



Thames View Infants' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101200
LEA Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number 276466
Inspection dates 3 November 2005 to 4 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mike Thompson AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Bastable Avenue
School category	Community		Barking
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		IG11 0LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02082704317
Number on roll	341	Fax number	02082704319
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Miles
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs H D Collins

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Thames View Infants School serves an area of significant social deprivation. Over the past few years the cultural mix of its pupils has changed rapidly as the proportion of pupils of White British heritage has sharply declined. Almost two thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a small, but significant, proportion of these are asylum seekers. About a third of all pupils either join or leave the school during the course of each year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. From a low starting point pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The school is good at ensuring that pupils experience success, and grow in self confidence. However, this is sometimes achieved by pitching work at too low a level to challenge the more able pupils. As a result, the number of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level by the end of Year 2 is not as high as it might be. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and met. However, those who need extra help in learning English as an additional language make only satisfactory progress because their specific difficulties are not always fully understood. This occurs because of some weaknesses in assessing these pupils, together with rapid changes within the composition of the minority ethnic population. Teaching is satisfactory, and in some classes it is good. The school recognises that systems for checking pupils' progress need to be improved to help teachers set more challenging targets for their pupils to achieve. In addition, the performance of pupils with poor attendance records needs to be monitored in greater detail so that they can be given more effective encouragement to attend. The leadership of the headteacher is good, and leadership at other levels is satisfactory. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has devised a clear plan for further improvement. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. Changes in staffing, together with the focus provided by the school improvement plan, give the school a good platform for further progress.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards by improving systems for checking pupils' progress and tracking how well they are getting on, to ensure that: * teachers provide more consistently challenging work for more able pupils * the school becomes better informed about the performance of pupils with poor attendance * the school identifies more precisely the needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When they join the nursery, most children are well below the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. The new, high quality nursery helps staff to develop children's physical skills and play imaginatively. An effective system for checking on children's progress enables the staff team to know how children are developing and to set challenging targets. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in developing their social skills and their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas. Nonetheless, standards are below average by the time children move from reception to Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Those with learning difficulties do well because the school is good at identifying their individual needs and gives them a lot of help. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to

read and write in English make satisfactory progress. Other pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds generally do better than those of White British heritage. Although the school's performance in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 is below average overall, its results have steadily improved since the previous inspection in 1999. The school is effective in ensuring that a large proportion of pupils achieves the basic standards expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. However, it is less successful in challenging its more able pupils to exceed this basic level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils enjoy their education, are keen to succeed and try hard. The skills that pupils learn provide a sound platform for continued progress when they move to the junior school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In assemblies and lessons, pupils learn to develop a respect for themselves and others. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong, and behave well in classes and around the school. Pupils are considerate and get on well with one another regardless of race or gender. The good relationships evident throughout the school reflect the very strong emphasis which the school places on pupils' personal development and the good examples given by all adults. The school is also good at celebrating the cultural diversity of its community and pupils regularly learn about the different traditions of their classmates. For example, in religious education lessons, Muslim pupils take great pride in explaining to others how they worship. Children are being effectively prepared to play their part as citizens in a multi-ethnic society. Pupils make good progress in learning about keeping safe and healthy. They show a reasonable understanding of the benefits of eating fresh fruit and making safe choices for themselves and for their environment. The school successfully develops pupils' sense of achievement and increases their self-esteem. Although attendance rates have improved in recent years, they are still below the national average. Levels of unauthorised absence are much higher than the national average because of the transient nature of much of the school's local community. However the school is not yet doing enough to identify which groups of pupils are involved.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with some pockets of good practice. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well, and use this knowledge to help manage pupils' behaviour and create a positive atmosphere for learning. In a Year 1 class, for example, the calm, reassuring manner of a teaching assistant helped a pupil to overcome a problem with forming letters correctly and defused the child's frustration. The teachers use questions well to involve all pupils in the lessons. However, they too readily accept pupils' answers and often miss opportunities to correct grammar and poor English.

Teachers' planning generally caters well for pupils with learning difficulties and pupils of average ability, but more able pupils are not always challenged enough. Teachers place a good emphasis on ensuring that their pupils succeed, but this is sometimes achieved by lowering their expectations of what the most able could accomplish. The school recognises that arrangements for checking on pupils' rates of progress need to be improved and staff are in the process of introducing a new system. These new arrangements ensure that clear targets are set for individual pupils and are under regular review. Early indications are that this is beginning to accelerate the pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school correctly judges that it provides a satisfactory range of activities for its pupils. In the Foundation Stage a strong emphasis is placed on developing children's social and language skills and recent initiatives have further improved the range of activities available. The school works hard to compensate for the deprived social circumstances of many pupils. It makes sure that pupils, many of whom live in flats and have no opportunities for outdoor play at home, have regular opportunities for vigorous exercise, both in PE lessons and in lunchtime activities. It also ensures that pupils have opportunities to experience theatre productions and visits to places such as the seaside. However, the school's curriculum is not yet planned well enough to meet the wide variety of needs and abilities of the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties are effectively supported. However, the level of challenge for brighter children is not always great enough. Although the curriculum reflects the cultural diversity of the school's communities, the range of languages spoken by pupils continually varies as different ethnic groups move in to and out of the area. Important learning resources, such as bilingual books, to meet these changing needs are often in limited supply.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with parents' views that the school is good at looking after their children. The school is a safe place for pupils and it works hard to maintain this ethos in a challenging environment. At the heart of this is the good quality of day-to-day care given to all pupils. School staff know pupils' personal needs very well. Pupils are very confident that they can approach staff with their concerns and that any problems will be dealt with effectively. Health and safety requirements are properly met, and child protection procedures are effective. The school is particularly good at making pupils feel welcome. For instance, pupil recorded 'welcome tapes' in a number of different languages often help to integrate newcomers who speak little English. Taken overall, the help the school currently provides for pupils to improve their work is satisfactory. Teachers mark children's work carefully and talk to them about how to improve. However, new systems to track pupils' progress are not yet fully established. This means the school is not yet fully effective in ensuring that some groups of pupils,

such as those who are more able, make as much progress as they might. Similarly, the school is not yet tracking in sufficient detail the attendance of different groups of pupils and checking the impact of this upon their academic performance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's leadership is good. She knows the school very well and makes good use of information from regular monitoring to plan its development. She has ensured that the curriculum reflects the rich diversity of the local community and helps pupils to learn about and appreciate their own and others' cultural heritage. The headteacher has also developed a good partnership between the school and its parents who are pleased with what the school offers. The headteacher has built a good staff team, and uses them well. There is a clear sense of shared responsibility to ensure that pupils do well and are fully included in activities. The quality of middle management is satisfactory. Teachers satisfactorily monitor their areas of responsibility and use the information which they gather to make useful contributions to the school's improvement. Financial controls are satisfactory. The school's budget surplus is currently unacceptably high, but this was caused by reasons which could not have been anticipated. There are secure plans in place to make effective use of these funds. Governance is satisfactory. Governors care about their school and adequately hold it to account. They provide useful support for school initiatives and ensure that it meets its legal responsibilities.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you what we think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

We enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes and liked talking to you. There are lots of things that we like about your school. Some of them are: * Your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on well with each other. * When you find work hard, your teachers take care to see that you are given the right sort of help. * Your teachers work hard to organise lots of extra things for you to do. * All of the adults who work in your school make sure that you are safe and are really well looked after.

Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think that the things to do next are: * Improve the ways that teachers check on how well you are doing and how often you come to school. * Give more difficult work to those of you who need more of a challenge.

Yours sincerely

The Inspection Team