

James Wolfe Primary School with Centre for the Deaf

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131246
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	328570
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy HMI

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)	428
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	Ms Maureen Stapleton
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Deane
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Randall Place Greenwich London SE10 9LA
Telephone number	020 8858 2472

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Inspection number	328570

Fax number

020 8305 2910

Age group 3-11

Inspection dates 13-14 May 2009

Inspection number 328570

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

James Wolfe Primary School, which includes the Centre for the Deaf, is almost twice as large as the average primary school. It has a Nursery which, with two Reception classes, forms the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the proportion from minority ethnic groups. Approximately half the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is below average overall, although higher in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average, and the Centre makes provision for up to 23 deaf children.

There is on-site childcare provision which is managed by the local authority and was inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

James Wolfe Primary is a satisfactory school which has set its sights on improvement. At the heart of its vision is the aim for its pupils to become 'well-rounded, independent, with a desire to learn and a respect for others'. Pupils of all ages, from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 6, enjoy school. As one parent said, 'This is a vibrant and happy school where children of all social backgrounds and races mix well.'

Although pupils' enjoyment of school is evident, the school has correctly identified that the satisfactory progress that they make is not good enough. It is taking action on many fronts to ensure that its varied population has every opportunity to achieve. The system which it has introduced to track and identify the progress of both groups and individuals is helping staff to identify correctly areas for further improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who attend the Centre, make satisfactory progress. For these pupils, the school knows that challenging and appropriate targets are not consistently underpinned by accurate assessment.

A key factor in the school's burgeoning rise in standards and achievement is the introduction of a curriculum that is increasingly creative and exciting. This has added considerably to pupils' enjoyment of their learning and their quest for knowledge. However, it has yet to demonstrate full impact upon progress in all subject areas. Extensive enrichment activities enhance opportunities provided in school, so that pupils have a range of interesting sporting or creative clubs in which to develop their skills and interests.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school has taken some action to address elements of weaker teaching and to provide focused professional development and training. However, teaching remains variable across the school, and this is reflected in the quality of pupils' learning and progress. Systems to support high-quality teaching are not securely in place, nor are they monitored consistently by all the senior leaders. The phase and curriculum leaders are emerging as an increasingly strong element. Their input into school improvement has yet to have its full effect, because they are not yet sufficiently involved in self-evaluation nor held fully accountable for raising standards.

Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely positive. Personal development and well-being are good, being positively promoted through the school's inclusive approach. The strong focus on personal development ensures that behaviour around the school is good. Care, guidance and support have many strengths, although academic guidance, in the form of consistent marking and challenging target setting, is variable. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Substantial numbers are involved in helping to take part in and run activities in school and in the local community. Although standards in literacy and numeracy are only average, pupils benefit from opportunities to gain social and organisational skills which will help them in their future lives.

The headteacher's ambition for the school is well supported by the extremely active governing body. Together they make a strong and determined team, so the school has a sound basis from which to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

On entry to the Nursery, many children are at attainment levels which are below national expectations, especially in their language development and social skills. Some of the children do not speak English fluently. They make satisfactory progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they have made up for lost ground in some areas. They achieve particularly well in physical development because of the good provision for developing physical skills both inside and out of doors. However, they remain below average in aspects of communication, language and literacy. The introduction of targeted phonics sessions is helping to raise achievement in this aspect.

The personal and social development of children is good, and all children work and play together harmoniously. They develop good social and workplace skills through the creative setting up and use of role-play areas, for example a veterinary surgery. Children are encouraged to make choices and decisions for themselves, and they learn to be confident and independent. They readily approach adults for help with 'making a castle' or fastening their coats. The satisfactory provision made for their welfare means that they settle into school quickly and happily. They have positive relationships with staff and enjoy learning and playing, although opportunities are sometimes limited by the cluttered learning environment. The newly established leadership team has identified systems and processes to ensure that all learners consistently improve their rates of progress across all areas of learning, and is beginning to implement these.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for all learners through improved use of assessment and target setting.
- Ensure that systems and processes to support high-quality teaching and learning are securely in place and monitored rigorously.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels are held accountable and are involved in rigorous self-evaluation as a means to promoting achievement.

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

For all pupils, achievement overall is satisfactory. Standards reached by the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected nationally, although standards in reading are lower, with fewer pupils reaching the higher levels. This year, there has been a significant improvement in writing, with more pupils reaching or exceeding the expected levels. Interventions to raise standards in mathematics have not yet had a significant impact, particularly for pupils capable of reaching higher levels. In 2008, standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 were slightly above average in English, average in science, and slightly below in mathematics. The school has taken action to address shortfalls in mathematics, and this year more pupils are on track to reach the higher levels.

Target setting for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the Centre for the Deaf, is often focused upon what pupils will do rather than what they will learn. As a result, tracking and evidence of progress is less secure. However, the majority of pupils

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Strong links with parents and the local community help to promote this. Through the school's very inclusive and welcoming approach, pupils develop a good understanding of the range of different cultures and faiths in Britain today. Pupils' own contributions to the school and wider communities are good, and the school council enables pupils to contribute to school decision making with an increasingly earnest sense of responsibility. Pupils' adoption of a healthy lifestyle is demonstrated by the very large proportion who take part in sporting and other physical activities. They appreciate the lunches provided by the school's enthusiastic catering team, although some would like lunchtime in the hall to be a more relaxed experience.

Parents overwhelmingly feel that their children enjoy school. The school has taken seriously the views of some pupils who were worried about the behaviour of others and staff are continuing to monitor this. However, pupils generally behave well and act safely in and around school. They are not unduly concerned about bullying; they know what to do if any incidents occur, and say that the school will deal with them. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. The school continues to implement measures to improve this, with some success, but there remain a few pupils who find it hard to come to school on a regular basis.

Activities such as gardening and opportunities to be eco-warriors give the pupils first-hand experiences of caring for their planet. They take an active interest in the languages and cultures they experience, and enjoy communicating in a mixture of spoken and signed language. Levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy underpin satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being. The development of effective teamwork and cooperative skills stand pupils in good stead for the future. Year 6 pupils look forward to making their own radio programme. Others particularly enjoy running the school tuck shop, an initiative which came from the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is some variation in teaching and learning across the school. Where learning is strongest, the pace of lessons is brisk and teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think and develop their understanding of the topic covered. In these lessons, pupils have good opportunities for discussion and they are encouraged to evaluate their own learning. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons is too slow and the delivery does not take account of the needs and interests of different groups of pupils. Opportunities to check how well pupils are doing are missed, so it is difficult for teachers to gauge the progress that pupils have made in lessons, or what they have or have not understood. Teaching assistants are generally used well to support pupils who need help to complete a task. For some pupils, particularly those with additional learning or communication needs, staff are sometimes too keen to intervene, thus limiting opportunities for pupils to try for themselves.

Where work is appropriately matched to their abilities, pupils engage well, and there is some evidence that the teaching of writing and mathematics has improved since the start of the current school year. Pupils know their writing targets and are keen to discuss these. The quality of assessment and marking is variable. In the best examples, it supports target setting and helps pupils to improve their work, but this is not always the case.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum reflects the diversity of pupils' backgrounds well, and the school constantly seeks ways to enhance and develop this. It has made a good start in implementing a curriculum which links different subjects through interesting and creative topics. Although this is not yet fully embedded and formalised across the school, it is helping pupils to make meaningful links between subjects and to develop appropriate skills for learning. Well applied use of technology and good signing skills from specialist staff support effectively deaf pupils' access to the curriculum.

The school is rightly proud of the extra-curricular provision, which is strong and makes a positive impact on pupils' personal development and enjoyment. The morning exercise routine in the playground is a motivating way to start the day. Older pupils benefit from residential visits, and good use is made of the local and London museums, galleries and parks. The school is part of the three year 'Change' programme and pupils are involved with artists in residence and other exciting projects with obvious good impact. Themed weeks such as Book Week and the arts showcase are rightly popular with pupils, parents and staff. Music and art are real strengths of the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's commitment to providing high-quality care is demonstrated in the well-ordered and harmonious community in which pupils with different abilities, and from different backgrounds, are valued and work well together. A very large majority of parents, particularly those of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, say they are pleased with the support that their children receive. The school works well with a wide range of outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being. Guidance for pupils on how well they are doing, and what they could do to improve their work, is less strong.

The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at the early stages of learning English, are fully included in the life of the school and are able to benefit from all the opportunities it offers. However, support for these pupils is not always sufficiently focused on ensuring academic progress. The school has robust systems for safeguarding children, including vetting of staff appointments and that ensuring risk assessments are carried out regularly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has made many changes since the last inspection. The headteacher is committed to the challenging agenda which she and the governors have introduced to promote improvement. The restructuring of the leadership and management teams, including the bringing

of the Centre for the Deaf within the management of the school, has been a constructive move. Staff speak positively of the team ethos which exists within the school.

The school works extremely hard to include and involve all parents. A very large majority of parents express satisfaction with the school and how it is led and managed. The parents' association plays a valued role in making all feel included. The school has a comprehensive approach to promoting community cohesion, with evident impact. Its close relationship with the neighbouring community centre, and its involvement in local, national and international initiatives, provide the pupils with good opportunities to engage with their own and the wider communities. One parent glowingly describes the '...wonderful community that we will value for years to come' that is created by the school.

The governing body's skilled and experienced members are able to offer a very strong level of challenge. They provide a good model of expectation and accountability which is gradually spreading across the school. Increasingly realistic self-evaluation is helping the school to identify the right areas for development and to utilise resources accordingly. More challenging targets are being set and appropriately used to drive up standards. However, in some areas the pace of change has been too slow, and the impact upon raising standards is not yet evident for all.

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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?	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?	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/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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 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?	2
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	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**

01 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of James Wolfe Primary School with Centre for the Deaf, London, SE10 9LA

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed our visit. It was good to meet so many of you and to talk and sign with you. I particularly liked hearing some of your music, and we all very much enjoyed seeing the displays of your work around the school.

Your school is satisfactory. It does a good job in helping you to learn how to get on well together and how to lead safe and healthy lives. We could see that you enjoy being at school, and that you have very good relationships with the teachers and other people who help you. You are very polite and helpful.

There is a good range of things for you to do in and out of school, but not all your lessons help you to make as much progress as you can. Teachers try hard to make lessons interesting. You study some exciting things, but these do not always help you to improve your skills, particularly in mathematics. Marking and targets are not always clear enough to show you how well you are doing or how you could improve.

It was good to meet so many parents and people who look after you, and to see how well the school works with everybody around you. Quite a number of your parents are governors, and they are good at finding out how well the school is doing. Your headteacher and the staff have many ideas about how the school can get even better. We have asked them to:

- make sure that all your teachers help you to learn as well as you can in your lessons
- make sure that all the leaders and managers play their part in improving the school so that you all make as much progress as you can.

I hope that you will all try your best and do well in the future.

Yours faithfully

Anne Duffy

Her Majesty's Inspector