

Eliot Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100711
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	335586
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Jon Carter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Fahey
Headteacher	Mrs K Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	6 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. About two thirds of inspection time was spent looking at learning. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed 17 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies related to the safeguarding of pupils, information about the monitoring of teaching and learning and the school's progress tracking data, as well as samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics. Inspectors analysed 112 questionnaires from parents and carers and looked at responses from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of teaching and the impact of leadership and management on improving writing across the school
- the school's success in meeting the needs of different groups of learners so that all pupils reach at least expected levels of attainment
- the impact of the school's actions on improving community cohesion and pupils' contributions to the community.

Information about the school

Eliot Bank is a larger than average school with an ethnically diverse population, the largest groups being from White British and Black Caribbean backgrounds. A higher proportion than average speak English as an additional language. Approximately one quarter of the pupils in the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is above the national average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school throughout the year remains above the national average, although there has been a significant decrease in this since the last inspection. There is a children's centre on the school site which is not managed by the governing body and will be inspected separately. The school is designated a National Support School and holds Artsmark Gold and Healthy Schools awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

As one pupil comments: 'My school gives me a brilliant education and all the staff are extremely caring.' This statement matches well with the findings of the inspection team. Eliot Bank is an outstanding school where pupils very much enjoy their learning and develop a very strong sense of community through their interaction with children from different backgrounds and through taking responsibility as school council representatives, play leaders and mediators. They are very well prepared for their future as learners, not only in terms of their basic skills in numeracy, literacy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT), but as citizens with outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The exceptionally strong system of leadership has made sure that every member of staff takes responsibility for ensuring that each pupil achieves as well as they can. The quality of teaching is outstanding because teachers plan stimulating learning experiences and deliver them at a pace which suits the pupils very well. As a result, pupils make excellent progress from low starting points and leave the school with above average attainment. Groups of pupils who are at risk of performing less well than their peers are identified quickly and action is taken to help make sure they make similar progress to the other pupils in the school. Teachers and teaching assistants guide and support learning well in lessons and assessment of pupils' progress is generally outstanding and used productively so that future learning builds upon what pupils know and can do. However, while there is some exemplary practice, the use of high quality written comments, which help pupils to improve their work, is inconsistent across the school. Not all staff ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to respond to these so that their work improves. The headteacher and other leaders have secured consistently above average attendance. With learning and progress continuing to be outstanding and attainment now above average, leaders have clearly demonstrated an outstanding capacity for further improvement. The school's improvement plan, to which all leaders contribute, is clear about the next steps in the school's future. The headteacher's status as a National Leader of Education, and the school's designation as a National Support School, are helping less successful schools in the local area to improve through the sharing of good practice. They also provide Eliot Bank's staff with many opportunities for professional development as part of its devolved leadership system.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all written feedback about pupils' work is of consistently high quality, by providing clear developmental comments and giving pupils appropriate

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opportunities to respond to them, so that it has greater impact on learning and progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils at Eliot Bank very much enjoy school and clearly demonstrate this through their infectious enthusiasm for learning in lessons. One parent commented: 'I do not ever stop being amazed at how my son enjoys going to school, day in, day out.' There is a harmony between children from different ethnic backgrounds as a result of the very strong community spirit that the school has developed and fostered, and pupils work and play together well. Pupils are clear that they feel extremely safe within the school environment and they are confident that any of the school's adults will give them help should they need it. They keenly adopt healthy lifestyles, which is recognised in a national award.

Behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is exemplary. Pupils demonstrate politeness and maturity when initiating conversations with adults and are keen to communicate the pride they feel for their school. In the majority of lessons observed, the quality of learning was outstanding. Teachers use their assessments of pupils' progress very effectively to ensure that work is extremely well matched to their needs. As a result, pupils always make at least good and sometimes exceptional progress. In an outstanding numeracy lesson, all pupils were appropriately challenged by a range of learning activities and staff worked tirelessly to ensure that the engaging and enjoyable tasks were leading to improved knowledge and understanding of their times tables.

Over the past three years, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has shown a steady trend of improvement in all subjects, with particularly strong outcomes in writing. This is the result of improvement in the whole-school approach to teaching writing, as well as developments to the curriculum which make very strong links between subjects and give greater emphasis on writing for specific purposes. Consequently, the rate of progress in writing through Key Stage 2 is also improving. Assessment data indicate that progress over the last three years is significantly above average for all pupils. The school identifies underperformance quickly and acts swiftly to ensure progress is accelerated. This has helped to ensure that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress. The strong focus on skills for learning has helped pupils develop excellent resilience and extremely positive attitudes towards school. Pupils were observed in lessons using familiar strategies to tackle tasks without staff assistance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching seen by inspectors was outstanding and none was judged to be less than good. Parents agree: 'The teachers at Eliot Bank give the children enormous enthusiasm for their learning.' Teachers across the school have high expectations of their pupils and, as a result, lessons are challenging. Teachers take very good account of pupils' learning styles and interests in planning stimulating and exciting learning activities, which pupils say are fun. Learning is made particularly meaningful for pupils because they have an active voice in deciding what they are going to be taught. While there is an appropriate focus on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and the curriculum is broad and balanced, pupils are very well stimulated by a variety of further learning opportunities, chosen by teachers with due regard to pupils' strengths and interests. The Artsmark Gold award reflects the importance the school places on ensuring its curriculum is highly relevant to the range of cultures and backgrounds of its pupils and the exceptional quality of work that pupils produce in this area.

Learning is moved on very effectively because teachers use their assessments of pupils' progress to evaluate and modify their planning on a daily basis. The tasks for different groups of pupils and individuals who need greater support are expertly set so that pupils' skills and knowledge are developed at an appropriately good pace. The school has developed very effective partnerships with agencies supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and deploys resources extremely well to support pupils in class or as a target group. As a result, pupils who have specific learning needs or emotional difficulties are able to make very good progress. Both teachers and

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teaching assistants have high quality conversations with pupils about their learning and use questioning techniques skilfully to ensure that pupils' understanding is secure. The quality of these interactions is also indicative of the extremely high standard of care shown by staff, which pupils comment upon particularly. Pupils who join the school beyond the normal time have very effective induction arrangements made for them, including class buddies, and make similar progress to their peers as a result.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A particularly striking feature of Eliot Bank is that exceptionally strong leadership at all levels has ensured that there is a culture of extremely high expectation and equality of opportunity embedded across the school. The headteacher and her deputies are clearly successful in setting the direction of the school and consequently all staff and governors share a common purpose, to ensure that every child can succeed. Governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and of what it needs to do to improve further. Their expertise and passion ensure that they support and challenge the school extremely well so that the needs, safety and well-being of pupils are always given highest priority. Their monitoring and reviewing procedures are extremely robust, particularly in respect of safeguarding.

Rigorous monitoring systems are in place so that the school's leaders have an exceptional knowledge of their pupils, at both group and individual level, and as a result are able to ensure that academic progress and personal development are supported where necessary. This is made possible through very effective systems for sharing information and working with families. Events such as 'Dad's Breakfast' help to strengthen home-school links and promote parental involvement in their children's education. Recent development of partnerships with the new children's centre on the school site, and the role of the school's Children and Family workers, have enhanced this provision further, impacting positively on attendance for example, and helping to ensure that all arrangements for safeguarding children are secure and of very high quality.

The school's leaders continue to use their knowledge of the community served by the school to strengthen very good cohesion within the school and out in the local community. For example, teachers promote interaction between pupils from different backgrounds by setting targets for pupils to work collaboratively with particular classmates. Staff work with parents to overcome reservations about visiting the places

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of worship of other religions. The school has begun to address the national and global aspects of community cohesion through developments to the curriculum.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make exceptionally good progress in Nursery and Reception, often from low starting points, to reach broadly average levels of skills by the time they enter Year 1. They get off to a flying start in the Nursery because of the excellent provision for developing independence, confidence and self-esteem. Children settle quickly because they form very warm and supportive relationships with all of the adults who look after them. As a result, they thoroughly enjoy the exciting activities that are planned every day and make rapid progress in acquiring early reading, writing and number skills.

This rapid progress continues in the Reception classes, where teachers are skilled at extending children's knowledge of sounds and letters and their understanding of numbers. Progress in reading, writing and calculating is accelerating in response to high quality teaching. Children thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities to learn through play and exploration. On one occasion, children delighted in mixing bicarbonate of soda with vinegar and watching it 'explode', as one described it. Despite the wet and blustery weather, children were keen to get outside, where there is always a good variety of activities to promote learning. In both Nursery and Reception, staff have an excellent awareness of the children's needs and interests and provide first-rate care and support for them. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants provide consistently good support for children's learning. Parents are involved very well in their children's learning, for example through the 'Stay and Play' sessions and by reading the daily entries in the

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'Today We'..' book. Outstanding leadership ensures that a high quality provision is maintained.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Approximately 24% of the questionnaires were returned by parents and carers. Almost all say that their child enjoys school and that the school keeps their child safe. A very large majority were happy with their child's experiences at the school and say that teaching is good at the school, that the school is led and managed effectively and that the school meets their child's particular needs. The inspection findings echo these very positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eliot Bank School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 464 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	62	42	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	63	41	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	46	42	38	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	49	46	41	5	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	72	64	35	31	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	61	69	35	3	3	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	54	47	42	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	56	50	42	38	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	52	42	38	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	49	39	35	9	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	44	46	41	3	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	69	62	36	32	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	67	32	29	3	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eliot Bank Primary School, Sydenham, SE26 4BU

Thank you for making us feel very welcome when we visited your school recently.

We enjoyed our visit and were pleased to see you all enjoying your lessons and working very hard. Many of you spoke to us and told us how good you thought your school was. We agree with you, and in fact think your school is outstanding.

Your teachers work very hard to make sure you have the right kind of work so that you can make very good progress with your learning. You help them by behaving extremely well. Mrs Palmer and the other teachers who lead the school know you all very well and that means that those children who need extra help make very good progress as well. Your teachers make what you learn interesting by involving you when they decide what your lessons are going to be about. Many of you told us how well the school cares for you. We are very pleased about that.

Even outstanding schools can improve, so I have asked Mrs Palmer to make sure that teachers always provide good quality written feedback to help you make your work better. You can help by making sure that you respond to your teachers' comments about your work when they have asked you to improve something.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter

Lead inspector

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