



Forster Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100683
Local Authority Lewisham
Inspection number 285843
Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Lyons

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Boundfield Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		SE6 1PQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8698 5686
Number on roll (school)	366	Fax number	020 8695 9659
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Colin Yardley
		Headteacher	Ms Jennifer Chiverton BEd
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Forster Park is an above average sized school welcoming pupils from a socially and ethnically diverse inner city community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Far more pupils than average take free school meals. A quarter of pupils speak a language other than English at home. More pupils than usual join and leave the school throughout the school year. The headteacher took over the post in April 2006 and from September has had the support of a consultant. Two assistant head teachers started in September 2006 together with four new members of staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for the pupils but it is making good improvements in important areas. The new headteacher has taken steps that have raised the quality of teaching and learning and immediately reversed the recent downturn in standards at the end of Year 6. With excellent support provided by the local authority and the consultant headteacher the strategic planning for improvement has quickly had a marked impact on the life of the school, the quality of the curriculum and the support offered to pupils. However, many of the changes are too recent to ensure that all pupils achieve well and reach the standards of which they are capable in English, mathematics and science.

Achievement is satisfactory. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage although fewer children than usual reach the goals set for the end of the Reception year. They continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Although standards fell last year, when results in English and mathematics were well below average, they are improving rapidly and are now broadly average. These improvements are the result of effective teaching. Good lesson planning ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress.

Teachers are using assessment information to provide appropriate challenge and support in lessons, but the use of targets to improve pupils' work is inconsistent, especially in numeracy, where they are too general. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. One parent commented, 'My child is involved in many useful clubs so school gives her more than the basics'.

Personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. It is now good, so that lessons and the life of the school are not disrupted. Systematic efforts have improved attendance but it has not quite reached the national average. Nevertheless, most pupils are well motivated and have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school, taking an active part in its running. Visits and visitors contribute well to pupils' understanding of the world of work and life after school.

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made an excellent start in bringing improvement to all the areas of school life. Leaders at all levels have a strong vision of where they want the school to be, but governors are not sufficiently involved in monitoring its performance. Many parents recognise the good leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of the staff. As one said, 'Everybody at Forster Park is fabulous and they keep parents informed'. Since the new headteacher has arrived much has been achieved and much more is planned. There is good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the best practice in teaching and learning to make more consistent use of target setting, so that pupils make better progress and reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Strengthen the role of the governors as critical friends so that they can be more effective in directing the work of the school.
- Work with parents to improve attendance and remind them regularly of the adverse effects of children's absence from school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is below average. The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage but fewer than usual reach the goals set for the end of the Reception Year. In recent years, standards at the end of Year 2 have improved. Pupils are now making good progress and the results of national tests in 2006 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

In the past, at the end of Year 6, standards have been average and pupils' achievement has been good. However, in national tests in 2006 results were well below average in English and mathematics. Currently, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making much better progress in lessons because the teaching is good. As a result standards are rising.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported and encouraged well to make the same progress as the other pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language make at least satisfactory progress because of the good support they receive. Teaching assistants support all pupils effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school as demonstrated in lessons and outstanding school assemblies. They told inspectors they like coming to school because, 'Teachers are great and teach us lots of different things everyday'. Pupils are friendly, polite and behave well. They are given opportunities to demonstrate responsibility by being peer mediators, members of the school council or the 'circle of friends group'. Attendance is still a little below the national average but improvements are being made year by year. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community through 'International Week' and 'Black History Month,' when parents come to assemblies. Discussions with pupils show they have good understanding of healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices at lunchtimes. Pupils understand how to stay safe and, when any bullying occurs, it is quickly resolved. Pupils' positive attitudes and developing values prepare them well for secondary school and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. All lessons are at least satisfactory and some are excellent. The teaching is particularly good in Years 1 and 2 because lessons are well planned with activities that engage and interest the pupils and extend their concentration. In the excellent lessons verve and vitality together with thoughtful planning make learning exciting and fun. Good learning results from a range of activities, such as pair and group work, which interest and engage the pupils fully. In the older classes interactive whiteboards are used effectively by both pupils and teachers to provide models of writing that help develop pupils' literacy skills. Teachers use day-to-day assessment well but the use of targets to show pupils how to improve is inconsistent.

Teachers and pupils work well together and pupils speak highly of their teachers. They admire them and feel that they will help and support them both in and out of the classroom. As one parent wrote, 'The school is a very nice and friendly environment'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. National guidance is used well to ensure effective coverage of the subjects taught. Good adaptations have been made to meet the children's needs. For example, in the current theme of Rain Forests in Year 6, work in English, art, geography and information and communication technology are planned effectively to contribute to raising pupils' skills. The school's provision for the more vulnerable pupils is particularly noteworthy and contributes well to these pupils' progress. The personal, social and health education programme is a strength because it provides a particularly strong basis for personal development. Good use is made of additional activities to strengthen the curriculum. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to make visits to enhance topics being studied. There is a suitable range of after school activities, particularly in sport and music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. While pastoral support for pupils is outstanding academic guidance is only satisfactory. Pupils at risk are identified early and effective arrangements are put in place to keep them engaged such as art therapy and peer mediation. The school makes good use of links with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Both teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' personal needs well and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and English as an additional language is good. However, pupils are uncertain about their individual targets and how to achieve them; this creates a barrier to effective learning. Clear and thorough induction systems are in place to

ensure smooth transition both into the school and to secondary school. Pupils are therefore happy and feel confident in school. Pupils say they feel safe and confident to approach an adult if they have a problem. Arrangements for ensuring health and safety and minimising risks are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. There have been significant improvements in the school's provision and pupils' progress in the six months since the new headteacher took up her post. She has made an excellent start and is providing effective leadership. Good changes to the way the leadership is organised give more rigour to both provision and the systems for checking improvements. Above all, she has created a positive learning atmosphere in which the views of all staff are valued. As a result, there have been improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and pupils' behaviour and enjoyment of school. Supported well by two skilled assistant heads and effective teacher leaders, the school is now focused on making further improvements. The progress that pupils now make in lessons indicates that achievement is strengthening from the current satisfactory levels. This work is further strengthened by the excellent support provided by the local authority and the consultant headteacher provided by 'London Challenge'.

Governance is satisfactory. Although governors usually support the school well, they do not have a sufficiently strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development in order to check on improvements being made.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for being kind to us, talking so honestly about your school and sharing with us all the things that you are doing to make it better for all of you. We are writing to let you know our findings.

We think that you have some really good ideas that other schools should do too, like your friendship bench. We think that the guarantee by the school council that someone will join you if you are feeling down shows how much you care for each other. We agree with you that your new headteacher is doing a super job in making the school better and things are now at least satisfactory. We think that all the managers and staff are working in harmony to improve your education. We know that you have worked hard with your teachers to improve behaviour and we think that it is now good, so well done! In the past not all children have done as well as they might but you are doing better now. We know how much the assemblies mean to you and how important they are in making you feel part of the school. The music you made together was awesome.

The inspectors have asked the school to help you to make even more progress by making important changes.

- We think you should do even better in your lessons, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and that knowing and working to targets would help you even more.
- We think that the governors who are in charge of the school should visit more often to help the school improve.
- Some of you do not come to school as regularly as you could, so we have asked the school to work with your parents to get you to school and stop you falling behind.

Work hard to reach your targets, continue to look after each other and enjoy your lessons.

Thank you again, and do well!

Andrew LyonsLead inspector