does not consistently ensure clear written feedback on the next steps in learning or, where provided, that pupils respond to comments for improvement.

The good curriculum is enriched by frequent visits and a wide range of extra-curricular activities which pupils enjoy and which contribute well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well looked after, and supported and guided effectively to meet their personal needs. Consequently, they have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Their good behaviour and kindness to one another ensure a safe and caring environment. Good partnerships support pupils' well-being well and extend learning opportunities especially in theatre, music and information and communication technology (ICT).

The school is well led and managed and staff are proud to be part of the school community. The headteacher sets a positive tone and staff and governors have a strong understanding of the school's context and its key priorities. Tracking of pupils' progress is very robust and provides early warning where any pupil is not making sufficient progress.

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

However, governors and middle leaders are not involved enough in checking the work of the school in order to help identify, and address, areas for improvement. Nonetheless, self evaluation is used to good effect and the school has a reasonably accurate picture of how good it is and what needs improving. It has effectively addressed the main issues raised in the last inspection. Attendance is now much better and pupils' reading skills more secure. Hence, the capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that work is consistently well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils so that it is neither too hard nor too easy
 - giving pupils clear feedback on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
 - making sure that pupils act on the feedback they receive
 - involving middle leaders more systematically in checking the quality of teaching and learning.
- Develop the monitoring role of the governing body further so that they are more actively involved in seeking and gathering information about the effectiveness of the school's work.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that activities are always sufficiently demanding in Reception
 - making sure that children are given as many opportunities as possible for developing their early writing skills.

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

Most pupils make good progress. The significant numbers learning English as an additional language do very well in developing their English and widening their vocabulary as they move through the school. Some groups who begin with very low attainment, such as White British boys, make measurable progress but their attainment remains lower than that of others. Additional support, such as one-to-one tutoring and small group sessions, is helping to narrow the gaps in attainment between different groups. Such support is also helping those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. In a small group session on reading, for example, pupils enthusiastically responded to questions about what happened next in a book they had been reading. They kept up with the brisk pace the teaching assistant had set because they had built up confidence in their ability to read.

In lessons, pupils focus well, listen carefully and concentrate on their work. In a mathematics lesson, pupils had understood how to unpick a word problem because they listened to the teacher and thought hard about the questions she asked. They also discussed the problem with a partner, which helped them to understand what to do to solve it. However, many found the follow-up task hard. Most stuck to it, though girls tended to persevere better than boys. Pupils enjoy using computers and their ICT skills are well developed; for example, they make and edit their own animated films. Art work

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

across the school is of good quality also. Given their positive attitudes, good social and oral skills, and sound basic skills of literacy and numeracy, pupils are well prepared for their next step in education.

Pupils are polite and friendly and their behaviour is consistently good. They readily engage in conversation and are good at asking questions. Most are thoughtful and reflective by the end of Year 2, with a good understanding of right and wrong. Their good understanding of the importance of exercise to healthy living has been recognised by a national award. They enjoy learning about other cultures and religions and respect difference. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by being 'special helpers' in class and raising money for good causes at home and abroad.

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	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	3
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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know their pupils well and have a strong understanding of their individual progress. On occasion, however, this information is not used systematically enough to tailor work closely to their individual needs. Nonetheless, activities provided capture pupils' interests and engage them well in most lessons. Support from adults ensures that, in most cases, less able pupils can complete the tasks set, and more able pupils are encouraged to think more deeply about their work. Questioning is used well to assess pupils' understanding and extend it further. Pupils are frequently asked to talk about their work with a partner and this helps them to think through ideas independently of adults. While

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

there are many examples, particularly in English, of good quality, clear written feedback on what pupils need to do to improve, this is not yet consistent practice across the school.

Pupils are well served by a topic approach to the curriculum which promotes links across different subjects. This is now being developed further with the very recent implementation of the international primary curriculum. The framework for teaching reading is very effective in developing pupils' skills in understanding the texts they are reading. As a result, a good many pupils are reaching the higher levels of the National Curriculum.

The school cares for and supports pupils well. This is reflected in the high level of confidence amongst families that their children are safe at school. Good use is made of statutory agencies and staff, such as a parent liaison coordinator, to support individuals and their families, especially where potentially vulnerable pupils are concerned. The school has worked hard and effectively to improve attendance. It has reduced the number of families taking children on extended holiday during term time and is continuing to work to reduce this further. There are a small, though decreasing, number of persistent absentees with whose families staff are also working closely. The breakfast club gets pupils off to a good, nutritious start.

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 positive impact of leadership and management is clear in the high level of consistency across the school in the quality of the learning environment. Rich displays and careful placements of labels and instructions provide pupils with stimulating surroundings that encourage them to think and be creative. An equally strong emphasis is evident on pastoral support for pupils and, where necessary, their families to make sure pupils are ready for learning. The school is robust in tracking progress and analysing the performance of different groups as well as checking their participation in school life. Action, such as additional support programmes, is promptly taken where such analysis reveals a need. The school also put on clubs at lunchtime, for example, to increase participation of groups who found it difficult to attend after school. Consequently, equality of opportunity is well promoted. However, monitoring of teaching and learning is not as robust as it needs to be. The headteacher observes lessons regularly and provides good feedback on strengths and areas for improvement. There is some good involvement in this of other senior staff. However, middle leaders are not engaged enough in checking the quality of teaching and learning to help them drive up standards further in their areas of

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

work. They do check progress data and curricular coverage in their subjects, and provide effective support to other staff.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and increasing its active involvement. Members know the school's strengths and weaknesses as they check the school's performance data and progress through the school improvement plan. The governing body ensures that safeguarding meets requirements. Though becoming more proactive, members remain to some extent too reliant on the headteacher reporting to them, both about safeguarding and the wider work of the school, rather than actively seeking information or checking procedures for themselves.

Community cohesion is outstandingly well promoted at school and local community level. Classes for parents help to increase their confidence and skill levels both when supporting their children's learning and when themselves applying for jobs. Links with companies on Canary Wharf provide valuable work experience for pupils as well as securing reading partners for them. The school and parents are working purposefully together, as well as with other schools and the local community, to address the issue of gang culture on the Isle of Dogs. Plans are well underway to establish global links through the international primary curriculum to add to the work done in lessons about different communities in the United Kingdom and other countries.

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	3
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	3
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

Good provision leads to good overall progress for children. As a result, by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, their attainment is noticeably closer to national averages than when they began. In some areas, such as aspects of personal and social development and physical development, children's attainment matches that of children nationally. Though they make reasonably good progress in developing early writing skills,

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

these remain low for many children. While children have frequent opportunities to practise writing and making marks both indoors and outside, these are not always enough to help children overcome the very low level of writing ability they begin with. Speaking skills develop particularly well and this is because children are encouraged to talk when interacting with adults and one another. In both Nursery and Reception, children benefit from practical work that is linked well to a topic of interest such as pirates. Activities are lively and engaging and help develop children's thinking. These activities are very well structured in the Nursery, sometimes exceptionally so, and usually well put together in Reception so children learn a lot from them. Occasionally in Reception, some activities are not as demanding as they could be. Children have good opportunities to make their own choices about the activities they would like to do. Children's progress is regularly assessed and links with parents are good. The coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. She provides effective feedback to staff on their work and prioritises the right areas for development.

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

Those parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents and carers are strongly in agreement that their children enjoy school, are safe and well taught.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cubitt Town Infants' 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	74	22	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	69	24	27	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	63	31	35	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	60	33	38	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	67	28	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	56	36	41	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	56	37	42	1	1	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)	46	52	39	44	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	55	39	44	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	51	37	42	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	49	39	44	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	52	41	47	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	69	26	30	0	0	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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cubitt Town Infants' School, Isle of Dogs, London E14 3NE

Thank you for giving us such a friendly welcome when we visited your school recently and for sharing your views with us. Your school provides you with a good education that helps you to make good progress. Children get a good start in the Nursery and Reception. You have regular opportunities to work on computers and use cameras, which you enjoy. You also told us how much you enjoy the frequent visits out and visitors to the school. You get a lot out of your reading partners at Canary Wharf and the work experience you do there.

Your very positive attitudes to learning were obvious when we visited lessons. We also noticed how well you worked with one another sharing ideas and resources. We agree with you that behaviour is good and that staff take good care of you. Adults support you well in lessons and teachers keep a close eye on how well you are doing. They ask questions that make you think and give you interesting tasks and activities. Staff and the governing body are keen to make the school even better than it is. To help them do this, we have asked them to:

- improve the teaching even more so that all of it is good or better by making sure that the work you are given is never too easy or too hard
- make sure that teachers tell you, when they mark your work, exactly what you need to do to improve it
- give children in the Nursery and Reception even more opportunities to develop their early writing skills
- ask governors and staff with responsibilities to be more active in checking how well the school is working.

To help your school improve, continue to do your best work at all times, check with your teachers how you can make your work better and make sure you do what they suggest. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.