

Richard Cobden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100022
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	276236
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2005
Reporting inspector	Peter McGregor

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 on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Hester Mrs Kathy Bannon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Camden Street London NW1 0LL
Telephone number	02073875909
Fax number	02073801518

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors

Description of the school

Richard Cobden is bigger than most primary schools. Pupils have a very wide range of backgrounds, and are mostly from minority ethnic communities. For a very large number, English is not the language they speak at home. Twenty-seven different home languages are spoken. About two in every five pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. Lots of pupils join the school other than in the Reception year. By Year 6, over half the pupils have done this, which shows high mobility. The area around the school, where many pupils live, has a high number of social problems. Just under half the pupils are entitled to free school meals. More pupils have learning difficulties than in many other schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

What the school should do to improve further * Teachers need to make certain that work in lessons is always matched to the learning needs of pupils of all abilities.* The school should maintain its efforts to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

The school considered teaching to be at least satisfactory but the inspection team judges it to be good. The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Lessons vary between satisfactory and outstanding and most are good or better. Good teaching is the main reason for the pupils' good progress. Quite a lot of pupils struggle to learn because they are still learning English or they have additional needs. All the staff, with many different roles, work very well together to help them. Nothing is too much trouble. Pupils know this and show great respect for the staff. In lessons, pupils know they have to behave well and they do. Teachers and other staff have clear routines and plan carefully, and so pupils can follow lessons and find them interesting. Staff provide lots of opportunities for improving their English, such as 'talk partners', where two pupils discuss things together before giving their answers to a question. In some lessons, the work some pupils are asked to do is too hard or too easy. On these occasions, pupils' progress was satisfactory overall, but could have been greater if the work had better matched their needs. Pupils' work is marked regularly. The written comments are helpful. Some work has clear targets written on it, such as 'try to use my checklist for story endings to make yours better'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

Inspectors agree with the school that the curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced. In nursery and reception, activities are well planned and suited to the children. This enables them all to enjoy learning and make good progress. The school has recently reorganised the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 to make learning more interesting and relevant. Work is now in topics, such as 'the seaside', and includes several subjects. Daily lessons in English and mathematics and a weekly information and communication technology (ICT) lesson are also taught. Pupils do even more of these important subjects in their topics. All pupils spend a good amount of time on physical education and have specialist music lessons. They can also enjoy a very good number of trips and visits and join several clubs. The curriculum is planned carefully to help every pupil learn how to live healthily, avoid risks, and stay safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding and better than the school judges. Staff know pupils very well and care greatly about them. They carry out duties around school very thoroughly, which pupils appreciate. Very good links with many outside groups, such as the local council's social services and leisure departments, help vulnerable pupils to receive all possible help. The school communicates very well with parents, especially where children have additional educational and social needs. The school tries very hard to improve attendance and punctuality. It works very closely with the educational welfare service to tackle the few families that do not support the school's efforts. The many children learning English as an additional language and those with additional educational needs receive very good specialist support. This enables them to enjoy their school life and make progress. Parents appreciate both the approachable, caring staff and the way their children are treated. Child protection procedures are first class and staff receive excellent training to keep up to date. The school council reports to governors have resulted in improvements, for example in the quality of school meals. Systems for checking on pupils' progress and target setting are good. Pupils aim at helpful, high targets and staff keep careful records of their progress, knowing what they can expect of them.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your help during our time at your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and hearing your views and ideas.

Lots of good things are happening in your school and you like them all. Those that we think are the best are: * the way you behave well, help one another and work hard; * the very good help you are given to improve your English so you can do well in all your subjects; * the care the staff show for you, so you can grow up healthy and safe; * the way the headteacher runs the school with the help of her staff, always thinking about what's best for you; * the lovely clean and interesting school building that you and all the staff look after so well, giving you a nice place to work

Even in a good school like yours there are one or two things that are not quite as good as they could be. We think the school would be even better if: * teachers made sure work was not too hard or too easy for you * all of you made every effort to come to school every day.

We hope you continue to enjoy attending your good school. Best wishes,

Peter McGregor, Lead inspector