

Eleanor Palmer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100027
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	376337
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Hodgetts
Headteacher	Kate Frod
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 19 lessons, observing 10 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and members of the governing body. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers as they arrived with their children at the start of the day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised assessment information, pupils' books, records of pupils' progress and school improvement plans. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 193 parents and carers, 116 pupils and 24 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively do teachers help pupils to identify how to improve their work and meet their targets?
- How well does teaching meet the full range of needs in each class and challenge the more able?
- To what extent does the curriculum support the pupils' academic and personal development?
- How successfully does the school support the development of its potentially vulnerable pupils?

Information about the school

Half of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds in this average-sized school, although few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Fewer pupils than in most primary schools are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and a Reception class. The school has recently received the Artsmark Gold and Eco Schools Green Flag awards. The school hosts an after-school club run by the local authority, which is inspected separately.

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

Dynamic and inspirational leadership at all levels, but particularly from the headteacher and governing body, have driven the school forward in its relentless quest for excellence. Very accurate self-evaluation based on the searching analysis of data and other monitoring evidence underpins sharply focused plans for improvement. Outstanding features have been retained since the previous inspection and teaching, the pupils' achievement and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now excellent. This gives the school outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for all that the school is doing for their children, as summed up by one when writing, 'Eleanor Palmer is an absolutely wonderful school – warm, nurturing, extremely well led and managed, with excellent teaching and a very inclusive ethos.' Through exemplary care, guidance and support, high quality teaching, a rich and stimulating curriculum and their determination to succeed, pupils make outstanding progress and attainment is high and rising by the end of Year 6.

- The youngest children have an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception. They make rapid progress in a stimulating environment where their development is successfully promoted at every possible moment.
- Pupils make outstanding progress because teaching throughout the school is sharply focused on the next steps in learning for all pupils. In the large majority of lessons, lively teaching and interesting activities engage the pupils and drive forward learning rapidly. However, this aspect of teaching is less consistent and the school accurately identifies this as an area for further improvement.
- The rich and diverse curriculum provides many memorable experiences and brings learning to life by linking topic themes creatively between subjects. Boys' writing has greatly improved by developing their skills in contexts they find engaging, generally closely linked to these topics.
- The welcoming environment, starting in the entrance area and continuing through all classrooms, coupled with the pupils' exemplary behaviour leads to an outstanding climate for learning. The pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance levels.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to identify and deal with any risks they might face. They are confident that any problems they raise will be dealt with constructively and understand the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise.

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- The pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the great consideration they show to each other. They are keen to learn about different ways of life and show great respect for the customs and values of others.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, as shown by their concern to help the school become a more sustainable environment and reflected in the Eco Schools award. The buddy system adds greatly to the close-knit family atmosphere through the relationships established between older and younger pupils.
- The headteacher has positioned the school at the heart of its community by forging very productive partnerships with many outside organisations that enrich the pupils' lives and have a direct impact on their achievement.
- The school's work with parents and carers is highly effective in engaging them in their children's learning and providing them with information about their children's progress.
- Marking gives pupils very clear guidance on how successful they have been and the steps needed to help them to develop further and so meet their targets.
- Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are at the core of the school's values. The committed staff team ensures that each pupil's needs are identified and addressed. As a result, the attainment of the potentially more vulnerable is much higher at the school than nationally.
- Members of the highly effective governing body fulfil their responsibilities in an exemplary manner, particularly in relation to safeguarding the pupils and supporting greater community cohesion.

It is the breadth of the pupils' experiences that gives Eleanor Palmer its character which, coupled with the relentless drive to improve teaching and learning, has led to it becoming an outstanding school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the expertise and best practice that exists within the school to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils are very keen to succeed as demonstrated by their very positive attitudes to learning throughout the school. They rise to the challenges presented by their teachers by concentrating, persevering when the work is hard and acknowledging that they can learn by their mistakes. Their skills of inquiry and problem solving are well honed and the rapid development of key skills is reinforced through their application of writing and information and communication technology across subjects. Teamwork and collaboration on practical tasks or in discussion are key factors in their outstanding learning.

Pupils are given a very firm foundation for success in the future. Almost all reach

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nationally expected levels in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Year 6 test results rose in 2011 and were very high, particularly so in mathematics where three quarters of the pupils reached Level 5. There is no difference in attainment by ethnicity. Skilled and focused support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils new to speaking English enables them to participate fully in lessons and in most cases work at least at expected levels for their age.

Pupils greatly enjoy sporting activities such as the parent-run football practice before school and the input from their specialist coach. The take-up of the nutritious school meals is very high. They are very keen to participate in cultural, artistic and musical activities, such as the strings programme, as recognised by the Artsmark award. Pupils show a very keen interest in topical issues. They are exceptionally thoughtful when expressing their concerns for environmental issues such as when a Year 6 girl responded to a picture in assembly by saying ‘I think this shows the future of the world is in our hands’. Pupils from different backgrounds are able to explore how others are feeling and understand the consequences of their actions. They appreciate the lives of others through links with a school in Sierra Leone.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
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	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are enthusiastic and not only do they teach confidently, but they also generate confidence in the pupils by showing how much they value their contributions. The most skilled use the pupils’ responses to adapt their teaching and

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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through brisk questioning drive the pupils’ learning forward at pace. In the small minority of lessons which are not of the highest quality, teachers can talk too much and not exploit opportunities for pupil discussion. The strong emphasis on active learning was seen when as part of a lesson on Romans, Year 4 pupils worked in teams to build towers either under the rule of an emperor or working as a democracy. The creative use of resources, particularly in practical tasks and investigations, and the careful deployment of support staff contribute greatly to the most effective lessons.

Although the focus on literacy is central to the pupils’ achievement, parents and carers also value the wide range of enjoyable and interesting experiences provided for their children every day. Fieldwork is a very strong feature and leads to very exciting lessons, such as when Year 6 pupils dissected owl pellets discovered on their recent residential trip. Each class does several topic-related visits each term to stimulate learning such as Year 3 doing science work on mirrors following their trip to the Sir John Soane Museum. The school is also willing to follow the pupils’ enthusiasms with Year 2 pupils creating their own ‘Plastiki’ boats following a visit from the woman who sailed the Pacific Ocean in a vessel made from plastic bottles.

Parents and carers are delighted with how well the headteacher and staff know their children. This reflects the headteacher’s view that ‘knowing each child and building firm foundations for the relationship with home’ is a key to the school’s success. The pupils feel secure and greatly valued and so grow academically and socially in a warm family atmosphere, where each is known for their individual characteristics. This generates great confidence in the pupils when facing new experiences and enables the school to very rapidly pinpoint resources and actions to meet their needs.

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?

Decisive leadership by the headteacher is based on a shared vision sharply focused on high achievement for each pupil. In order to accomplish this, there is a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Morale is high and teamwork strong at all levels. Teachers are very keen to share their skills and to learn from each other. The forensic analysis of data and other evidence enables the headteacher to focus action when potential underachievement emerges or to take action, such as to improve boys’ writing, if gaps appear in the performance of

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different groups. Successful strategies were developed during the 'Extra Mile' project which focused on raising achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

The highly effective governing body makes a very significant contribution to the school's pursuit of further improvement. It keeps itself well informed and able to challenge the school's performance through robust monitoring systems, while supporting its development. The governing body rigorously fulfils its responsibilities for safeguarding by establishing robust systems to protect pupils and their impact is frequently monitored, reviewed and updated to reflect changing conditions and requirements. A termly 'health check' of systems generates points for action and there are effective procedures to maintain a 'watching brief' on pupils causing concern.

The school uses a detailed understanding of its context to provide a very wide range of carefully planned and evaluated activities to promote greater community cohesion. It reaches out constantly to the local community and has helped to create a 'car-free' zone outside the school. Parents and carers are very pleased with the partnership between home and school, and the governing body regularly seeks their views over its plans. The school is increasingly successful at engaging with families who might otherwise be less confident in approaching staff. This includes welcome parties for all new Nursery and Reception parents and carers and annual Eid parties. The school is strongly committed to partnership working by bringing in skills not otherwise available, recognising the value additional expertise adds to the pupils' achievement and well-being.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Exceptionally well-focused leadership backed up by sharply reflective self-evaluation has in recent years moved provision forward considerably in both the Nursery and Reception Years. There has been and remains a very clear and shared vision for moving forward through a careful evaluation of the setting’s strengths and where action can lead to improvements.

By forging very close links with home and through sensitive induction procedures, children settle quickly into the classes and rapidly become very confident in their learning. One parent’s comments summed up the views of many when writing that, ‘My daughter has just started at the school and I am already bowled over by it. She adores it and can’t wait to get there each morning.’ By knowing each child so well and having a clear picture of their development, adults are able to plan activities that closely meet their interests and the next steps in their learning. Consequently, children become quickly absorbed in their work and actively involved in shaping aspects of their learning.

Along with more effective provision, the school has seen improvements in the children’s achievement and personal development. Most enter Year 1 with attainment above that expected for their age. Their development in all areas of learning is so very strong because of the high quality of the teaching, the perceptive interventions by adults to move learning forward and engaging activities that flow freely between inside and outside. Children collaborate well and respect the needs and wishes of others. They develop caring attitudes, accept that everyone has different needs and readily work together and help each other. Their behaviour is often exemplary. Children feel safe and secure because robust practices protect them and eliminate risks.

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

A much higher proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire than in most primary schools. The level of satisfaction is very high in response to all of the questions. Inspection evidence endorses their very positive views about the school, particularly over the quality of teaching, the progress their children make and how they are prepared for the future, the effectiveness of leadership, and the way in which their children are helped to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eleanor Palmer Primary 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 193 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 236 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	134	69	56	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	135	70	56	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	121	63	67	35	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	115	60	69	36	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	143	74	46	24	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	127	66	58	30	3	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	112	58	75	39	2	1	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)	97	50	79	41	2	1	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	99	51	80	41	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	41	90	47	9	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	95	49	85	44	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	145	75	42	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	152	79	39	20	1	1	0	0

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



20 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eleanor Palmer Primary School, London, NW5 2JA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We saw that you work very hard and are proud of the part you play in school life. Inspectors were particularly impressed with your confident answers to their questions. We found that Eleanor Palmer is an outstanding school. These are the things we liked most.

- The headteacher, staff and governors do their utmost to help you all to succeed, to take care of you and make sure you are kept safe.
- Your exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and exemplary behaviour contribute significantly to making the school calm and happy.
- The curriculum provides many enjoyable experiences for you, including many clubs, residential trips and other events.
- The school works exceptionally well in partnership with others to support your learning and has formed strong links with your parents and carers.
- Teaching is outstanding and teachers use assessment data to support your learning and help you to make outstanding progress.
- You develop an excellent understanding of how to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle and make a huge contribution to school and community life.
- You are very thoughtful and we were impressed by the concern you show for the environment.

We have asked the school to ensure that all of the teaching in the school is brought up to the quality of the very best. You can play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard. Well done for showing such pride in your school and in your achievements.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Lead inspector

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