

Ilderton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100795
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	307485
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	339
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	87
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Gilda Chambers
Headteacher	Mrs Liz Hills
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Varcoe Road London SE16 3LA
Telephone number	020 7237 3980
Fax number	020 7252 1541

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a culturally diverse community. Free school meal eligibility is high. Two-thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups representing pupils of Black African or Black Caribbean heritages. A quarter of pupils have a mother tongue other than English, although very few are at an early stage of learning English. Many more pupils than in most other primary schools need extra help with their learning. These pupils are mostly identified with specific learning and moderate learning difficulties, although a significant number have speech, language and communication difficulties. Provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is through Nursery and Reception classes. The school's work has been recognised by the Artsmark Gold award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and it is one of very few schools to have received a Platinum Sing-Up award. Since October 2007, Ilderton Primary has been in a federation with another local school led by a joint governing body and one headteacher.

The school hosts the local authority after-school club and a holiday play scheme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Governors and staff are accurate in their view that Ilderton Primary is a good school. Senior staff and governors are coping well with the challenges of managing the two schools in the federation, which has brought a fresh impetus to the school and enabled its leaders to flourish. The achievement and well-being of every child, whatever their background, are central to its work. Parents are very pleased with the school. One summed up the positive responses of many when writing, 'I think Ilderton is a fantastic learning environment. My child has been consistently supported and encouraged to excel.'

Pupils are fine ambassadors for the school and are highly motivated. Their excellent behaviour contributes to the harmonious environment and sense of purpose. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons, the clubs and the use made of the school's proximity to central London for educational visits. Pupils know the importance of exercise and a balanced diet if they are to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Music makes a major contribution to school life and is another feature that pupils greatly enjoy. The school has gained national recognition for the quality of the pupils' singing and its choir.

Pupils speak highly of their school and the links forged locally and further afield. The imaginative activities involving the wider community give pupils a sharp insight into how their environment can be looked after and improved. Various activities, such as the 'junior street leaders' project when pupils identify where the local area needs cleaning up, and the 'intergenerational' project finding out the concerns of the elderly, give them an appreciation of their community responsibilities. The school also provides wide ranging opportunities for pupils to value and celebrate the cultural diversity of the local community and the wider world.

There is some very lively teaching that keeps the pupils on the edge of their seats waiting for what comes next. 'We never get bored here.' as one pupil said, summed up the way the best teachers make every moment count. The pupils' good achievement is a result of the quality of much of the teaching, moving them from their below average starting points to standards that are broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. The recent focus on literacy has brought improvements in the pupils' writing. Their good personal qualities and basic skill development give pupils a very secure platform for success in the future.

The headteacher sets challenging targets and makes sure the necessary support is available to help pupils to achieve them. Leaders are adept at identifying where teachers need additional guidance to improve the pupils' learning. The school has many examples of success in developing its own staff into skilled practitioners. Any underachievement is spotted quickly and action taken if a pupil is falling behind, such as with their reading. Senior leaders recognise that progress is uneven across the school. Not all teaching is of the same high quality, particularly when questions do not extend thinking and computers are not used to enhance learning. Marking varies in quality and pupils are not always clear about how to meet their learning targets.

Under the astute leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, everyone remains focused sharply on continuing the improvements seen in recent years. The headteacher, staff and governors know how good the school is and where it is going. It is well placed to achieve its goal of becoming outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Parents are happy with the EYFS and particularly the care for their children, who settle well into the Nursery and Reception classes thanks to the support and close relationships between staff and home. All adults successfully promote the children's personal development and well-being, so that they are well prepared for learning by the end of Reception. Good teamwork ensures that children are happy, able to make friends and work together constructively. The high expectations of behaviour mean that children listen carefully and quickly become familiar with the routines. Children enter the EFYS classes with skills below those expected of their age. They make satisfactory progress, and most reach expected goals by the end of Reception, although some still have further to go. Children in the Nursery enjoy the range of activities in both the indoor and outdoor areas. They choose their own activities, explore their world and share with their friends, although adults miss opportunities to extend the children's learning through more detailed and focused questioning. Learning activities for children in the Reception classes are limited by the shortcomings to the outdoor area. The school is aware that this area needs redesigning. Teachers' planning ensures that all the areas of learning are covered, but assessment is not clearly identified or used to plan future activities. Although only recently appointed, the new manager has already identified where action is needed to improve EYFS provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring greater consistency to learning by developing questioning and the use of computers in classrooms.
- Use targets and marking more effectively to help pupils understand the next steps to take in their learning.
- Raise achievement in EYFS by making better use of assessment information to plan appropriate activities so that children are making better progress in each area of learning and by providing a more suitable outside classroom for Reception children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils build well on their solid start in the EYFS and make good progress in the rest of the school from generally below average attainment on entry to Year 1. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of different ethnic groups. Standards are rising. Test results for Year 2 were below average in 2007 in all areas, but show some improvement this year, particularly in mathematics. Year 6 test results rose sharply in 2007, when they were above average. This year group was somewhat exceptional for the school. Results have fallen slightly this year, although the trend over the last few years remains upwards. Pupils receiving extra help with their learning also make good progress, and their test results are often much better than those gained by similar pupils nationally. Similarly, the attention given in class, and through additional help when needed, helps pupils new to English make similarly good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show great respect for others and learn about their place in the diverse world of today. They are very considerate towards each other, relishing the opportunity to take on responsibility

for helping in school and on the playgrounds. Pupils value the opportunity to share their views and make a difference through the school council. Pupils show that they can reflect on, and make sensible decisions about, how to deal with issues such as bullying. They know how to stay safe and how to deal with risks in their everyday lives. Behaviour is of a high standard. Pupils are polite and very keen to show how proud they are of their school. Pupils also value the experience of mixing with others from a wide range of backgrounds and enjoy sharing their cultural experiences and learning about their traditions. These factors all account for the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Attendance is only satisfactory, because of high rates of absence by a small number of pupils. The school is working hard to get the parents to see the importance of regular attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Many of the teachers generate a love of learning in the pupils and show that they have high aspirations for what they can achieve. They adapt lessons well to tackle the individual learning needs of the pupils in their classes and use new technology to explain new ideas clearly. They deploy the team of support staff carefully so that they can maximise learning for pupils who need additional help. Pupils respond well to their teachers' demands and enjoy discussing their ideas with each other before sharing them with the whole class. This helps to give them confidence as well as developing their speaking. The 'no hands up' rule is very effective in keeping everyone on their toes, because they never know when they are going to be put on the spot. The more effective teachers expect detailed responses from pupils, but this is not the case in all classrooms, where teachers do not consistently probe the pupils' understanding of new ideas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to meet the variety of learning needs in this diverse school community. Basic skills are given good attention and links between subjects explored to revitalise the curriculum with writing acting as a major focus. However, pupils do not use their computer skills or the new technology available in classrooms to extend their learning. The pupils' experiences are much enriched by the very popular clubs and activities such as drama, the involvement of a poet, and a close relationship with local theatres. Pupils get plenty of exercise in school and through the extra sporting activities, benefiting from the input of specialist coaches. Music adds much to the pupils' experiences and enjoyment, from learning an instrument to singing in the choir. Close links with the London Philharmonic Orchestra mean that much attention is given to the classical aspects of culture.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are pleased that the care of their children is at the heart of school life. All arrangements to secure their health, safety and welfare are robust and conscientiously implemented. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and always have someone to turn to if they have any problems. They praise the staff for their help and advice. The school has developed effective systems to check pupils' progress and implement action if underachievement

is spotted. It utilises every avenue of external expertise to support the specific needs of pupils who have difficulty with learning. This leads to them making good progress academically as well as towards their individual targets. These factors also account for some of the impressive progress of individual pupils, particularly those new to English. Marking is variable and does not always show what pupils how to improve. Furthermore, their individual learning targets, set by their previous teacher, do not always relate to their current work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's improvement in recent years is down to the strong team of senior leaders and governors. They have successfully placed the school at the heart of the community, and have provided a clear direction during a period of considerable change. The first year of the federation has been a valuable learning experience for all and has benefited the school by challenging and extending the senior managers and governors. The part played by other staff in leading and checking on the success of developments is more effective than at the last inspection. All are now involved in the cycle of monitoring and providing support and guidance for their colleagues. This has helped to consolidate the drive for improvement. It gives all leaders an accurate view of the school's qualities and identifies the next steps in its development. The exception to this has been in the EYFS, where leadership is only now tackling some of the weaker aspects of provision. The governing body's path through the changes this year has been thoughtfully plotted. Governors provide strong support for shaping the direction for the school. Its future is in safe hands.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ilderton Primary School, London, SE16 3LA

You will probably remember that we visited your school recently and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would just like to say thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so ready to share your thoughts about your school. We had a chance to talk to quite a lot of you and we have told your teachers how you were very helpful and polite. Through our discussions with you, it was great to hear how much you enjoy school. It was also good to hear about how safe you feel in school and that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried. We thought that you showed a real concern for your local environment and your community.

Ilderton Primary is a good school with several impressive things about it, not the least of which is your excellent behaviour. Teachers and support staff care for you well and make learning enjoyable through the clubs and other activities. The school is good in helping you to keep fit, safe and healthy. Your teachers and other staff make learning challenging and interesting. This helps you to achieve well. Most of you reach the standards expected of you by the time you leave and some of you do better than this.

Even a good school like yours can improve. We have asked your teachers to push learning forward more rapidly in all classrooms by expecting more from your spoken answers, by planning for greater use of your computer skills and by using targets and marking to improve your learning. We have also asked them to make better use of assessment information when planning activities for the youngest children, and to improve the outdoor space in Reception.

The staff and governors want the school to continue to be successful and we know you will play your part by continuing to behave so well and working so hard. Some of you also need to attend more regularly. We wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector