

Poplar Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106204
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	355903
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Tony Painter

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	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Wagstaff
Headteacher	Mr Iain Linsdell
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 11 lessons taught by 11 teachers. They held discussions with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of school documents including policies, planning and assessment records. They examined staff and pupil questionnaire responses as well as 85 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How far the school has maintained rising trends of attainment
- Whether action is ensuring improvements in attendance and punctuality
- The extent of the governing body's involvement in setting the school's strategic direction
- The effectiveness of the school's new leadership strategies to drive improvement.

Information about the school

This is an above-average sized primary school where most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small, but growing, number of pupils has a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased recently. It is above average, although very few pupils have a statement of special educational need.

A children's centre adjoins the school under independent management and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has a number of awards including the Healthy School status and an Active School Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. School leaders have used accurate self-evaluation to identify the right areas for development and have taken effective action to raise attainment. As a result, good teaching now ensures pupils make good progress throughout the school from their below-average starting points. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. The clear success of the current developments and the good sense of ambition in the school indicate a good capacity to improve further.

Good assessment systems give a detailed and accurate picture of how well pupils are doing. Senior staff have analysed this carefully to target action successfully, for example where groups of pupils were making different rates of progress. Teachers use the information successfully to plan work for pupils of different abilities and ensure good learning. Strong features, such as good relationships and organisation, permeate all teaching and lead to consistently good progress. Teachers generally note pupils' learning in the classroom well and adapt their approaches successfully. However, occasionally they miss opportunities to respond quickly and flexibly to pupils' needs to raise progress further by re-arranging groups or giving further challenge.

The headteacher has taken positive steps to widen the leadership and management roles of staff with subject and year group responsibilities. These staff now play a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, contributing to development planning. However, their autonomy remains limited and they are not always involved fully in monitoring and evaluating teaching or sharing good practice. In an additional strategy, a number of 'action teams' have been established that allow staff and governors to work together with contributions from parents and carers and other school partners. Although very new, these are already having a positive impact, bringing a closer involvement in determining some strategic plans for the school. However, there is currently no clear plan of how to integrate the work of the 'action teams' into the development planning process.

The school gives good care, guidance and support for pupils, based on detailed knowledge of each child. There is a very strong sense of community in the school; 'we're all like one big family' explained one pupil. Pupils of different backgrounds mix readily and cohesively. Strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies and outside bodies ensure effective support for pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances, and their families. Pupils' good behaviour, regular attendance, high levels of enthusiasm and their desire to do well indicate the success of this approach.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further promote pupils' progress in lessons by:

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- sharing the best teaching practice that is currently evident within the school
- responding more flexibly to pupils' needs as they become apparent during lessons.
- Widen involvement in management systems by:
 - developing middle managers' skills of observation and evaluation of teaching and other aspects of the school's work
 - giving them greater opportunities to take an independent lead in developments
 - establishing ways that the 'action team' approach can support and improve the established development planning process
 - devising plans to link the strategies to avoid duplication or conflict.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Actions to raise attainment are bearing fruit and pupils' learning and progress are good in all parts of the school. In lessons, pupils show good levels of enjoyment of their tasks, work hard and concentrate well. They relish applying their developing skills, often making positive comments about their enjoyment of challenge. The school's promotion of language skills is having an impact, with pupils giving their thoughts and opinions with greater confidence in response to teachers' questioning. Action to promote learning in mathematics has led to significant improvements.

Year 6 pupils are on track to leave school with broadly average levels of attainment. This maintains the improving trend shown in recent test results and represents good achievement. The school sets appropriately challenging targets and the accurate assessments, pupils' work and lesson observations all show pupils on track to reach these. Staff use assessment information well to identify any pupils in danger of falling short of expectations and provide help to make sure they do not fall behind. Effective analysis of the relative performance of different groups of pupils ensures successful targeting of additional action to reduce gaps. As a result, more pupils are reaching higher levels of attainment and good support ensures pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

The impact of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in the ways pupils from different backgrounds interact harmoniously and co-operate well. These personal strengths, secure basic skills and broadly average attendance prepare them well for the next stages of their learning. Pupils say they are very confident of their safety in school and they know who they would turn to in the event of any concerns. The agreed behaviour strategies are effective in ensuring pupils' good behaviour. Most pupils take positive actions to ensure a healthy lifestyle, such as sensible eating and regular activities such as sports. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities in and around the school, such as helping other pupils and serving on the school council. Many, for example, are involved with the school allotment and through this promote good links with the local community. They carry out their responsibilities well but the range of opportunities is somewhat limited.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
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?

Throughout the school, teachers' consistent approaches and good teaching help all pupils to learn well. Positive relationships and well-established routines form a foundation of good classroom management that ensures little time is lost. Pupils' consequent good behaviour contributes further to the effective pace of learning. Only when the pace of learning slows, for instance in satisfactory lessons, does their attention slip a little. In many lessons, teachers give pupils good opportunities to work together and to express their own ideas, giving them greater confidence. Support staff are used productively and are generally confident of their roles to ensure learning, particularly of targeted pupils.

Teachers use their accurate assessments well to plan work for pupils of different abilities and set clear learning objectives. As a result, pupils feel their work is, 'at just the right level'. Teachers generally identify clearly in their marking what pupils need to do to improve. Additionally, pupils frequently evaluate their own work, which helps them understand how well they are learning. Teachers recognise how well pupils are learning during lessons and often intervene appropriately with further questioning or support. However, they sometimes miss opportunities to adapt flexibly and quickly to pupils' responses and tackle minor misunderstandings.

The school's good curriculum has meaningful activities that pupils find enjoyable and engaging. Thematic work links different subjects in a coherent manner and well-chosen visits and visitors frequently enrich topics. Pupils use their developing basic skills in a wide

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range of subjects and contexts. Provision for information and communication technology has expanded well since the last inspection although some limitations in older pupils' access to computers are only just being resolved. Pupils greatly appreciate and readily attend the wide range of clubs and activities that enliven many aspects of their learning.

Adults have strong personal knowledge of each individual pupil. They foster good relationships and a very positive ethos throughout the school. These ensure pupils' good personal development. Good arrangements to support pupils and their families whose circumstances may make them most vulnerable make effective use of well-established partnerships. Robust arrangements to monitor attendance have reduced levels of persistent absenteeism. There is good support for the very few pupils who show challenging behaviour, ensuring no disruption to learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Good monitoring ensures accurate self-evaluation that identifies the right areas for development. The headteacher and senior staff convey their ambition for the school well and staff show strong commitment to their clear vision for improvement. Regular and accurate assessment gives a sharp picture of pupils' progress. Frequent reviews of data hold teachers to account and identify where to give further support. These processes reinforce the drive for improvement and help teachers to ensure good progress. Effective action to close gaps follows detailed analysis of the relative performance of different groups of pupils. The school therefore promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles any possibility of discrimination. Well-chosen training ensures staff develop new skills to put strategies into place.

The school has taken good action to widen leadership. A significant strategy has been the introduction of 'action teams'. Although at an early stage of development, these show promise, with evident enthusiasm from those involved and positive outcomes. For example, members of the governing body have been able to play a clear role in determining the strategic direction of the school. In parallel to this, the headteacher is successfully supporting teachers with subject and age group responsibilities to take greater roles in steering developments. However, their opportunities to act independently have been limited. Currently there is no clear link between the processes of 'action teams' and development planning to avoid possible duplication or conflicts of development.

The effective and supportive governing body ensures safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and takes appropriate action to monitor safeguarding matters. Parents and carers have good opportunities to come into school and understand how well

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their children are doing, ensuring very good links between school and home. Strong partnerships, including with the adjacent children's centre, contribute well to school life and support pupils' personal development. The school effectively promotes community cohesion from a good understanding of its own context. There are strong links in the local area, nationally and internationally that help pupils from different backgrounds to get along very well together.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision ensures all children make good progress from starting points that are below that typical for their age. Staff promote children's personal development particularly well. Children settle quickly and comfortably into the school day and are clearly happy in their activities. The caring, welcoming and encouraging staff ensure a supportive and positive atmosphere that encourages good behaviour. Children are interested in their tasks and many work with good levels of concentration. As a result, children reach broadly similar levels of development to those found nationally for their age by the time they begin Year 1.

Staff have now established comprehensive assessment systems to gain a clear idea of how well individual children are learning and developing. This tracking information indicates where to target activities, ensuring good support for particular needs, such as in communication and in personal development. However, the school is aware of greater need to extend the children's vocabulary. Despite children's improving levels of development through Key Stage 1, staff have identified a need to extend the Early Years Foundation Stage approach into Year 1. They have therefore taken effective action to ensure this transition is smooth and supports Year 1 pupils' continued good progress.

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Some opportunities remain to share evaluations and experiences between Reception and Year 1 staff.

Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has established effective teamwork that ensures consistency of approaches. Self-evaluation is detailed and identifies where to take action. For example, staff have effectively tackled relative weaknesses in boys' basic writing skills and the gap is clearly closing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspection questionnaire response rate, at around 25%, is below the average found in primary schools. However, most parents and carers responded with wholly positive views of their children's experiences with particularly strong support for the effective way that the school keeps pupils safe and meets their individual needs. The inspection findings support these views. A very small number of comments expressed negative views and inspectors thoroughly investigated all the general matters raised. Their findings are included within the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Poplar Street 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 334 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	71	21	25	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	59	69	26	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	60	28	33	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	62	27	32	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	53	62	28	33	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	55	32	38	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	60	31	36	2	2	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)	43	51	37	44	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	61	27	32	6	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	59	31	36	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	56	33	39	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	59	69	23	27	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	73	19	22	4	5	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 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 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 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Poplar Street Primary School, Audenshaw, M34 5EF

Thank you all for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to your school. I would like to give special thanks to those who gave up time to talk to us about your work and how you enjoy school. You told us that you think your school is helping you to learn well and we agree. You work hard in school, and are rightly proud of what you achieve. Most of you know just what you need to do to get even better. You behave well and get on really well with each other.

Yours is a good school. The headteacher and all the staff are good at making sure that you are safe and very well cared for. We can see that all the staff have been working hard to help you to learn better and this is proving successful. We saw how keen you are to learn and all of you, including the youngest children, make good progress.

One reason for our visit was to see how your school can improve. We have asked your school leaders to make sure that:

- teachers do everything they can to help you to learn in lessons, such as re-arranging groups or giving you extra challenges
- teachers have more ways to play a part in checking how well things are going and leading new ideas in the school.

I am sure that you will help by continuing to do your very best in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Tony Painter

Lead inspector

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