

Dilkes Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114920
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	397847
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2012
Lead inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lea Tyler
Headteacher	Maureen Wright
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	24–25 April 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Selwyn Ward	Additional Inspector
Gillian Walley	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Barker	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 42 lessons taught by 20 teachers, with a particular focus on the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and on any differences in the progress made by pupils in different key stages. Inspectors listened to pupils read, and spoke with parents and carers, groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school development planning, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching and the questionnaire responses of a sample of 47 pupils, 49 staff and 270 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Dilkes is almost twice the size of the average primary school. The large majority of pupils are White British; the proportion with minority ethnic heritage is average. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported as school action plus or with a statement of special educational need. Of these, the majority have moderate learning difficulties. The school incorporates a specially resourced provision for 10 pupils with special educational needs relating to emotional, social and behavioural difficulties; most of the pupils with a statement of special educational need are supported by this personalised learning centre. The school meets government floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress. Dilkes Primary has Artsmark, Activemark, the Quality Mark for science and International Schools awards, and has Healthy Schools status. The governing body has advanced proposals for the school to become an academy. It has already consulted parents, carers and the local authority about its plans.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. The excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to a stimulating curriculum that continues to be outstanding, as it was at the time of the last inspection. As a result, pupils become confident learners.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well because teaching is of high quality. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those attending the personalised learning centre, make good and often outstanding progress. Just occasionally, progress for pupils with special educational needs in reading and mathematics slows when resources and techniques used are not matched closely enough to their individual learning needs.
- Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Lessons mostly move forward at a brisk pace and so pupils get a lot done. Pupils' learning is not always consolidated in those lessons where not enough opportunity is taken to summarise and evaluate with the pupils what it is they have learnt. Marking gives pupils a very clear picture of what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils have a remarkably sharp awareness of how well they are achieving.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Even those pupils who join the school with a history of behavioural difficulties settle well and integrate into mainstream classes. Thanks to extremely well-focused support, these pupils learn self-control. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and their very positive attitudes contribute strongly to their excellent progress and achievement.
- Attainment has risen steadily because leaders and managers have been highly successful in securing a consistently high standard of teaching. Monitoring is thorough and the headteacher has been innovative in devising programmes of continuous professional development that equip teachers to reflect on and improve their performance.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the range of strategies in the individual education plans for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to assist teachers in providing focused resources and techniques to further accelerate these pupils' progress in reading and mathematics.
- Further increase the proportion of lessons where pupils make outstanding progress by ensuring that, at the end of all lessons, learning is consolidated through an opportunity for pupils and teachers to summarise and evaluate what has been learnt.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is outstanding because pupils make excellent progress in lessons and over their time at the school. This is a view endorsed by almost all parents and carers. Children join the Nursery and Reception Years with skills and capabilities considerably lower than expected for their ages. They make rapid progress so that their attainment is average by the end of the Reception Year. Parents and carers comment very positively on the 'great start' their children get in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and staff credit much of their success to the close partnership they have built with parents and carers to help them to support their children's early learning. As one Nursery parent explained of her son, 'He has come on in leaps and bounds, and his confidence has soared.'

Although pupils' progress has been less strong in the past in Key Stage 1, the trend in Year 2 assessments is one of steady improvement. Current pupils are on track to secure above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This improvement is due, in part, to the more systematic teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in the Reception and Year 1 classes. It is recognised by parents and carers, including those of a Year 1 pupil who commented, 'We continue to see steady and remarkable improvement in our child's academic work and attitude to education.'

Achievement in Key Stage 2 has been consistently high, with attainment at the end of Year 6 also on a rising trend. Value added measures place Dilkes in the top 3% of schools nationally for the progress recorded over the course of Key Stage 2. School tracking data, and pupils' current work in lessons, shows that the great majority of pupils had already last term reached nationally expected levels for the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics, with the expectation that attainment by the end of the school year in these subjects will be substantially above average. This is an improvement on 2011, when attainment was the equivalent of around a term ahead

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of the national average. Attainment in reading was only around half a term ahead of national in 2011 but assessments show it to be notably higher this year.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress that is at least good and is often outstanding. For a small number of these pupils, progress is hampered when they do not have resources to maximise their learning.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is outstanding because it results in pupils making rapid progress. This is because lessons are very well planned, with activities that are varied in order to keep pupil on their toes. This is sometimes quite literally the case, as seen in a high quality Year 6 English lesson where pupils leaped and punched the air to represent, as compass points, the 'who, what, where and when' aspects that they had to look out for when evaluating news reports and when compiling their own. Pupils confirm that physical activities such as this, and the lively exercise taken by Year 5 pupils measuring pulse rates, help to create memorable learning experiences in English, mathematics and science. They also contribute to the high level of pupil engagement in lessons. Pupils work hard because they like their teachers and are keen to please them. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers praise the quality of teaching at this school. They recognise, for example, teachers' success in extending more-able pupils so that they are suitably challenged; a notable improvement since the last inspection. Work is generally very well matched to pupils' different capabilities, including the specific learning needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who benefit from carefully tailored support. In some cases, however, progress for these pupils slows when their individual education plans do not identify with precision the techniques to be used and resources needed to maximise learning. For example, a pupil in one lesson struggled to accurately read instructions because he was not given picture clues to help him to identify unfamiliar words.

Question and answer sessions are especially lively in those classes where there is more than one teacher. In these classes, the team teaching adds further dynamism to lessons, as there are two adults quizzing pupils. Teachers reinforce literacy and numeracy through other curriculum subjects. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, compiling timelines as part of a project on the history of the Olympic Games, the teacher took the opportunity to correct misconceptions arising from pupils' confusion over the difference between 'except' and 'accept'. Teachers are very successful in devising activities that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, children's horizons have been lifted by the teachers' focus during the inspection week on China and South Africa. The previous week the children were learning about Italy. Throughout the school, marking gives pupils a very clear picture of how to improve their work, although there is some variation in the rigour with which spellings errors are identified. A notable strength of marking in English and mathematics is the genuine dialogue developed with individual pupils as they routinely respond to teachers' comments. This has a clear impact in rapidly moving learning on, particularly in Key

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Stage 1.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. This is primarily because behaviour management strategies are implemented very effectively and pupils are keen to do well. Pupils get on very well together and treat each other with kindness and respect. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully, try hard, and they work with concentration and sustained effort. These attributes are instrumental in the pupils' success.

Pupils and their parents and carers confirm that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is very much the norm at this school. Pupils who join the personalised learning centre also learn and follow the school's orderly routines. As they increasingly settle and learn self-control, the school is able gradually to relax the one-to-one supervision these pupils have in lessons. Pupils confirm that they feel very safe at school and they have a very clear understanding of how to keep safe, for example when using the internet. They confirm that bullying of any kind is exceptionally rare, to the extent that pupils struggled to recall any incidents they had either experienced or heard about. Nevertheless, they know about the various manifestations of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racism.

Attendance was average in 2011 but current year attendance rates are above those for the corresponding period last year. Initiatives such as the early morning clubs have contributed to improved punctuality.

Leadership and management

The success of this school is due to outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher, leadership team and governing body share a commitment to ensuring high quality provision for all pupils, including those in the personalised learning centre, to enable them to achieve their full potential. In maximising the effectiveness of teaching, leaders' thorough monitoring of provision has been key. Regular performance management checks are followed up with extensive training for staff on methods for ensuring all pupils routinely make good and outstanding progress. This is a feature that stands out at this school, with the Dilkes' staff training programme on 'high impact teaching' now being rolled out to other local schools. The impact of leaders' focus on improving teaching is evident in the continuing rise in attainment in all three key stages.

School self-evaluation is accurate, and the school's determination in tackling the issues from the last inspection and in continuing to raise attainment show Dilkes' excellent capacity for continued improvement. The governing body's plans to pursue academy status are indicative of the school's ambition to develop further, particularly in extending the curriculum, which is already an important strength. The international dimension of provision is given prominence, contributing very well to

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pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a constructive partnership with a school in India, for example, and children in Reception are eager to greet visitors with their smattering of Mandarin. Such activities encourage the children to celebrate diversity and challenge prejudice and discrimination in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony. British heritage is equally celebrated. Nursery children, for example, made England flags as part of their commemoration of St George's Day. Equal opportunities are promoted very well, so that pupils from different backgrounds, and those in the personalised learning centre, show similarly rapid rates of progress. Initiatives, for example to stimulate boys' writing, are introduced by leaders where any group is identified as doing less well than they could be. The curriculum is extended through a wide array of well-supported clubs, as well as by a range of booster classes run by teachers, including sessions for Year 6 pupils to practise their mathematics skills in the computer room before the start of the school day.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are thorough and fully meet the government's current requirements. Leaders have taken the initiative in building productive ties with parents and carers, including through coffee mornings that encourage parents and others to come in to school. As a result, parents and carers are increasingly supportive of the school and of their children's education, to the extent that some would now like to see further improvements in home-school communication.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dilkes Primary School, South Ockendon, RM15 5JQ

Thank you for welcoming us when we came to visit your school, and a particular thanks to those of you who filled in questionnaires and who talked to inspectors about your time at school.

Many of you and many of your parents and carers told us that you think Dilkes is 'a fantastic school'. We agree. You go to an outstanding school. It is exceptionally well run, with teaching that is outstanding and which ensures that you make excellent progress. As a result, your attainment is above average. Many of you told us that you enjoy school because teachers give you interesting things to learn about, and because they make learning interesting and fun.

We were particularly impressed at how very well you all get on together and that behaviour is extremely good in lessons and around the school. Your very positive attitudes to learning play an important part in your rapid progress. It was especially pleasing to see such very good behaviour too from those of you attending the personalised learning centre. The improvement in your behaviour should stand you in very good stead when you go on to secondary school.

Even in a school that is outstanding there are things that could be even better. We have asked staff to make sure that teachers always provide the right support and resources so that those of you who need extra help with your learning all do as well as you can. We have also asked teachers always to be sure to summarise what you have learnt at the end of each lesson. I am sure you will all want to join in whenever possible in sharing what you have learnt.

If you continue to listen carefully to your teachers, as you do now, and try to do your very best, we expect you to go on to achieve even better in the years ahead. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward
Lead Inspector

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