

Dulwich Hamlet Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100787
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	323347
Inspection dates	16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of School	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Crispin Tuckley
Headteacher	Mrs Sonia Case
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
School address	Dulwich Village London SE21 7AL
Telephone number	020 7525 9188
Fax number	020 7525 9187

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the way in which pupils are helped to achieve their full potential and the impact that school leaders have had in driving improvements. The inspector met with pupils, and some of the staff and governors. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation documentation, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average. Around two thirds of the pupils are of white British heritage, with the others coming from a cosmopolitan mix of different ethnic backgrounds. Many, but by no means all, pupils join the school having achieved high scores in their infant school assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007 after the school had been through a period of temporary leadership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils do very well because the staff work hard to provide such a stimulating curriculum that, in the words of one parent, ensures that 'every child is given opportunities to flourish and develop their full potential'. The school has a well earned reputation for the extent and quality of its music provision: much appreciated by pupils and parents alike. A very high proportion of the pupils learn to play musical instruments from the dizzying range on offer. The quality of provision for music and the high quality of work in art and other creative subjects has been recognised through national awards, including Artsmark Gold. Pupils produce work of a high standard too in information and communication technology (ICT) and media, where, for example, work done by Year 3 pupils on photomontage picture stories is contributing to their progress in literacy.

Among the other features that stand out at 'The Hamlet' is pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attendance is consistently well above average. Pupils greatly enjoy school and take a considerable pride in the work they do. They also appreciate the impressive range of clubs and other extra-curricular activities, as well as the exciting things they do during the school day. Relationships throughout the school are excellent, so that pupils from different backgrounds mix, work and play very well together. Older pupils, in particular, enjoy the responsibilities they take, for example as monitors helping to look out for the younger ones. Pupils are exceptionally well looked after so that feel safe and know very well how to keep safe. They also have a keen understanding of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. Members of the school council point to improvements to school dinners that they have helped to bring about.

Although some parents would like to see improvements in communication, there is a ready acknowledgement that this is 'a very well organised and led school' that works in close partnership with its highly supportive parents. Standards in English, mathematics, ICT and creative subjects are consistently high. Changes made by the headteacher and leadership team over the past year to improve the tracking of each pupil's progress are helping to further raise standards throughout the school, so that pupils are on track to attain the very challenging targets set for them. Pupils of all abilities are fully included and achieve exceptionally well, so that, for example, a significant number of able pupils undertake Level 6 work in mathematics, which is a level normally only reached in secondary school. Some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and some who join with very low attainment in their infant school assessments, make impressive progress, especially in reading. It is in science that standards, though still above average, have been notably less high. School leaders acknowledge that this is a subject where teachers have not always done enough to tap into the enthusiasm that pupils bring to other subjects, such as ICT and media. Across other subjects, however, teaching and learning are outstanding because, as pupils themselves put it, 'Teachers make learning interesting and fun'. Parents describe teachers as 'instilling pupils with a love of learning'. It is this, along with the very good progress they make in their key skills, that prepares pupils exceedingly well for the next stage of their education.

Teachers' marking gives pupils very clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work - an improvement since the last inspection. The match of homework to ability was also an issue for improvement in the last inspection. This has been remedied, with pupils themselves confirming that homework varies 'depending on how good you are at the subject'. However, pupils' work and school leaders' monitoring show that just occasionally teachers do not make full use of the now detailed information they have about their pupils to precisely match work to pupils' different capabilities.

Governors are extremely supportive and have played a very active role with the headteacher, leadership team and staff in driving forward improvements in this popular and successful school. Together they have an accurate picture of the school's many strengths and of those areas which could be even better.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a more consistent match of work in lessons to pupils' different capabilities.
- Better harness pupils' enthusiasm for learning to help raise standards in science so that pupils achieve as highly in this subject as they do in others.

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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

Achievement and standards

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

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

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.

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.

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dulwich Hamlet Junior School, London, SE21 7AL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. You are obviously very proud of your school. You are right to be. It is an outstanding school. I was pleased so many of you are doing very well, not just in the subjects in which you take tests, but in so many other activities too. The Hamlet has a great reputation for all the music that you are involved in, but I was impressed too with the high standard of your art and ICT. What a super animation film the Enrichment Group put together! I could see that you all enjoyed watching it in assembly as much as I did.

I was impressed with how very well behaved you all are and how you get on so well with each other. Yours is a school with a real sense of community. It is also good to see that your attendance rates are high. You are keen not to miss any of the exciting things you get to do in lessons.

The school takes excellent care of you. It is very well run, and some of the recent changes made by your headteacher and senior staff have helped to make sure you all do as well as you can. Some of you told me how much you appreciated the way your teachers help you to learn by making lessons fun. Their very good teaching helps you to make such great progress in so many different subjects. I think you could be doing even better in science, however, and I have suggested that staff do more to build on your enthusiasm in that subject. Among the improvements there have been in the school is the way homework is now better matched to individual children's needs and abilities. That also happens in most lessons, but there are still some occasions where work which could be better matched to your individual talents and needs. Again, that is something I have asked the school to look at.

I am sure that you will continue to enjoy your time at The Hamlet and to work hard, and I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Selwyn Ward
Lead Inspector