

# Lea Valley Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	102125
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	323588
Inspection dates	8-9 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Barnard Payne

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

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Type of School	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Sanda
Headteacher	Mr Andy Nicholas
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
School address	Somerford Grove Tottenham London N17 0PT
Telephone number	020 8801 6915
Fax number	020 8880 3217

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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

Nearly all pupils attending this large primary school are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils do not have English as their first language and many of these speak Kurdish. A high number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. A high number have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; these are predominantly difficulties with speech, language and communication. The school has provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and has 49 in the Nursery and 62 in Reception. The school has gained the Healthy School award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

**Grade: 1**

Lea Valley Primary is an outstanding school. The headteacher and staff have created a very strong ethos for learning in which children thrive. As a parent writes, 'The teachers work very hard and obviously spend a lot of time and effort to make learning interesting and fun. They constantly, but gently, push the children forward, encouraging them to do well.' The school has strong parental support and is very popular and well regarded.

Pupils value the high level of care and support; they say that teachers are always there to help them understand. Many children have difficulties with language, but they pick out literacy activities as some of the most enjoyable. From exceptionally low starting points, they make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is due to the inspiring and well-planned environments staff have created in both the Nursery and Reception, which stimulate children to learn. Pupils continue to make outstanding progress through the school to reach the nationally expected standard in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. This is due to the teachers' relentless focus on ensuring that pupils acquire and use literacy and numeracy skills. This enables pupils of all abilities and all ethnic groups to make outstanding progress. Pupils acquire excellent attitudes to working in school, fully subscribing to the school's values and reflecting its slogan 'Determination to Succeed'.

Pupils play a significant role in creating a cohesive and harmonious school community in which they feel very safe and well cared for. They say that 'if you have a problem, your friends are always there to help you and your teachers are always there to listen'. Their behaviour is exemplary. Their adoption of healthy attitudes to diet and exercise is outstanding. An active school council plays an important role in promoting the interests of pupils; for example, they issue rewards to those who bring in healthy packed lunches. Pupils' development of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and other workplace skills makes an excellent contribution to ensuring their future economic well-being. They acquire these skills because the school provides a curriculum and range of learning activities that takes full account of pupils' starting points and needs. While pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented have clearly defined personal targets, this is not the case for all pupils. This means that these pupils have less opportunity to help set their own goals and assess their own progress towards them.

The headteacher and staff have ensured sustained high rates of progress in the school over the years. This is due to their excellent knowledge of the local community and the skills that children need to achieve and do well. They are clear about the strategies to use to improve standards and use them consistently. The school sets its sights high to reach challenging targets. Governors support the school well and have a good overview of its performance. The school is in a good position to continue to improve. However, while leaders and managers are highly committed and collect a variety of evidence to find out how well the school is doing, they are too dependent on national test results to compare the progress of different groups of pupils, making it difficult to spot any changes in trends during the course of the school year. This means that they cannot be sure that all groups are continuing to make outstanding progress.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

**Grade: 1**

The majority of children enter the school with skills well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. A large number of children require additional support in speech, language and mathematical development. Teaching is excellent because staff make effective use of assessments to plan, carefully, the next steps in children's learning. Children make rapid progress in their personal and physical development, becoming confident, independent learners. Staff meet their welfare needs very effectively and are fully aware of children's individual needs. While their overall progress is outstanding, many do not reach the goals expected nationally by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, because staff have created a learning environment that is rich in literacy and numeracy stimuli, children are able to start in the main school with the confidence and skills in language and numeracy to continue making rapid progress.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the management of performance data to be sure that all groups are making the same rates of progress consistently across the school.
- Provide personal targets for all pupils so that they are more involved in setting themselves goals and assessing their own progress.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 1**

The gap between pupils' attainment and the national averages in English and mathematics narrows as pupils move through the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, although their attainment is lower than expected for their age, they are much closer than when they started. Writing, in particular, improved in 2008 so that the proportion reaching higher levels matched national performance. Achievement in mathematics was not quite as good as in reading and writing and the school has identified this as a development priority. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English, mathematics and science is in line with the national average, including the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels. Again, performance in mathematics has been more variable over time, but the school still does well in the numbers achieving the national average in both English and mathematics, and does notably well with pupils whose attainment was low at the end of Key Stage 1. Higher and middle-ability pupils do particularly well in achieving higher levels in both subjects. Provisional 2009 results show that pupils continue to exceed the expected rate of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the continual emphasis placed on systematically developing literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, including those for whom English is not a first language, make the same excellent rate of progress. A significant factor is the effective use of a structured literacy programme that helps pupils to build their confidence.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

Pupils show outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They demonstrate this through the values they hold, in the way pupils from very different backgrounds integrate and in their very positive attitudes to learning. Because they enjoy being in school so much, their lessons are consistently focused and purposeful. They participate well in class and in after school activities. Even those younger pupils who find aspects of language difficult offer contributions in class and group activities. Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and how to act safely. Their acquisition of the skills that will help them in the future include taking on extra responsibilities. For example, pupils have to apply for and be elected to take on the role of Year 6 helper. Attendance is in line with the national average, but this is an improvement since the previous inspection and the school works hard to promote good attendance.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 1**

The most significant strength of teaching is its impact on pupils' progress and achievement over time, reflecting patience and determination. Teachers have a very secure knowledge both of what pupils need and how to enable them acquire it. They build very strong relationships with pupils who, in turn, show a real willingness to learn. Teachers

organise classrooms well and even lessons that include repetitive exercises, as pupils develop their language skills, are fun because teachers lead them in a lively way that engages pupils. Teachers use a wide variety of activities, including role play, work in pairs and class discussions. In an outstanding lesson pupils discussed the character of Bill Sykes in *Oliver*. Pupils came up with a wealth of ideas and this developed into role play in which pupils showed an outstanding grasp of Bill Sykes's character. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is based on an excellent knowledge of the strategies that work best for this group.

## Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 1**

The school's curriculum is highly responsive to the local context of the school and takes full account of the difficulties many pupils have with language. This has led to the school establishing working methods that address needs by placing a great emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT. Additionally, the school ensures all pupils acquire healthy attitudes and that they make a strong personal contribution to the school. The take-up for extra-curricular activities is high, and these include a variety of physical activities such as dance and football. The effective provision made for those pupils identified as gifted and talented includes clear targets and these go beyond English, mathematics and science to include, for example, dance and drama.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

The school looks after pupils very well, with robust safeguarding procedures and strong promotion of personal development. The high level of harmony in such a diverse population reflects the success of the school's work. The school's early identification of difficulties enables pupils to receive, quickly, appropriate levels of support and intervention, hence their rapid progress. All of these aspects of care are outstanding. The reason this aspect is good overall rather than outstanding is that the targets for some pupils are not clear enough to help them judge their own progress towards their goals.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 1**

The school's headteacher, leaders and managers have established a school that is highly successful at what it does. The strategic leadership team share an excellent understanding of their local community and this has contributed to parents' high regard for the school. Community cohesion is good. School leaders recognise the need to carry out a more formal evaluation of the school's work in this area to develop provision further. Excellent results show the high level of effectiveness of the strategies established by the school to raise standards. The school's leaders make sure that expectations are always high and this has led to consistency in pupils' achievement. The school deploys staff and resources very effectively and provides outstanding value for money. While the school's leaders and managers know their school well, they lack the means to use their performance data efficiently to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils over the year; the methods they do have are paper-based and make the task laborious. Consequently, their self-evaluation is not always informed by the most recent evidence of progress. Governors play a positive and supportive role, but are not fully involved in school improvement planning and evaluating the impact of policies.

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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	2

### 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?	1
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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?	2

## 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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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



## Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

22 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lea Valley Primary School, London, N17 0PT

First, thank you very much for making us feel so welcome in your school, for talking to us and for being so friendly. We know how much you enjoy going to Lea Valley Primary and we agree that it is an outstanding school. The school is an excellent place to learn and the staff are very good at knowing when you are finding work difficult and quickly doing something about it.

Although many of you start school without speaking much English, by the time you leave you reach the same level in English, mathematics and science as pupils in other schools, and some of you do even better. This shows you make outstanding progress through the school. You play a very important part in this because you are so positive about learning. We were impressed with your behaviour and with how well you all get on together. Your healthy attitudes to diet and exercise are outstanding and it was good to see members of the school council checking up on packed lunches and giving out reward stickers!

Even though the school does so well, we have found two areas that could be better and have asked the school to improve them. These are:

- to improve the way the school collects and uses information about your progress to help the staff keep up to date with how you are getting on
- to give you all clear personal targets, so that you know what to aim for to improve your work.

You can help by getting involved in assessing your own work, challenging yourself about what you can do and finding out how to do it.

Yours faithfully

Barnard Payne  
Lead Inspector