

Poplars Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107247
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	356118
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Thiara
Headteacher	Mr John Davison
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, observing eight teachers and eight classes. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 53 parents and carers, 114 pupils and four staff were scrutinised.

- What the school is doing to raise attainment and achievement across the school.
- How challenging teaching is, especially for the more-able pupils
- How well-informed, cohesive and focused staff are in driving improvement forward, given the recent changes in staffing.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this average-sized primary school are non-White British, being mostly of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi origin. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average but the number believed to be new to speaking English is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, but the number with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark award. The school has undergone significant staffing changes over the last year and also major building work. The current headteacher took up post in September 2008.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has strengths especially in the good safeguarding, care and support pupils and their families receive and this makes a considerable difference to their lives. Through the good programme of personal and social education pupils also have a well-developed sense of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are highly supportive of the school's work.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those typical for their age. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Overall attainment on leaving the school is now average, although some weaknesses remain in pupils' writing skills and in the number of pupils reaching above average levels in English and mathematics. Learning and teaching are satisfactory but improving rapidly. Examples of good teaching were observed and these lessons inspired pupils but in many lessons there is a poor match of activities to pupils' needs, especially for the more-able, underdeveloped speaking and listening skills and limited opportunities for pupils to work independently. The satisfactory curriculum is being updated to make it more imaginative. It has strengths in the arts, sport and provision for extra-curricular activities.

Pupils enjoy their time in school, say they feel very safe and behaviour is good. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within the school and community are good. The promotion of community cohesion is effective and is reflected in the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Attendance is average, despite the school's strenuous efforts to improve it.

Recent challenges facing the school are being overcome and the school is moving forward under the determined leadership of its headteacher, staff and governors. Many staff are new to their management responsibilities and their monitoring and planning roles are still developing. Nevertheless, the leadership team has gained an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through its self-evaluation. Plans are in place to introduce initiatives to tackle concerns, for example improved assessment systems, but are not yet properly embedded across the school and their impact not yet fully proven. Consequently, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and achievement by ensuring that the quality of learning and progress is good or better in all lessons, by:

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- developing pupils' speaking and listening skills so that they are able to learn more effectively from adults and each other in lessons
- further developing pupils' writing skills so that they can communicate their learning more effectively
- promoting more effective independent learning by allowing pupils to better demonstrate their understanding without adult support
- providing a better match of lesson activities to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more-able.
- Improve attendance by impressing on parents and carers, especially of the younger pupils, the importance of regular attendance.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the initiatives to bring about change are fully-embedded
 - developing the monitoring role of subject leaders and ensure their action plans are sharply-focused on raising attainment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In lessons, most pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills in a satisfactory way. They are keen to succeed, mostly apply themselves well in lessons and work at a good pace when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. Progress in learning is satisfactory, however, because of the variability in the quality of teaching. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation that achievement is satisfactory across the school. Pupils' attainment is broadly average and rising in response to a more stable staffing situation. Attainment in mathematics and science has recovered from a dip in 2009 and in the majority of classes is getting closer to average levels. Areas of weakness remain within writing, which limit some pupils' ability to communicate their learning. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels also remains below average. However, inspection evidence and school data show that the large majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have made satisfactory progress in the past but more recently there is evidence of these pupils making good progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory, but, again, improving rapidly, as a result of the additional support they receive.

Pupils value the improvements brought about recently, especially in classroom space and resources. The vast majority of pupils say they feel safe in school and that they enjoy their learning. Behaviour is good and often very good in the best lessons. The school places a high priority upon developing pupils' understanding of healthy living and pupils' awareness of this is good. Pupils take on many levels of responsibility within the school and the active school council has been responsible for many changes in the way the school operates, notably after-school activities. Community involvement is strong, for example pupils acting as local wardens. The celebration of diversity, mutual respect and harmony demonstrated by pupils, as well as their extensive involvement in cross-cultural projects and visits means that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Satisfactory attendance and basic skills mean that, currently, the pupils' preparation for the next stage in their learning is satisfactory rather than good.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory across the school. Occasionally it is good and a small amount observed was outstanding. In the better lessons, good planning ensures that varied activities are provided that meet the needs of pupils and good pace and challenge from the teacher stimulates their interest. The school has recently introduced several new initiatives, including improved assessment practices, to raise the quality of teaching. In the effective lessons the results of these changes can be seen in tasks and support being closely-focused on pupils' needs. While the quality of teaching is improving, the new changes are not being used consistently across all classes. In some lessons, assessment data is not yet used to match activities appropriately to pupils' needs, especially the more-able. Speaking and listening practices are not as well-established as they could be, with the result that not all pupils learn as effectively as they should from each other or from adults in lessons. On occasions teachers talk for too long and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to demonstrate their own learning and work independently of adult support. The use of individual learning targets has been recently introduced and is beginning to help pupils to move on to the next stage in their learning.

The curriculum is currently under review to ensure it more fully meets the needs of all the pupils. There has been a major drive to improve literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills that is beginning to impact upon all areas of pupils'

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learning. A wide range of support programmes has been introduced over the last year to target identified learning needs. The programme to support gifted and more-able pupils has begun to have significant impact in Year 6 but the school recognises that it has more to do in this area. A good range of visits is broadening pupils' experiences of the world and residential opportunities are contributing well to their personal development and health.

The quality of the care, guidance and support is good. Aspects of the school's pastoral care are outstanding and the success of this provision is seen in the warm and harmonious atmosphere within the school. Transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school are very good. There is a good programme of family learning opportunities, including days when parents and carers can join in lessons with their children to share in their learning experiences. The school can point to several cases where the quality of its care has resulted in pupils overcoming significant barriers to learning, notably for those new to speaking English. The school is dealing with attendance robustly, with a wide range of rewards and incentives. It has been successful in improving attendance and reducing persistent absence. This can be seen in the attendance in the older year groups which is often high, reflecting pupils' very positive attitudes to the school. Attendance within younger year groups is weaker, however, despite the school's efforts to improve this.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is driving improvement forward with energy and determination. His vision is shared by the staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers, who are especially appreciative of the changes brought about. He has largely stabilised staffing, overseen the considerable extension of the school's facilities and begun a programme of support and challenge to improve attainment and the quality of teaching and learning. Many new initiatives are yet to be fully embedded and their impact upon pupils' learning realised. Similarly the role of subject leaders is not yet sufficiently developed, especially in respect of their direct involvement in monitoring the quality of provision within their areas, and in development planning. The governing body provides satisfactory management. Governors know the strengths and areas for development in the school, and are increasingly supporting and challenging its drive for improvement.

Safeguarding practices are good, reflecting the levels of care within the school. There is good practice in the checking and vetting of staff and in site security. The promotion of

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equal opportunities is satisfactory, reflecting the variability in the quality of teaching, but gaps in pupils' performance are being reduced. Discrimination is extremely rare and when encountered is dealt with well. Engagement with parents and carers is good, with the Parents' Council providing a valuable forum for discussion and communication. The promotion of community cohesion is effective, especially at school and local levels, and pupils gain an informed understanding of wider communities via the 'Through my Windows' project and international links.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction arrangements ensure that children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome in the school. Children settle happily into the safe and secure environment of the Early Years Foundation Stage setting. Children enter the Nursery classes with skills that are generally below those typical for their age, especially in their early language and social skills. They make satisfactory progress in their learning overall and good progress in their personal development. This is reflected in their good behaviour and their ability to work and play together well. Teachers are well aware of children's interests and regularly assess the progress they make in their learning. They communicate this information well to parents and carers. Welfare provision and care are good. Teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good, especially in the Nursery classes. The outdoor learning area is somewhat hampered by the steep slope of the school site but is resourced well and used imaginatively. There is a satisfactory balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that are teacher-directed. Support for children who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances is good, especially regarding language acquisition. Leadership and management are satisfactory but improving as the new Early Years Foundation Stage leader establishes her expectations and practices. There are appropriate plans in place for bringing about further improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very happy with almost all aspects of the school's work. They consider it provides a safe and caring environment for their children and that it is led and managed well. Inspectors found that safeguarding is good and leadership is improving now the school has a settled staff. A few parents and carers expressed concerns that their children are not making sufficient progress in their learning. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' progress is satisfactory overall and improving.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Poplars Farm 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 246 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	43	27	51	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	42	31	58	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	38	29	55	4	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	26	33	62	6	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	32	34	64	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	30	35	66	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	43	30	57	0	0	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)	17	32	28	53	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	34	32	60	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	21	36	68	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	28	32	60	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	32	35	66	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	30	35	66	2	4	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



17 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Poplars Farm Primary School, Bradford, BD2 1LQ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly, polite, and enthusiastic about what you do.

Poplars Farm is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and is improving after a dip in performance two years ago. You get a satisfactory start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and make satisfactory progress there as a result of the satisfactory teaching, care and leadership and management. Your progress within the rest of the school is varied, but satisfactory overall, and improving. In the past, your attainment on leaving the school has sometimes been low but this has now risen to broadly average levels. Teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good and a small amount that is outstanding. The variety of activities offered is satisfactory but being developed well. Your behaviour is good. Well done! Your attendance is average, being held back particularly by more regular absentees in the younger year groups. You have a good sense of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, helped by the wide range of sporting and other activities provided by the school. We have asked the school to consider the following points that will help make it improve.

- Make sure that all your lessons are at least good.
- Continue to develop ways to improve the attendance of those pupils who do not come to school regularly.
- Check what is going on in lessons more frequently to be clear about how things should improve and ensure all of the new changes are being successful.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn, letting them know if you have any problems and for some of you to come to school more often. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead Inspector

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