

Ainslie Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130343
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	315617
Inspection dates	9–10 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)	434
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	103
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Midge Broadley
Headteacher	Ms Sonia Titcomb
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	140 Ainslie Wood Road Waltham Forest London E4 9DD
Telephone number	020 8523 7913
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves a diverse community in which over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A quarter of pupils speak another language in addition to English. Many pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. The proportion eligible for a free school meal is above average. Fewer pupils than in most other primary schools are identified as in need of extra help with their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises Nursery and Reception classes. During 2006/07, the school formed a soft federation with two other primary schools to share good practice. The school has the Activemark award in recognition of its success in physical education. The school hosts an after-school club run by the YMCA.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

There is significant underachievement throughout the school, including in the EYFS, largely because teaching is inadequate, progress in lessons is slow and teaching rarely inspires. As a result, many pupils are considerably behind where they should be by the end of Year 6. From their starting points which are around those expected for their age, many pupils make slow progress so that standards are below average by the age of eleven. There are exceptions to this and some pupils do much better than might be expected, but they are few in number.

The quality of teaching is inconsistent and teachers generally expect too little of the pupils and give them few opportunities to show initiative or take responsibility. Hence, pupils do not make the necessary strides in the development of their skills and personal qualities to give a strong base for success at secondary school and beyond. The school's dedication to the pastoral care of its pupils is one of its strengths. Pupils say that they 'like the way the teachers help us when we're confused or stuck'. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and they are keen to learn, but playtimes can be boisterous affairs with little constructive activity organised. Pupils generally feel safe, but not all are happy at playtimes and some say that adults do not deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. Parents are largely happy with the school and most report that their children enjoy the clubs and other activities provided for them.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are aware of the school's shortcomings, but their action to improve teaching has not resulted in sustained progress. Much of the successful action since the last inspection has relied on outside help. Any improvement made has not lasted once this support has been removed. Attendance had improved but fell again in 2007/08. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to take responsibility for learning or helping around the school. Year 2 assessment results are lower than at the time of the last inspection, while at Year 6 they have varied over time and between subjects. The exception to this has been the reasonably successful work undertaken by the school to improve pupils' writing.

Other leaders, besides the headteacher and deputy headteacher, play only a very limited role in supporting the drive for improvement and governors do not expect enough from staff. Individual targets for pupils and those for the performance of teachers are not sufficiently challenging to raise achievement or improve provision rapidly. Self-evaluation is not focussed sufficiently on the impact of any action taken and does not act as a secure base from which to plan for rapid and sustained improvement in achievement. This means that the school does not have a secure base from which to tackle its current shortcomings.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with the skills expected for their age, but make slow progress so that by the end of the Reception year less than half achieve the nationally expected goals. This is because teachers' expectations of what children can achieve are too low. Tasks are not challenging enough or planned sufficiently to meet their individual needs. Adults provide a caring, safe, welcoming environment in which children are happy and

secure. Children are confident and respectful of each other in their work and play. They concentrate well when choosing their own activities, are good listeners, keen learners and follow instructions competently. The school works soundly in partnership with parents and relationships are good. Most of the conversation that staff have with the children is instructional. Teachers and other staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings and develop their speaking skills. Systems to assess children's attainment and progress are newly devised with the intention to be more rigorous than in the past. These arrangements have not been in place long enough to judge their effectiveness in raising standards. The Reception class has activities each day in the school playground. This is an inadequate environment with limited equipment to support the children's physical development. Throughout the EYFS, much time is spent organising children and equipment, which detracts from the time available for teaching. The leaders of the EYFS do not focus sufficiently on high quality planning, evaluation, extending learning and improving the children's achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Focus leaders and managers work at all levels on bringing about sustained improvement in pupils' achievement throughout the school.
- Raise expectations of everyone through setting more challenging targets and checking everyone is working to their potential.
- Give pupils greater responsibility in school life and for their learning.
- Provide more activities outside at lunchtime to channel the pupils' interest and energy.

Provide for more effective learning in the EYFS by:

- ensuring that all adults demonstrate higher expectations through the activities they plan
- giving children the opportunity to develop their speaking skills through a better balance of instructions and open questions
- improving provision for outdoor play in Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The slow progress of children in the EYFS is mirrored across the rest of the school. Progress is inadequate in lessons and leads to considerable underachievement by a significant number of pupils. Year 2 assessment results have fallen in recent years. They were broadly average in 2007 and remained at a similar level in 2008. Year 6 test results have fluctuated. They were average in English and lower than the national average in mathematics and science in 2007. There was no significant improvement in 2008, although this group of pupils had attained above-average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Achievement is particularly weak in mathematics, where pupils make insufficient progress and fall considerably behind where they ought to be given their Year 2 assessment results. The progress of pupils who receive extra support with their learning or language development does not follow a consistent pattern. This is mainly because the impact of support staff varies as they are not always deployed to best effect in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' positive attitudes to work are matched by their good behaviour in lessons. They take advantage of the school grounds for exercise and understand the importance for their future

of a healthy lifestyle. Meal times are sociable and relaxed, but the requirement for pupils to remain in lengthy queues is a wasted opportunity for more productive activity. Pupils enjoy each other's company. Although most act sensibly, with due care for their own safety and that of others, their behaviour is more boisterous during playtimes when their energy is not harnessed as well as it could be. Pupils learn to respect the beliefs and cultures of other people, and gain a fair understanding of the part they can play in today's world. Pupils have some opportunities, like the recently formed school council, to take on responsibility and develop their independence but the impact is quite limited. These factors contribute to the pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

There is little teaching of a good quality and a considerable amount that is inadequate. Lessons do not inspire and the pace of learning is often pedestrian. Pupils are keen to do well, but are not always clear about the purpose of the work they are doing and how they can achieve success. Teachers do not use targets for pupils consistently or set clear outcomes so that lessons build learning sufficiently rapidly. The recent addition of interactive whiteboards in the classrooms motivates and enables staff to access a wide range of resources, but the potential to add interest is often missed. Pupils enjoy sharing and clarifying their ideas with their 'talk partners', but this is another missed opportunity in many lessons. Furthermore, teachers dominate by talking too much and do not involve pupils sufficiently through their questioning. Group and paired work is minimal and pupils have few opportunities to take responsibility for their learning, show initiative and develop independence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils agree that they enjoy their learning. Basic skills are given reasonable attention but pupils have few opportunities to use their computer skills to support learning in other subjects. A recent review led to the provision of more linked and creative teaching programmes. New themes build in planned visits, visitors and links between subjects with more opportunity for practical work and investigation. Working with drummers, music, dance and story-telling over an extended period gave the pupils a deeper understanding of aspects of parts of African culture and key personalities. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and sessions introduced to extend their learning and thinking. Many initiatives are new and their impact on pupils' achievement has not been evaluated. Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities including sport and leisure. These receive a good take up and make a satisfactory contribution to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a safe environment for pupils with secure child protection procedures, risk assessments, and regular monitoring of health and safety. However, members of staff do not always deal effectively with incidents of poor behaviour and bullying. Parents indicate that they are generally confident that their children are well looked after. Newcomers to the school are helped to settle smoothly. Assessment is used to identify where extra help is needed if

pupils are falling behind, but additional support does not lead to consistent improvement. Pupils are given targets for their work in literacy and numeracy but some of these are too general, and so pupils are not sufficiently helped to understand how to improve their work. The standard of guidance, such as through marking, is variable. Some helps the pupils to have a clear picture of the next steps to take in their learning, but this is not consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school's action plan identifies priorities for development but expectations and timescales for improvement are set too far in the future. Extensive staff training has not led to lasting improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders and managers work at all levels continues to be ineffective. Middle leaders make only a limited contribution to raising standards and are not held sufficiently to account for their performance. Monitoring focuses on processes not on impact, and self-evaluation gives too favourable a view of the school's qualities. Targets to raise standards are unambitious and maintain the current slow rate of progress. The school is involved with a range of local groups and through these foster a sense of community. Membership of the federation increases curriculum enrichment and staff development but has yet to benefit pupils' achievement. The school carried a deficit budget at the end of the 2007/08 financial year, which it plans to eliminate during this financial year. The governing body does not have robust procedures by which it can gain a clear view of the school's qualities. One consequence is that governors are not sufficiently challenging in holding the school to account for its current performance.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	4
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	4
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	4
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	4
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

21 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ainslie Wood Primary School, London, E4 9DD

You will 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 good to hear how much you enjoy school.

We recognise that Ainslie Wood Primary School does some things well but there are major weaknesses in some important areas. For this reason, we have decided that your school requires help to improve. The youngest children do not have the start they need in the Nursery and Reception classes and we have made some suggestions to improve matters. In all classes, we think you should all be doing better in English, mathematics and science and be set challenging targets. Some of the teaching has not been good enough and this has led to you not making the progress of which you are capable.

You behave well in lessons, but some of you can be a bit rough at playtimes. For this reason, we have asked your teachers to provide more organised activities for you on the playgrounds. We are also suggesting that they give you more opportunity to show how well you can take responsibility around the school and in the classroom. Some of you also need to attend more regularly.

We know that the adults in the school work hard to care for you. We are sure that the staff will do their best during the coming months to improve the school. They will be helped to carry out these improvements and inspectors will visit regularly to check the progress the school is making.

We wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector