

Dersingham Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102716
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	323677
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	310
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Clements
Headteacher	Miss Joanne Bezer
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lawrence Avenue London E12 5QP
Telephone number	020 8478 2133
Fax number	020 8514 5206

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in four Reception classes. Nine out of ten pupils on the school roll are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Bangladeshi. A large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, with 46 languages spoken in all. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties. The school is a member of the Manor Park loose federation of schools, an organisation that succeeded what used to be the Education Action Zone. The school has awards for promoting healthy lifestyles and for its physical education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Dersingham Infant School provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. It is emerging from a period of transition with a confident and motivated senior leadership team. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, and this is being realised with the effective support of the new deputy head and other senior leaders. While standards are low overall, pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points, and data show that in the past eighteen months, standards in reading and writing have been rising. This is because of specific interventions that the leadership team have introduced to improve the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), and to create more opportunities for writing. Standards in science are closer to average because pupils have plenty of opportunities for practical activities. One factor that is hindering a noticeable minority of pupils from achieving their best is their inadequate attendance. While the school has put many measures in place to reduce absence, including employing a family liaison worker, some families still do not fully appreciate how important it is for their children to be at school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good or better teaching is not enough to ensure that all pupils achieve well, so enabling standards to rise faster. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and supportive, meaning that pupils are keen to learn. However, there is inconsistency in how well this enthusiasm is harnessed between classes, and in how precisely tasks are matched to suit pupils' abilities. The staff are fairly inexperienced, with a high proportion of teachers in the first year of their career. These teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to observe the good practice that goes on in parts of the school, in order to help improve their own skills. Pupils say that changes to the curriculum make learning more enjoyable, with more activities to do, including drama and role play. The school has begun to make its curriculum more relevant to pupils, studying in history the patterns of migration into London. However, there is further scope for this work to be expanded and for the presently satisfactory curriculum to come alive.

The pastoral care of pupils is good, with particular strength in how vulnerable individuals are supported, enabling them to be included in all activities. Good links with outside agencies assist this work. Satisfactory provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties enables them to achieve as well as their peers. There is good support for pupils at the earliest stages of learning English, so that they quickly become more confident speakers. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The new marking policy is not consistently implemented in all classes, so that some pupils are not as clear as others are about what they have to do to improve their work. The school enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their personal development and well-being, as they understand about staying healthy and trust adults they can turn to if they have a problem. The school council are keen to 'make the school beautiful', and pupils support one another as playground friends. They raise money for charity and get involved in their local community. While basic skills are low, pupils grow in confidence at the school and develop some good work habits, meaning that overall they are satisfactorily prepared for junior school.

The impact of the new leadership team is satisfactory, as they are becoming familiar with their roles and responsibilities. Leaders monitor teaching regularly and give helpful advice. They know the school's strengths and areas to improve. Some of their judgements about the school's effectiveness are too generous, as they do not always focus on the impact of their actions on pupils. Governors are supportive, but their monitoring is too informal. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection and is on a sound footing for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are very low, especially in language and literacy and in their personal and social development. They settle quickly and enjoy the appropriate range of activities that are available for them to explore. The classrooms are spacious and well resourced, with an excellent shared outdoor area. The main shortcoming of the provision is the fact that the day is too tightly structured, which means that children have to keep stopping and starting activities. Formal playtimes in the mornings and afternoons use up curriculum time that would be better spent extending learning, both inside and outside the classroom. Assessment is thorough and enables staff to build up a clear picture of how well the children are doing. Children make satisfactory progress in their Reception year, although many do not reach all the expected learning goals by the time they leave, because of their very low starting points. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with a committed team of teachers and support staff working closely together. Because the Early Years Foundation Stage leader does not have a class, she is able to support and monitor the provision on a regular basis, and this has a positive impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics further by ensuring that work is well matched to pupils' abilities and that all pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by creating opportunities for teachers to observe and discuss existing good practice.
- Revise the daily timetable for the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that children have extended sessions of learning, both inside and outside the classrooms.
- Improve attendance by giving even greater urgency to impressing upon parents the importance of good attendance and the poor consequences for children of persistent absence.

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

Standards in reading and writing are very low by the end of Year 2. They are below average in mathematics, and close to average in science. Steps that the school has taken to improve reading and writing are beginning to have an impact, with standards in reading rising in 2008 following the introduction of a new phonics scheme. This year there has been a focus on teaching the skills of writing through extended projects, with the effect that progress in Year 2 is good. In previous years, standards remained fairly static, so the school realises the importance of building on this work. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their very low starting points. This includes pupils with moderate learning difficulties, who have appropriate support to reach the targets on their individual education plans. Pupils at the earliest stages of learning English make good progress because of the focused support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory as they build their confidence in an attractive and purposeful learning environment. They have a sound appreciation of their own and other cultures, and enjoy the special events that help to enrich the curriculum, such as a drumming workshop during Black History month. Behaviour is satisfactory. It is often good in the playground, but pupils' concentration can lapse in lessons if the work does not fully engage them. Attendance is inadequate. As an infant school, pupils are prone to the full range of childhood diseases. However, there are also some families who do not give attending school the priority it deserves. Pupils contribute to the local community by singing to the elderly and meeting politicians. They help to improve the environment by planting trees in a local park. Pupils benefit from the school's Healthy School status, taking plenty of exercise, including swimming throughout the year. They say they feel safe at school and know what to do in an emergency. Their improving basic skills, and an active approach to learning, mean that they develop a sound basis for their future education. As one pupil said, 'I try to use my skills - I'm nearly getting there.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While all teaching is at least satisfactory, not enough is good or better so as to ensure that all pupils achieve well and standards rise rapidly. There is some very strong teaching in the school, with the emphasis on moving learning forward, high expectations from teachers, and work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. However, this is not consistently the case. All lessons have a clear objective, and teachers reflect upon what has been learnt at the end. In a successful lesson in Year 2, pupils discussed the characteristics of heroes and villains in Red Riding Hood, giving evidence for their opinions. There is some good questioning, although where classroom management is weaker, pupils tend to shout out rather than wait to be asked. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties are included well in lessons, receiving valuable support from teaching assistants. Planning takes account of the high numbers of pupils whose first language is not English, with an emphasis on developing their speaking skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets pupils' needs adequately, and has improved with the introduction of a more thematic approach. Information and communication technology is used more widely to enable pupils to practise their skills across a range of subjects, especially since the school purchased some laptops. There is a good range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum, and themed weeks such as Environment Week add variety. Much of this work is at an early stage, and the curriculum does not fully reflect the cultures, interests or aspirations of the pupils. A focus on involving pupils more in their own learning has contributed positively to their personal development and enjoyment of school. Pupils who re-enacted the Irish potato famine gained a real insight into conditions for families at that time.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers show the pupils care and consideration, treating them as individuals. The school meets all requirements for safeguarding pupils. Improvements in the way that pupils' progress is tracked mean that those at risk of falling behind are identified quickly, and interventions put in place to support them. The impact of this help is monitored closely, with factors such as their attendance record built in to give an overall picture of how the child is progressing. Particularly vulnerable pupils are supported well, often with one-to-one assistance. Provision for pupils with other learning needs is generally satisfactory. The school has established strong relationships with a range of outside agencies and other schools across the federation. This enables staff to access support and advice and additional resources, such as the setting up of a sensory room. Pupils all have targets for improvement, in some instances displayed imaginatively on classroom walls. However, there is variation in how well they know what to do next to improve, as marking is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Changes to the leadership team mean that, apart from the headteacher, other leaders are new to their roles. Together, they have built momentum for change, with a more systematic approach to monitoring that involves middle managers as well. None of the key leaders have their own class, a strategic decision that is helping to accelerate the school's progress towards improvement, as they have more time to monitor and to work alongside staff. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their pupils, and regular meetings ensure that provision matches pupils' needs. Many of the initiatives are relatively new, and so the full impact of them cannot be measured. However, rising standards and more rigorous monitoring indicate that the school is moving forward at a more rapid pace than has been the case in previous years. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, especially locally. Members of staff are drawn from the many cultures represented in the area and speak a variety of different languages. While there are good links with other local schools, the school has not established ties with schools in a different region of Britain, for example in a rural area, or in other parts of the world. The governing body is finding its voice as a critical friend, with governors asking searching questions. While governors visit the school on a regular basis, feedback is too informal and not written down so as to clarify the outcomes of the monitoring.

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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	3

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

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	4
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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

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

31 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dersingham Infant School, London, E12 5QP

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, which provides you with a satisfactory level of education. These are some of its strengths.

- Standards in science are better than those in other subjects.
- You take plenty of exercise and know how to live healthily.
- Behaviour in the playground is often good.
- Some of your lessons are really interesting, so that you learn quickly in them.
- There are plenty of visits and visitors for you to enjoy.
- Those of you who need lots of help are supported well.
- The school has good links with other schools and organisations.
- The new leadership team is working hard to help the school improve.

Standards are still too low in reading, writing and mathematics. To help them rise, we have asked your teachers to make sure the work is just right for you, not too easy or difficult. We have also asked them to see that you know what to do to improve. We are sure they would value hearing your opinions about what you enjoy doing. It would be helpful for them to spend more time in one another's classrooms, to share the good things that are going on. We believe that children in the Reception classes should spend longer getting really stuck in to their work, instead of having lots of different breaks. While most of you come to school regularly, some of you do not, and we have asked the school to make sure that your families know how important it is for you to attend school every day.

Thank you once again for helping us. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector