

The Livity School

Mandrell Road, London, SW2 5DW

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school continues to provide a good education for its pupils, whose overall achievement is good. In some important ways the school has become even better since the last inspection.
- Pupils make good progress, for some it is outstanding. This was acknowledged in the Lambeth Achievement Award ceremony held at the Festival Hall during the inspection. Increased use of information on pupils' progress is improving teachers' understanding of how individual pupils are doing.
- Teachers have high expectations and whatever the learning difficulties of their pupils they expect them to do their very best. Strong support also helps pupils' social and emotional development, and overall this helps explain why achievement is good.
- Behaviour and safety are of the highest order, even though many pupils arrive with very challenging behaviour. Detailed plans and close working with parents and other professionals support rapid improvement. Great care is taken to ensure the well-being of pupils who are potentially very vulnerable.
- Leaders are focused on providing first-class education and leadership, and the expanded leadership team has brought a wider range of expertise than existed previously. Good monitoring and support have enabled teaching and achievement to go on improving since the last inspection.
- The effective governing body contains a range of relevant expertise that enables governors to support the effective management of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teachers are making more use of progress data than they did previously, they do not always use this information fully and to best effect.
- Individual roles within the relatively new wider leadership team are not yet fully established.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 12 lessons taught by the 11 class teachers and a specialist danceteacher.
- A group of pupils were heard reading and inspectors looked at some of the work produced by pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, teachers, pupils, and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The views of 17 parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View were taken into account, together with the findings of the school’s own parent and carer evaluations. The views of staff were gained from discussions and from their questionnaires.
- A range of documents was looked at including information on pupils’ progress, planning for teaching and learning, the school’s development plan, and a range of policies and procedures including those for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jo Curd

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Livity School is for pupils who have complex physical and learning needs, often accompanied by associated medical needs.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. In recent years the scale and nature of the learning difficulties of pupils entering the school have become increasingly acute and severe.
- The proportion who attract the pupil premium (additional funding allocated by the government) is above average.
- The numbers who are from ethnic communities other than White British and who speak English as an additional language are well above average.
- The move to a new school, expected to take place in September 2012, has been twice delayed, although the contractor has now handed over the keys to the local authority and the move is imminent.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the best possible use is made of progress data so that pupils are always set challenging learning tasks in lessons, and individual weaknesses are always identified and addressed.
- Enhance the effectiveness of the senior leadership team by ensuring that each member has a clear and accurate job description for which they are held to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well, irrespective of their disabilities and special educational needs.
- The use of data to track individual progress has developed strongly over the past two years. Apart from a small number whose medical conditions prevent it, pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points when compared to many pupils in similar schools.
- This was celebrated during the inspection when four pupils from the school joined others from across Lambeth who had made outstanding progress for the Lambeth Achievement Awards in the Festival Hall.
- In Early Years, children demonstrate good progress, particularly in their social development. Staff constantly look for ways of developing communication and sensory skills from individual starting points and record progress very effectively.
- In the four communications classes specifically for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders the main focus is on helping pupils to be able to communicate freely with others. They do this effectively through learning signing and a symbolic communications system. Technology is also used well, such as in the use of switches that enable pupils to make choices and decisions which promotes learning in a variety of ways. This enables pupils to develop skills of communicating in different ways, suited to their individual needs, and opens up exciting avenues through which they are able to learn, so they make good progress as they move through the school.
- In the other classes a curriculum which is more theme based is followed. Evidence is gathered from the start to show how well pupils are learning, including information that enables the school to compare the progress of its pupils with that of similar pupils elsewhere, which confirms the good progress made in English and mathematics.
- In English, this good progress is demonstrated in pupils' eager participation that demonstrates their understanding and perception. For example, in one lesson seen pupils were able to discuss a story they had listened to and express positive ideas through speech or signing. In mathematics, pupils make good progress in, for example, understanding concepts about number. In one lesson seen pupils were thinking about time through searching the room for examples of clocks that provided practical illustrations of what happened at different times of the day.
- Reading is promoted for those who are able. In a Years 5/6 lesson the teacher used phonics (learning about letters and their sounds) to help pupils develop their skills and a group enjoyed reading to an inspector. Pupils were able to follow simple books, reflecting good progress and allowing the pupils to gain enjoyment from reading.
- The use of the pupil premium has been effectively targeted. For example, it funds additional time for a specialist educational psychologist to develop support programmes. Additional information and communication technology equipment has been specifically purchased for identified pupils. Consequently, these pupils achieve well, and in line with their peers.
- Monitoring shows there is no difference between the progress made by any identified group. This includes those who attract the pupil premium, or those from different ethnic communities. Since the focus is on meeting the needs of every individual this is not surprising.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because their individual needs are understood and addressed within a school community committed to providing equal opportunities. This includes staff members from the range of communities reflected in the school.
- On occasion some pupils do not reach their full potential in lessons because full use is not made of progress data in the process of planning to meet individual needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- A tremendous strength of the school is the excellent teamwork in every class. Teachers and their assistants plan and deliver lessons together, working effectively with all pupils. As a result teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations on most occasions. Even though some pupils have profound needs they do not lose sight of the fact that this is a school where all pupils are expected to learn to the best of their abilities. The focus on helping all pupils to do their best enables them to make good progress.
- Key skills are taught well. For example, teachers and their assistants plan the content and anticipated outcomes of lessons together. In a Years 2/3 speaking and listening lesson the teacher gathered pupils around and read a story from a big book. At the same time the assistants sat with the pupils with smaller versions of the book to help keep them focused. Pupils then broke into pairs or individuals to work with a member of staff in individually planned activities that really challenged the pupils to do their best. The quality of art and displays around the school create vibrant learning environments which engage and stimulate pupils. They also support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and this is reinforced through praise and celebration of success. Even when an individual pupil's progress slows because of their particular needs teachers still work hard to engage and stimulate, reflecting a strong commitment to equal opportunities.
- This commitment to equal opportunities is also reflected in the equally good progress of pupils from different ethnic communities, or who speak English as an additional language.
- Sometimes learning experiences are enhanced through specialist teaching. For example, dance lessons are enjoyed greatly and pupils, including those with very limited mobility using wheelchairs, participate with enthusiasm. This is a good illustration of the way in which pupils' emotional and social development is promoted.
- Information and communication technology is used well in the teaching throughout the school to widen pupils' learning opportunities.
- In the best lessons careful planning leads to clear progress, so that pupils can see what they have achieved.
- Staff show skill in noting 'small steps' in progress and routinely recording these. This adds to the more formal data that is available. However, on occasion planning does not fully address individual needs because full use is not made of the information gathered on individual progress, and progress of those individuals slows. Consequently, the overall quality of teaching, including the teaching of English and mathematics, is not yet outstanding.
- Teachers work well with parents and carers to help them to support their children with homework, which is always focused on reinforcing learning undertaken in class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Many pupils have very challenging behaviour when they first start at school. However, the school works closely with a range of other professionals, parents and carers to help pupils make radical improvement. Records confirm that these pupils typically make excellent progress in improving their behaviour.
- This very effective liaison results in the creation of detailed and very well-implemented behaviour plans which are monitored regularly to ensure they are working to maximum effect. The school works closely with parents and carers to seek to ensure that the plans are equally well implemented at home so that there is a consistency in expectation at home or in school throughout the year.
- Wider expertise, such as that provided by child mental health services, reflects the range of services that the school brings together in order to promote excellent behaviour within a carefully managed environment. The success of this is reflected in the way in which even the

most frail of pupils sit side by side with those who had been quite volatile when they first started.

- In lessons pupils display very positive attitudes to learning. They are keen and enthusiastic and the ways in which they engaged the inspectors in their learning typified this enthusiasm.
- Pupils, parents and carers believe strongly that the school is a safe and happy place and that pupils achieve high standards in their behaviour. Pupils get on extremely well together, developing durable social relationships. The school is very effective at promoting good relationships and consequently there is an absence of discrimination.
- There is very little evidence of any form of bullying and pupils are helped successfully to develop strategies to help them feel safe.
- Attendance is below average, but this is almost entirely due to the wider medical needs of pupils. When absences for medical reasons are removed attendance is high because pupils enjoy school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. She has created a committed team of school leaders who make an effective senior team. Roles within the wider senior team are still developing and the full range of individual responsibilities is still evolving.
- Each team member monitors and supports two teachers. In turn teachers are responsible for the management of their classroom team. In this way monitoring and reviewing of performance is undertaken and feeds into targets for staff performance, supported by opportunities for training.
- As a result of this effective monitoring, good teaching and achievement have been sustained and further enhanced, despite the changing nature of pupils' needs on entry to the school over time.
- Staff know they are accountable for pupils' progress and understand that this is linked to pay progression. More is expected from those who are most experienced, including the acceptance of additional responsibility by those on the teachers' higher pay scale.
- Staff awareness of the importance of pupil progress data to inform planning has been raised so that staff routinely use available information more effectively than previously, to inform their planning. However, there is not yet full use of the information available.
- The curriculum ensures that the wide range of needs and abilities within the school are addressed. The current focus is on ensuring that pupils are ready for the move to the new school. There is a determination that the move will be smooth and will support even higher standards of learning, and there is detailed planning in place to support the process of moving.
- Links with parents, carers and other professionals are extremely effective, supporting integrated help and support. A room in school provides a professionals' base and this element of the work of the school has been replicated and improved in the new building.
- Self-evaluation is very effective and enables the school development plan to reflect key priorities for taking the school forward in this exciting period of transition to the new school.
- The local authority has provided good support and continues to do so while the transition to the new school goes ahead.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective. It carries out its legal responsibilities and its duty to keep an effective check on the quality of teaching. It follows the performance of pupils carefully and has a good understanding of the data on the school's performance. It also has a good understanding of the standard of teaching in the school. Governors understand the system for managing the performance of teachers and evaluating the quality of teaching and how this relates to teachers' pay. Similarly, they understand the school finances, and know how resources funded by the pupil premium are deployed; their monitoring of the impact of the pupil premium is not always sufficiently rigorous. They take full advantage of the local authority's governor training programme to maximise their effectiveness.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133440
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	402575

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2– 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Secrett
Headteacher	Geraldine Lee
Date of previous school inspection	May 2010
Telephone number	020 7733 0681
Fax number	020 7733 7154
Email address	admin@thelivity.lambeth.sch.uk

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