

Mulberry Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133707
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	360576
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	680
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Luke Miller
Headteacher	Alan Jenner
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons, observed 26 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including policies, safeguarding systems and procedures, pupils' progress data, attendance figures and the school's development planning. They scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 213 parental and carer questionnaires.

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

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for improving the learning and progress for all pupils, particularly groups such as those at the early stages of learning English and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as the most able.
- The use staff make of assessment information to support and challenge pupils' learning.
- The effectiveness of leaders in checking, reviewing and taking actions to improve teaching and pupils' progress and tackle any underachievement in order to improve progress.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The pupils come from both White British families and a wide range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. Over three quarters of the children speak English as an additional language and of these, the majority join with little or no English, with 45 different first languages recorded. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average and represents a range of needs. The school has a dedicated provision for autism with places for 18 pupils with statements of special educational needs. A greater-than-average proportion of pupils join and leave the school at times other than expected, with the majority having had no previous formal education. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Over the last two years there have been many changes to staff and the governing body.

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

2

Main findings

Mulberry Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. Since the previous inspection, it has continued successfully to attach considerable priority to the pastoral care, guidance and support it provides as well as its safeguarding procedures. These aspects of the school's work are exemplary and ensure pupils develop very well as individuals. They are key factors in ensuring that pupils feel safe, well cared for and thrive in their personal development. Similarly, the provision for autism is outstanding because of the extremely high levels of care and support provided for each individual. Parents and carers strongly agree and pupils prosper as a result. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from good relationships with staff and their behaviour is good both in lessons and at play, where they show considerable support for one another regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.

The school is solidly focused on improving learning and there is a strong, shared commitment to raising attainment for all pupils. Leaders at all levels are involved in increasingly focused, formal self-evaluation. Senior leaders and the governing body have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and are instrumental in driving forward improvement. For example, as a result of their good efforts in working with pupils and families, attendance has risen considerably since the previous inspection and is now average and improving. This, combined with the effective action to tackle previous underachievement, shows the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

While teaching is satisfactory overall, it is good in increasing numbers of lessons and classes throughout the school. This is because leaders have focused successfully on improving the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain and, as a result, pupils' progress is better in some lessons and classes than others. Consequently, pupils do not build consistently well on their learning as they move up through the school. All teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing, but some do not make sufficiently accurate use of this information to set suitably challenging work for all pupils. This hinders the progress made by some pupils, particularly the most able. While day-to-day assessment, including marking, is effective in some classes, in others it is not used well enough. Not all pupils are made aware of the next small steps needed to improve their work and this limits their ability to take responsibility for their learning. While attainment in English and mathematics has risen due to the school's recent focus on these areas, it remains below average. Following a recent monitoring visit by Her Majesty's inspectors, the school has worked hard to improve provision for children in the Reception classes. While this is now satisfactory overall the school acknowledges that more needs to be done to develop the opportunities planned for children's learning, especially in the outdoor learning environment.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure better achievement for all pupils by:
 - developing teachers' use of marking so pupils always understand exactly what to do to improve their work and know the next steps in their learning
 - building on the best practice already seen in some classes for setting individual targets that help to ensure all pupils know how to improve their work in mathematics and English.
- Accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - making better use of assessment information in the planning process to ensure that lessons always challenge and engage pupils well, particularly the most able
 - ensuring that the monitoring by all leaders is thorough enough to secure consistently good or better teaching across the school.
- Improve outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - developing the outdoor learning environment so that children are active learners at all times
 - making better use of assessment information to ensure all activities on offer in the Reception classes are closely matched to next steps in children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

From low starting points, pupils achieve satisfactorily in their academic learning, helped by their good attitudes towards school. However, while progress is good and better in the majority of classes, it is not yet a consistent feature. This is because planned learning is not always matched closely enough to the differing abilities of each group or individual to enable all pupils to achieve consistently well. In such cases, pupils' interest and progress dip. Where learning is good, pupils are motivated and engaged, talking eagerly about what they have learnt. In a Year 6 mental mathematics lesson, the classroom buzzed with pupils' enthusiasm as they successfully discussed the best ways to tackle a series of problems. Working well collaboratively and as a result of skilful questioning and challenge, they grew in confidence as they explained how each problem could be solved, drawing on their good prior learning and evaluating each other's progress through the session thoughtfully.

Previous underachievement in the progress pupils made was recognised by the school which has worked hard over the last two years to reverse this trend. Indeed, increasing numbers of pupils make good progress. However, there still remains too much inconsistency across the classes and year groups for progress as a whole to be any better than satisfactory. The school is well aware that attainment for pupils still has to rise, and has already taken steps to hasten its improvement, but these have yet to make a full impact. While pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress overall, those within the provision for autism achieve exceptionally well due to the particularly well-targeted support they receive. Regular checks on how well pupils are progressing ensure that other groups of pupils, including those at the early stages of learning English and those newly arrived at the school, achieve as well as their

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peers. Similarly those known to be eligible for free school meals also make the same progress as their peers.

Pupils achieve well in many aspects of their personal and social development. They have an exceptionally good understanding of how to keep safe both within the school and in the wider world because of the school's very strong focus on pastoral care. Behaviour is well managed with most pupils saying that they enjoy school, feel cared for and know they can talk to someone if they have any problems. Pupils' enjoyment of school life is evident in their eagerness to talk about their school. From an early age, they are keen to take on responsibilities, whether being part of the class or school councils or acting as one of the peer mediators. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. With many different ethnic heritages represented in the school population, their cultural awareness within the school is particularly strong, relationships are good and pupils are considerate of each other, valuing and celebrating each other's differences. Although attainment remains low, pupils' enjoyment at being in school and increasing levels of attendance ensure their preparation for their future life and learning are satisfactory.

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	4
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	1
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?

The majority of lessons are planned and organised well with interesting activities to engage the pupils and high expectations set by teachers. For example, Year 1 pupils read the Jack and the Beanstalk story with increasing confidence and expression in a literacy

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lesson as a result of the teacher's good modelling. The teacher used questioning effectively to improve their writing so they were able to suggest a wealth of 'wow' words to describe Jack and the giant, discussing their ideas and recording them in pairs. However, in other lessons, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to capitalise on pupils' enthusiasm for learning, encourage them to explain in detail their ideas and to challenge their thinking further, particularly the most able. In these lessons, the tasks do not move pupils' learning forward sufficiently and the pace of teaching is not quick enough for them to achieve well. As a result, progress slows and pupils become less engaged and attentive. While marking in some classes is good because teachers refer to the next steps in pupils' learning, this has yet to become a consistent feature across the school. Similarly, in lessons teachers often miss the opportunity to refer to pupils' individual targets, in order to show them how to improve their work.

The curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, enabling them to make satisfactory progress in their basic skills from their generally low starting points. Through its rigorous tracking systems, the school is increasingly holding teachers to account for their pupils' progress. However, some planning does not always take account of the needs of the most-able pupils. Too often it relies on what the pupils produce rather than providing specific tasks to match their ability closely and this hinders their progress. While the curriculum is being more carefully tailored to meet the needs of groups such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, whether in lessons, small group work or on a one-to-one basis, these changes are too recent to have secured good achievement. The strength of the curriculum is evident in its success in effectively developing pupils' good personal development and well-being. A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education as well as a wide variety of visits and visitors and a good range of extra-curricular activities all help to promote pupils' enjoyment and readiness to learn.

Pupils' welfare and personal, social and health needs are catered for tremendously well because the school works exceptionally closely with parents and carers as well as a wealth of outside agencies. For example, the particularly high levels of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual ones are helped extremely well to settle very quickly and make the same progress as their peers. Similarly the effective support for targeted pupils is ensuring that their progress is improving rapidly. There is outstanding provision for autistic pupils. This really is a place where every child matters and staff at all levels go the extra mile to make a difference. Pastoral care is outstanding. The school's good efforts to support pupils and families who might otherwise find it hard to access education are evident in pupils' increasing attendance and echoed in comments made during the inspection by parents and carers.

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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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all members of the senior leadership team and governing body who are equally ambitious for the school. There is a positive team spirit among the whole staff. Good links with parents and carers are helping the school to achieve its goals. As a result of developing a more rigorous tracking system, the school has been increasingly effective in holding teachers to account for their pupils' progress. This has been instrumental in tackling previous underachievement and the upward trend in standards and achievement. Subject leaders play an effective part in checking how well their subject is doing and planning for improvement with the result that pupils' progress is rising securely. However, while all leaders are involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning and the quality of teaching is improving, despite the many changes in staff, they are aware more needs to be done as inconsistencies remain. The governing body is conscientious in fulfilling its statutory duties to ensure the safety of the children and agree policies. Governors, too, play an important role in giving challenge to the headteacher and are effective in checking how well the school is doing.

The school's promotion of equality and diversity is good because it takes effective steps to tackle discrimination to make sure that pupils from all backgrounds perform to a similar standard. They also ensure that pupils, whose circumstances make them most vulnerable, have the opportunities to achieve as well as their peers. Pupils are encouraged to play their full part in the school and the local community, and their understanding and contribution are developing well in these areas. The school is making good progress in promoting pupils' understanding of communities and cultures in national and global contexts.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and understanding that are well below the levels expected for their age, but especially weak in their personal, social and emotional development and their language for communication, language and literacy. They grow in confidence and make satisfactory progress though attainment remains below average as they start in Year 1. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with an appropriate mixture of activities led by staff and those chosen by the children themselves. However, while assessment information is used effectively to record children's progress, it is not yet used well enough in planning ahead to ensure they make good gains in their learning from day to day, particularly in the Reception classes. In the Nursery, teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Children achieve well because great care is taken to tailor the activities to the children's needs. Here, good opportunities for children to share their ideas are provided through effective open-ended questioning and activities planned draw on the children's interests. For example, as part of their work on the story 'Handa's Surprise' children re-enacted part of the story as they dressed up as different animals and tasted different fruits. They were keen to describe the texture and look of the fruits as they handled and tried them. Adults constantly reinforced simple vocabulary as children shopped for fruit, made models of oranges and bananas and even used fruit to help in their counting.

The curriculum as a whole is adapted appropriately to engage the children in active learning but the outdoor learning environment, while improving, still lacks sufficient quality opportunities to extend and challenge pupils' learning or to enthuse and engage them sufficiently to achieve well. Communication with parents and carers is good, with regular opportunities planned to give them a better understanding of how they can help their children's development through everyday activities. Nursery and reception leaders ensure children are provided with a safe environment in which to learn and grow. The recently

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formed Early Years Foundation Stage leadership team has a clear understanding of the next steps to be taken to strengthen provision and ensure children achieve well in all aspects of learning.

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 return of questionnaires from parents and carers was average. The very large majority of these were positive and most of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. Parents and carers commended the caring attitude of the school, how well the school is led and managed, the quality of teaching and how much their child enjoys school. Particular mention was made by parents and carers of those in the provision for autism both in the questionnaires and to inspectors during the inspection commending the 'levels of care, skill, intuition and dedication'. Typical comments about the school included, 'Teachers go that extra mile to help the child', 'A brilliant place for my children, no doubt about it' and 'The head is friendly and supports all the children well.'

A very small minority of parents and carers reported concerns over how the school helps them to support their child's learning or takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Several parents and carers commented positively on this aspect of the school's work in their questionnaires. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that the school works hard to provide parents and carers with information about how to help their children, and its open door policy enables parents and carers to talk with staff when needed as well as seeking their views about whole school issues such as the school menu and the forthcoming new build.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mulberry 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 213 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 680 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	137	64	73	34	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	114	54	95	45	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	97	46	106	50	9	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	39	117	55	9	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	97	46	110	52	6	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	88	41	104	49	16	8	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	81	38	115	54	11	5	1	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)	85	40	97	46	8	4	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	79	37	112	53	9	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	80	38	110	52	10	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	29	122	57	15	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	82	38	117	55	4	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	104	49	100	47	3	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	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.



24 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mulberry Primary School, London N17 9RB

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear that you like school and we agree that you do best when your teachers plan many interesting things for you to do. You get on with one another well and behave well in lessons and around the school. We think your school is really good at giving you the right help so that you know how to keep safe.

The inspection team has found that your school is satisfactory and improving. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs as it should and teachers do what is expected to help you make satisfactory progress in your work. The leaders in the school know what needs to be done to make your school better. In order to help you to make faster progress, we have asked the staff at your school to do three things.

- Make better use of marking and your targets to help you understand how to improve.
- Keep checking to make sure your lessons are always challenging enough and interesting so you achieve well.
- Make sure activities planned both indoors and outdoors in the Reception classes help all children with the next steps in their learning.

You can all help by continuing to respect other's values and always using the advice teachers give you on how to improve your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall

Lead inspector

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