

Edgware Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101276
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	307637
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kristine Cronhelm
Headteacher	Mr Alan May
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Heming Road Edgware HA8 9AB
Telephone number	020 8952 1472
Fax number	020 8952 1471

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Many of the pupils attending this larger than average school come from backgrounds of hardship and high social need, as evidenced by the very high number eligible for free school meals. More than three-quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and more than half speak English as their second language, with a large proportion still at an early stage of learning English. Several pupils, particularly those who come to the country as refugees, join and leave partway through their junior school education. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties, mostly with emotional and behavioural problems. Pupils' attainment when they join the school varies widely, but it is below average overall.

The school is part of the 'Excellence in Clusters' initiative, which funds some of the learning support for pupils. There is a breakfast club that operates before school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Edgware Junior provides a satisfactory education for its pupils but there are several good and some outstanding aspects of its provision. The headteacher and leadership team have been especially effective in creating a positive sense of shared community within the school, so that pupils from very different backgrounds mix and get on exceptionally well together. The way that pupils are helped to grow in confidence and self-esteem is impressive. They have an excellent appreciation of their own and each other's cultural heritage which contributes to the way they treat each other with politeness and respect. Parents comment on how much their children love coming to school. As one, typically, commented, 'My daughter enjoys every minute of her school day'. Pupils feel safe and secure at school because they are so well looked after. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed very effectively, so that there is palpable improvement in their behaviour. As a result, behaviour and attitudes in most lessons and around the school are exemplary.

Pupils and their parents appreciate the way the curriculum is made interesting and exciting for the pupils, enhanced as it is by what they describe as 'a range of clubs that is excellent' and a striking array of opportunities in art, music and sport. The many pupils who join the school, other than at the start of Year 3, include a high proportion who come from overseas with little or no English. In some cases, the pupils have little or no prior schooling. These pupils benefit from very well planned induction arrangements and are well supported. As a result, they make often good progress from a sometimes very low base, though their standards generally lag behind those of other pupils, especially in reading and writing.

There are many good features of teaching, particularly in the way teachers vary activities to keep pupils interested and involved. This results in pupils who are extremely well motivated. The school is not doing enough, however, to capitalise on the pupils' enthusiasm to ensure that they make consistently good progress. Results dipped in the 2007 national tests but pupils' work shows that standards are better this year. They are still, however, below average. More able pupils, in particular, do not do as well as they should because they are not set challenging enough work. As a parent put it, 'Some children should be pushed to achieve better results, instead of putting up with average'. Though there are examples of very good marking, there is still much that gives insufficient practical guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. In some cases, basic errors, such as lack of full stops and capital letters go uncorrected, even among otherwise able writers. Pupils all have, and most know, their individual targets, but some targets are too vague to help drive improvement in their work.

School leaders have a generally accurate picture of how well the school is doing and of those areas that could be improved. They monitor teaching and learning regularly, although the focus of their lesson observations is not always sharp enough. Where, for example, areas for improvement are identified, these are not routinely followed up in subsequent observations. Nevertheless, the school's many successes show its good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Better match work in lessons to pupils' capabilities, so that more able pupils, in particular, are challenged and extended.
- Provide clear guidance, through marking and individual targets, that shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

- Ensure that, when they monitor lessons, school leaders follow up areas identified for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Results in the Year 6 national tests in 2007 were the school's lowest for some years. Those pupils who spent all four years at Edgware Junior did markedly better than those who joined other than at the start of Year 3, but even these pupils' results were low in mathematics. Very few pupils exceeded the nationally expected level. Current work is of a higher standard. Whilst it is still below average overall, this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. The progress pupils make in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Pupils with behavioural difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English benefit from good support which helps them to make at least similar progress to others in the class. In some cases, these pupils make very good progress. By contrast, more able pupils do not all do as well as they should because not enough is expected of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent because they are supported by clear expectations. Pupils greatly enjoy school. As one child explained, 'This is a really friendly and polite school where everyone gets on well'. The atmosphere within school is warm and friendly so that pupils feel secure and safe. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils say that they are confident that it is dealt with quickly. There have been improvements in attendance, which is now average. The pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and this is reflected in their choice of school meals, the vast majority of lunchboxes and pupils' enthusiastic take-up of sports. The school has a very active school council that readily takes on responsibilities. It is proud of its achievements, such as the 'Buddy Benches' and the 'Adventure Trail'. Pupils make significant contributions to the local and wider community through, for example, charity fundraising and visits to local nursing homes. Productive links with schools abroad and taking positive advantage of the school's own cultural diversity, coupled with work on global art and music, have given pupils an excellent understanding of their own and other cultures. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved still further since the last inspection and is now outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Staff get on well with their pupils and this motivates the children to listen and concentrate because they are eager to please. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so that they are ready to learn. Pupils with behavioural difficulties and those for whom English is not their first language are very well supported by dedicated teaching assistants. However, work in lessons

is not always closely enough matched to pupils' different capabilities. In particular, more able pupils are not always given challenging enough work. Pupils themselves describe some of their work as 'too easy'. Although pupils are taught in ability sets in mathematics, each class still includes pupils with a wide range of capabilities but, too often, all pupils in the set do the same work, which limits their progress.

The quality of marking varies. Some encourages pupils to think carefully about their work and gives them very clear guidance on the next steps in their learning. Other marking gives pupils insufficient pointers as to how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A key feature of the school's imaginative curriculum is the excellent enrichment, both in lessons and through clubs, trips and visits. This benefits every pupil. The many artistic, musical, language and sporting activities, both during and after the school day, provide pupils with stimulating tasks that contribute strongly to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils who arrive at the school with little or no English are particularly well served by the curriculum which successfully takes their needs into account. There is a good focus on literacy and numeracy, though not enough is geared to the needs of more able pupils. Although information, communication and technology (ICT) skills are well taught in ICT lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their ICT skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'The staff care deeply for the children and their families, and it shows'. This comment from a parent represented the views of many who wrote to voice their appreciation for the high standards of care at the Edgware Junior. The school has excellent arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and health. Child protection and health and safety procedures are carefully managed. Rules and requirements for checking staff, visitors and safety are fully in place and records are exemplary. The school's ethos is one in which everyone feels positive about themselves and is caring towards others.

The school has a good knowledge of pupils' academic progress and identifies pupils who need additional support. Good links have been established with parents and the school works hard to support families as well as pupils. Guidance for improvement is given to pupils through some thoughtful, helpful marking but this is not consistent throughout the school. All pupils are given their own targets for improvement and respond well to them but again these vary in quality. There are good systems for sharing targets with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The success of the leadership is seen in the overwhelming confidence expressed in it by parents, who comment that the school is 'well run' and has a 'great atmosphere'. The headteacher and leadership team have succeeded in creating a harmonious community where pupils from all backgrounds get on well. Its impact is seen in the excellent personal development of pupils and in the exciting enrichment activities offered to them. School leaders have particularly focused on providing good support for pupils who arrive with little previous schooling or with

little or no English. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's and individual pupils' performance, but their monitoring of lessons is not as effective as it could be. School leaders regularly observe lessons and are perceptive in identifying areas for improvement, including, for example, that work is not closely enough matched to the needs of the more able, but they do not routinely follow up these shortcomings by making them the focus of subsequent observations. This is a key reason why the school has not translated the pupils' enthusiasm and excellent personal development into better rates of progress and standards. The governing body provide satisfactory support for the school but are at an early stage in developing their role in challenging school leaders over standards and achievement.

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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?	3
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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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

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.

Annex A

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edgware Junior School, Edgware, HA8 9AB

Thank you for making me so welcome when the other inspectors and I came to visit your school. I am writing to tell you what we found. The school is giving you a satisfactory education but there is much about your school that is good and there were some things we thought were outstanding.

We were especially impressed by how well you behave and get on with each other. You told us how much you enjoy all the interesting things you get to do at school and how staff help you to feel safe. You also told us just how important it is to eat healthy food and to exercise regularly. We were delighted to see how keen you are to learn in lessons. We were disappointed therefore that this wasn't resulting in higher standards, especially in English and mathematics. Those of you who need extra help, and especially those of you who are still at an early stage of learning English, benefit from good support that helps you to make strong progress. Some of you told us that work was too easy and we have asked teachers to make sure that you are all given challenging work to do so that you all achieve the very best you can. Even when you are taught in sets, as in mathematics, you are naturally not all working at the same level and so you should not all be doing similar work.

We were pleased that most of you know your targets. Often these are helping you to improve your work, but we think some of your targets, and more of the marking, could give you sharper guidance on what you need to do to do better.

Your school is well run. It is good to see that the school leaders keep a close eye on how well you are all doing. As you know, teachers visit each other's lessons from time to time to look out for ways of making them even better. We have asked the school to make sure that when they do this, they follow up suggestions from previous visits.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your best and by asking your teachers how you can improve your work.

Best wishes,

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector