

Thames View Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101200
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	323420
Inspection dates	19-20 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of School	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kelly Ager
Headteacher	Mr Paul Jordan
Date of previous school inspection	03 November 2005
School address	Bastable Avenue Barking IG11 0LG
Telephone number	020 8270 4317
Fax number	020 8270 4319

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an ethnically diverse community in Essex. A high proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, and over a fifth are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. Disabilities represented in the school are largely related to hearing impairment. The headteacher took up post in September 2007 after a short gap in the school's leadership and a period of staffing instability. Most of the current teaching staff have been in the school for less than two years. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage, which is made up of its own Nursery and Reception class. The school is sited next to the Sue Bramley Children's Centre Nursery. The school shares part of the Nursery accommodation with the Centre, although the Centre was inspected separately from this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Thames View Infants' is an outstanding school. It has made remarkable improvement since its last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. Pupils now make excellent progress in their learning to reach, from a low base, standards that are above average by the end of Year 2. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are particularly high, being well above average. Pupils use computers with confidence and skill, and ICT makes a major contribution to their learning across the curriculum. This work has been awarded the ICT Mark, and the school has been entered for this year's ICT Excellence Award.

The strong sense of community extends beyond the school gates to embrace the wider community. Parents feel welcome in the school because they are viewed as important partners in the education of their children.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils visibly grow in confidence and independence as they move through the school. They express their views with conviction, but have the grace to listen to those of others. Pupils' personal and social skills are sensitively nurtured, because pupils are valued as individuals. This instils a strong sense of belonging. Pupils reap the benefits of being educated in a culturally diverse environment, and successfully develop their understanding about the variety of lifestyles and cultures represented in Britain today. Their exemplary behaviour and enthusiastic enjoyment of school contributes to their excellent progress. Pupils exhibit a strong desire to do well.

The excellent curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. It also teaches pupils about healthy lifestyles, which most pupils make good efforts to adopt. The curriculum is tailored to the needs of individual pupils extremely successfully, so that all make very measurable progress. The excellent support and carefully modified curriculum for pupils learning English as an additional language ensures that they acquire English rapidly. Those who find learning difficult or who have hearing impairment are given very personalised help, so that they too achieve the best they can. The greatest impact of the high-quality curriculum is the success with which it supports teaching, so that this, too, is outstanding. Excellent planning guides teaching, with the result that it meets the needs of individual pupils very well. Teaching assistants and other support staff make a meaningful and invaluable contribution to the work of the school, and the impact of this is very evident in the outcomes for pupils.

The very strong pastoral systems ensure that pupils are looked after exceptionally well, which helps them both to feel safe and to be aware of safety issues. There is a wide range of partner agencies and external professionals who work with the school to support the personal needs of individual pupils and their families. Robust systems and initiatives for checking and improving attendance have led to a rapid rise in the attendance figures, and a significant reduction in persistent absence. Academic guidance is excellent, so that pupils have a very clear idea of what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve their work.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together in partnership to provide outstanding leadership. Excellent communication and consultation across the school community, including with parents and other local partners, is a key to the success with which the leadership has established common goals and set a clear direction for development. Staff and governors work collaboratively together to achieve these common goals, because they all know what they are expected to do and achieve. The headteacher builds on the strengths of individuals to bring out the best in everyone.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children begin in the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are significantly lower than expected for their ages. They make excellent progress, to reach standards that are, currently, in line with national averages. These standards reflect a strong and improving trend, building further on the performance of 2008, which was a little below average. Nonetheless, children's achievement was excellent across most areas, given their very low starting points.

Children's personal development and well being are good overall. They make excellent progress in the Nursery in improving social skills and becoming independent. In Reception, their progress in these areas, while good overall, is not as good as in Nursery. This is because there is a little too much whole-class teaching in Reception and occasionally sessions are too long, resulting in some children losing focus and concentration. The outstanding learning opportunities in the Nursery make a strong contribution to children's excellent overall progress. Here, a wide range of stimulating activities engages their interests and helps them to make rapid gains in their learning. They are enthused and excited by what they do, and participate fully in all that is offered.

Overall, children build well in the Reception classes on what they have learned in the Nursery. While teaching is good overall in Reception, there is also some outstanding teaching which promotes learning exceptionally well. Progress in most areas is exceptional, because of the excellent individual support for children and the outstanding use of ICT to support learning. The outdoor area is extremely well used in the Nursery, and increasingly so in Reception. Rigorous assessment systems are intelligently used to pinpoint the individual needs of children and to plan their next steps in learning. The area is very successfully led and managed. Given the rapid improvements in provision and standards, and the very accurate knowledge of how good the area is, the capacity to improve even more is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the balance between whole-class teaching and practical activities in the Reception classes, and ensure that whole-class sessions are not too long.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards have been rising rapidly over the last three years. Assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, in 2008, showed above-average standards in reading and writing. They were a little above in mathematics. Overall, given their low starting points, pupils made excellent progress. Current standards are even better, and pupils in Year 2 are on track to attain even higher levels overall in reading, writing and mathematics. The most-able pupils, identified in the last inspection report as underachieving, now achieve exceptionally well; this reflects the improved leadership and quality of teaching and learning. Pupils learning English as an additional language are exceedingly well supported and make exemplary progress, to reach similar standards as those whose first language is English. Those who find learning difficult are quickly identified and given very clear targets to work to, so that they, too, make as much progress as others. Boys and girls, and pupils of varying ethnic backgrounds, attain similar outcomes, which demonstrates a very inclusive school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

When writing about the things that she does during the week, one Year 1 pupil wrote, 'On Tuesday I go to my wonderful school.' This reflects not only the views of this pupil, but also those of the rest in the school. Pupils speak eagerly about how much they enjoy their lessons and the extra activities that are available to them. They certainly do enjoy school, as the greatly improved attendance figures show. A very active and enthusiastic school council works diligently to represent and support fellow pupils. The school council is admired by many, and seen as a shining example for others to follow - so much so that members have been invited to attend the Children's Forum. They have met the Deputy Mayor, with whom they discussed how to keep their area safe. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary, and this reinforces the very positive ethos that prevails. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and relate extremely well with each other and with the staff. Their cultural development and

understanding enrich their education enormously. There are times when experiences that they enjoy can only be described as awesome, particularly during assemblies. The excellent personal skills pupils develop prepare them exceptionally well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, and a very clear understanding of their individual needs. They have established clear routines and very high expectations of behaviour and learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and encourage pupils to use the correct vocabulary when describing their work and how they have achieved their learning goals. Lesson planning is comprehensive and includes very careful matching of work to pupils' ability. The close teamwork of teachers and support staff is of great benefit to all. Teachers work closely together, and share good practice to ensure that all pupils receive an equally high standard of education. Lessons are vibrant and pupils learn very well from their teachers and from each other as they are encouraged to work together, supporting and encouraging one another.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is lively and exciting, and encourages pupils to develop as learners exceptionally well. It is particularly mindful of the broad range of individual needs, and is carefully modified to suit the needs of different groups of pupils such as those with autistic spectrum disorder, or those learning English as an additional language. It also reflects the wide range of cultures represented in the school. The school has been instrumental in engaging not only pupils but also parents in the use of ICT to support learning, and has been able to introduce ICT into many homes where previously it was absent. Parents and pupils have benefited greatly from this initiative. The use of ICT as a means of communication is as natural to pupils as speaking and listening. The ICT-rich environment accelerates pupils' independence. Pupils also benefit greatly from the wide variety of visits and visitors, and of extra-curricular activities; pupils are thrilled to talk about these.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The level of commitment shown by all staff ensures that pupils' individual needs are well known to staff and that they are exceptionally well cared for. Home/school links are outstanding, and partnership with parents, established prior to admission, acts as a foundation to learning success. There is rigorous attention to ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. Support to pupils and, where required, to parents is exceptionally well managed. There is a 'can-do' approach, and the school is prepared to go the extra mile to support individual needs. Assessment is outstanding. Each child is confident in knowing their personal targets, and uses them to improve his or her work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school's success is attributable to outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have enabled staff at all levels to work to their strengths, to the benefit of the school and of pupils' learning. This includes empowering staff at all levels to develop exceptionally good leadership roles. The work of the school is underpinned with rigorous and thorough systems that are implemented consistently across the whole school. Honest and perceptive self-evaluation informs both the day-to-day work of the school and its longer term strategic

planning. Pupil tracking systems are used exceptionally well to identify any who are not working at their best, and appropriate support is rapidly put in place. There is a strong focus on doing what matters most and what makes the biggest impact on learning. Staff agree that they are working very hard, but they know what they are working towards and are enjoying the success that their efforts bring. Governors have an excellent overview of the school and its work. They are actively involved, and work in partnership with the school to promote community cohesion in a most effective way. Hence, the school is making a real difference to the school community, parents, and the wider local community. The emphasis on developing understanding and respect for differences in race and faith is part and parcel of the school's mission. Parents and pupils from all ethnic backgrounds dancing to music from Indian cinema is an example of the positive impact the school is having in promoting racial tolerance. Given the improvement since the last inspection, the school has outstanding capacity to improve even more.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

01 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thames View Infants' School, Barking, IG11 0LG

We enjoyed visiting your school, and talking to you. We particularly enjoyed your dancing in assembly and in the after-school Indian Dance club. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. The school gives you an outstanding education and prepares you remarkably well for your next school. Your teachers make lessons and learning interesting and exciting. They look after you really well and make sure that you know your targets and how to make your work better. You make outstanding progress and reach good standards as a result. The success of the school is down to excellent leadership.

These are some of the best things about the school:

- you become more and more confident as you move through the school
- you enthusiastically enjoy all that the school has to offer
- children in the Nursery and the Reception class do very well in learning important new things so that they are ready for life in Year 1
- you are expert in using computers, and the regular work you do using ICT helps you learn even more
- the work you are given is not only interesting but is also at just the right level for you - it's not too easy and it's not too hard
- the school makes sure that your parents are involved in helping you to learn; they feel the school is doing a really good job
- your headteacher and deputy work with other staff in the school to make the school the best that it can be.

There is very little that needs improvement, but one thing the school can do is to make sure that children in the Reception classes get opportunities to do more practical work and spend less time listening to the teacher or doing whole-class work.

It was very nice to meet you, and we wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gulshan Kayembe
Lead Inspector