

Woolmore Primary School

Woolmore Street, Poplar, London, E14 0EW

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is strong and leads the school well. She is relentless in her ambition for all in the community.
- School leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved further.
- The governing body knows the school well and provides good quality support and challenge to the leadership team.
- The quality of teaching is good. At its best, where expectations are high, teaching engages and excites pupils and encourages them to take an active part in their own learning.
- From their starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well, including those eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Provision in the early years is good. Routines are quickly established and children make good progress from their starting points. This ensures they are well equipped for life in school.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.
- Attendance and punctuality are good. The school has rigorous systems for ensuring pupils attend regularly.
- The leader with oversight of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is very effective. These pupils make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of the feedback teachers give pupils. Not all teachers make use of information from marking when planning the next lesson. Pupils do not always know how to improve their work, or follow up on teachers' comments.
- Teachers' expectations in some lessons are not consistently high enough, so that some pupils, particularly the most able, do not make the progress that they should.
- The role of middle leaders is not fully developed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed an assembly and range of lessons and part lessons from all years of the school. The headteacher and other members of the leadership team joined inspectors for the observation of five of these lessons.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and middle leaders, including those responsible for leading curriculum subjects, literacy, numeracy, special educational needs and early years. The lead inspector met with eight governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Two groups of pupils discussed their opinions about the school, their attitudes and their learning with inspectors. The inspectors listened to several pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the small number of responses on Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and of the school's own more extensive recent surveys of parents. Inspectors held discussions with parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, pupils' achievement information, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Reeves

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Majumber

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woolmore is an average-sized primary school. However, the school has recently (March 2015) moved into a new building on the site of the previous school. This new building will accommodate three classes of pupils per year. The school currently has one class per year, except in Year 3 where there are two classes.
- There are two full-time Nursery classes and two full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average. About three quarters of pupils are from a Bangladeshi background and a just over one tenth are Black African.
- The vast majority (91% in 2014) of pupils speak English as an additional language. This proportion is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs two daily breakfast clubs. There is also a programme of after-school clubs for pupils.
- The school has recently been awarded Gold Club status by the Mayor of London. This award is for schools where pupils eligible for the pupil premium do exceptionally well.
- There have been some significant changes to staffing in recent times, including among senior leaders. The school will have a full senior leadership team from September 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress further so a larger proportion of pupils make more than the progress expected of them by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in lessons and providing an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of the feedback that pupils receive about their work so that they know what they have to do to improve.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders so that they are better able to hold their teams to account for the quality of their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations for the school and leads with determination and a relentless pursuit of excellence. She has successfully managed the move into the new building, with care and consideration for the needs of the community. Careful planning and the appointment of key staff ensures that the school is poised for continued success as it grows in size.
- The headteacher has created a culture of learning where all are valued and all have a sense that they can succeed. The senior leadership team has developed a range of strategies, many of them necessitated by the recent building work, to engage with families and the local community to share this vision. All the parents spoken with during the inspection expressed high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school and the service it offers them and their children. This view is borne out in the school's own surveys of parental views.
- Leaders at the school are realistic and accurate in their views about the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because there are clear systems in place to monitor progress and then use this information for future planning. For example, leaders are clear that, whilst teaching is generally good, there are still some areas that need further development.
- Middle leaders are a developing influence at the school. A number of middle leaders are relatively new in their posts and are still developing the necessary skills to monitor the school's work. This is particularly the case as the school grows in size.
- The leadership of the provision for special educational needs and disabled pupils is good. The recently appointed lead has put in place clear, effective and rigorous systems to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified, their needs met and their progress carefully monitored. The school's leadership is dedicated to ensuring that the school meets the needs of this group of pupils, as far as possible, in 'mainstream' classrooms so that they have access to the full range of opportunities.
- Funding available through the pupil premium is used carefully to finance additional support and resources which help eligible pupils make at least similar, and often better, progress to their classmates. The school sees regular attendance as critical for the success of this group of pupils. Leaders have developed a range of effective strategies to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is as good as, and often better than, their classmates.
- Teachers' progression in terms of pay is linked closely to the Teachers' Standards. Teachers and, increasingly, teaching assistants have annual targets which are set by the headteacher and link to salary progression.
- Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and carefully. This information is used to set targets and ensures that, overall, pupils are provided with challenge and support that are matched to their individual needs. However, occasionally there is insufficient challenge for the most able.
- Staff are well supported through coaching, observing best practice and opportunities for further training. Discussion with staff, including newly qualified teachers, showed that staff agreed that leaders do all they can to improve teaching and that there is appropriate provision for professional development and training.
- The school is developing an approach to the curriculum that focuses more carefully on the skills needed for each particular subject area and the over-arching skills that are needed to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. It is too early to judge the impact of this approach across the school. However, where elements are in place, in a Year 6 politics session for instance, it presents pupils with opportunities to effectively develop their thinking and persuasive skills, as well as giving opportunities for extended writing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school's charity work gives pupils an understanding of the needs of others, as well as practical ways to address those needs. Similarly, the school's work around the responsibilities of being a member of the school community come across strongly in the ways pupils interact with each other in lessons and elsewhere.
- Additional funding from the government to promote sport and increase physical activity is being used to develop the expertise of staff and ensure a legacy of good teaching. The school is supported by the Tower Hamlets Youth Sports Foundation. The foundation provides opportunities for staff to improve their sport leadership and teaching skills. It also provides opportunities for pupils to play sports across the borough and beyond. More pupils are taking part in a wider variety of sporting activities. The range of after-school clubs has increased and pupils have more opportunities to participate in competitions than has previously been the case.
- The school has rigorous and effective systems for following up absence from school. It works closely with parents to reinforce the importance of their children attending school regularly, and on time, and has

several innovative reward schemes in place. Attendance at the school is above the national average.

- The school works closely with other schools across the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and is a member of the Poplar Partnership. The local authority offers effective support to the school. It has been particularly effective in helping teachers make accurate judgements about the quality of pupils' work.
- Staff at the school have received effective training in relation to extremism and radicalisation. Senior leaders are very aware and vigilant about the need to address this important aspect of the school's work.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led by an experienced Chair of Governors, who is clear about the school's priorities. As a result, governors have a clear sense of the school's strategic direction and are aware of the challenges that increased size will bring. They played an effective role in ensuring that the building of the new school did not have an adverse effect on the quality of learning. They also played, and play, a key role in ensuring that the local community is consulted and kept informed.
 - Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account through regular monitoring rooted in a clear understanding key information about the school. Their understanding of the school's performance data gives them an appropriate awareness of pupils' progress. However, they are over reliant for their information about the school on the headteacher and the senior team. Their relationship with middle leaders is not yet fully developed.
 - Governors understand the performance management of the headteacher and how the performance of other staff links to salary progression. They receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and, consequently, ensure that good teaching is rewarded appropriately.
 - The governing body has successfully challenged weak teaching and is committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils.
 - Governors review the school's finances to ensure the budget is managed effectively. They make close checks to ensure that grants such as the pupil premium and the additional funding for sport are well used, and measure the impact on pupils' outcomes.
 - Governors understand their role regarding the safeguarding of pupils. They ensure the necessary policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. Governors ensure all statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority of pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They want to do their best in lessons and participate fully in their learning.
- Pupils interact well with adults. Pupils conduct themselves with a clear understanding of the needs of others. Movement around the school is generally calm. The reduced size of the play area, resulting from the recent building work, does present some challenges for the supervision of pupils at breaks. Generally, these are well supervised by staff. However, during the inspection, during a heavy shower of rain, there were some incidents of boisterous behaviour, especially by boys.
- There is a clear school-wide behaviour policy. This helps ensure that pupils are clear about boundaries and acceptable ways to behave. Pupils welcome this.
- The pastoral care of pupils is a strength of the school's work. There is highly effective provision in place to support the most vulnerable pupils and the small number who find managing their own behaviour difficult. Fixed term exclusions are extremely rare.
- Attendance is now above the national average for all groups. This is a result of careful, targeted and sustained work by leaders and staff at the school. Lateness to school is relatively rare. The introduction of the more public 'late gate' has had a positive impact on pupils' punctuality. Pupils report that they enjoy coming to school.
- The school council meets regularly and conducts their business effectively. The council represents pupils' views on a wide range of activities, including the quality of learning and 'keeping safe'. Pupils are given keen insights into the democratic process through the council.
- Support for local, national and international charities, is a strong feature of the school's life. Pupils play a prominent role in choosing and collecting for charity. For example, the school recently raised £800 to support those affected by the earthquake in Nepal.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.

- Pupils feel safe and valued as members of the school community. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The school provides regular instruction on many aspects of safety through the curriculum and through assemblies and workshops. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Pupils fully understand the different forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying and racist name calling. School records show that incidents are rare, and when they do occur they are carefully analysed and followed up.
- Pupils report that everyone in school is treated fairly. They know to whom they can turn if they have a problem, and have confidence in the adults to help them if necessary. They know they will always be listened to by staff.
- Safeguarding procedures are good. All policies and training are in place and practices secure.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good quality teaching has continued to improve pupils' good achievement since the previous inspection.
- Where teachers' expectations are high, pupils settle promptly to work and make good progress both in whole class teaching and in individual tasks. Occasionally, when these expectations are not clear or the work is not sufficiently challenging, pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- Teachers know their subjects well. Generally, teachers use questioning effectively to give pupils opportunities to extend their knowledge or eliminate misunderstandings. However, opportunities are sometimes lost to use questioning to develop and deepen pupils' learning. Where questioning focuses on the 'what' rather than the 'how' and 'why', opportunities can be missed to challenge pupils' initial ideas and to explore alternatives.
- Pupils are regularly given opportunities to discuss their work together to clarify their ideas and recall related prior learning. This helps them to develop their understanding. Pupils are keen and proud to share their ideas and read out their work. Their classmates listen attentively.
- Teachers and teaching assistants monitor pupils' responses in lessons and adapt their approaches to teaching accordingly. Pupils' progress over time is also monitored carefully and accurately and staff use this information to ensure that their planning suits the needs of their pupils.
- Teachers plan effectively to match the work to the learning of most pupils. On occasion, the most able do not receive work which provides them with sufficient challenge or that moves their learning forward rapidly enough. When the work is challenging, most able pupils make good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants check pupils' work effectively and provide guidance to support pupils so that, generally, they make good progress in lessons. However, the feedback that pupils receive about their work does not always provide clear enough guidance to move some pupils' learning forward quickly enough. In addition, pupils are not always given sufficient time to respond to teachers' marking. This can limit its helpfulness.
- The teaching of reading is good overall. Pupils enjoy reading and have an appreciation of literature through the school's wide range of good quality reading materials. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to reading. They read with confidence and fluency and use a range of methods to work out the pronunciation and meaning of unfamiliar words.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Staff are knowledgeable. Pupils have access to a good range of equipment to support practical tasks. Pupils are expected to use mathematical terminology when explaining their answers and so they are familiar with correct mathematical language.
- The teaching of writing is effective. However, in some classes, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length and to develop their ideas. Generally, pupils are given a wide range of first-hand experiences which provide them with inspiration for writing. They are able to express themselves clearly in a range of styles.
- Homework is regularly set and there is an accurate record in pupils' home-school diaries.
- There are bright and striking displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school. These reflect the depth and range of the opportunities the pupils have to learn about and explore the world. For example, pupils' own exploration of the multiplicity of British society through writing pastiches of a Benjamin Zephaniah poem showed not only their skill in writing but also the breadth of their understanding of what it is to be British.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The skills and abilities children have when they start school are below those typical for their age. They make at least good progress throughout the school and, by the end of Year 6, pupils leave school with standards of attainment above national levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make good progress through the Nursery and Reception years. The proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development has improved over the past three years and was higher than the 2014 national averages in 2015. The majority of children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- In the phonic (sounds that letters make) screening check, completed in Year 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level has improved every year between 2012 to 2014 and was well above the national average in 2014. In 2015, there was a dip in results. The school's careful analysis shows that this is related to a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 1. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in phonics. This is because teachers have a well-planned and consistently delivered approach to phonics teaching through Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1,
- Increasing numbers of the most able pupils are now achieving the higher results at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Improved assessment processes and increased challenge for these pupils are having a positive impact on their learning. The proportions of pupils achieving the highest levels in reading and mathematics are above the national averages in both Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 6, achievement of the highest levels in writing is moving closer to the national average. The school recognises the need to build upon the improving outcomes in writing for the most able by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The needs of those pupils who join the school at different times of the school year are well met. They settle quickly and are incorporated into classes swiftly and sensitively, which enables them to make good progress.
- The Woodlands nurture provision ensures that pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress. This is because expert leadership and well trained teaching assistants provide these children with learning opportunities which are tailored to their needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good, and often very good, progress. This is because the school is adept at identifying gaps in learning and promptly putting in place teaching to address pupils' learning needs. The improved deployment of teaching assistants provides very good in-class support for behaviour and learning to enable these pupils to succeed alongside their peers. Very effective use of interventions support pupils and help ensure that they are ready to continue their learning in class.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. In 2015, Year 6 disadvantaged pupils were attaining broadly in line with other pupils nationally (2014 national figure) in writing and mathematics. In reading, there was a term and a half gap between the school's disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. However, this gap has reduced from the previous year. There are some in-school gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school. This is about two terms in reading and mathematics and one term in writing.
- Pupils are confident about moving to secondary school and they report that they feel that they have been well prepared both socially and academically.

The early years provision is good

- Children start in the early years with skills that are lower than those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. From their starting points, most children make good progress, with an increasing proportion reaching a good level of development. Overall, children are prepared well for Year 1.
- Leadership in the early years is good. The team is led effectively and there is a good understanding of the strengths and the areas for development. She monitors the impact of provision carefully and works alongside her team to ensure high quality, focused provision. She is aware of the aspects of early years work that still need further development, such as boys' literacy and the need for tighter checks of the quality of staff assessment of children's progress. There are well-developed plans in place to address these areas.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff support children in a range of activities which develops their key skills, pleasure and confidence in learning. Activities are well matched to their needs and offer a good level

of challenge. There is a strong focus on literacy and mathematics development. The early years area is well resourced and attractive. Through the range of experiences for children, there is a focus on exploring and celebrating identity and difference. This contributes effectively to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

- Teachers and teaching assistants plan together in order to provide a stimulating learning environment. They keep a close check on children's progress to ensure early identification of any specific learning needs or gaps in children's skills and knowledge. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are well supported through adult intervention, such as additional speech and language teaching. Most able children are given activities that extend them. This is particularly the case with literacy and numeracy.
- Phonics (sounds that letters make) is well taught and a consistent approach is applied across the early years setting. Children enjoy phonics and engage confidently. They support and encourage each other and are always willing to 'have a go'.
- Children's work is celebrated through attractive displays of their writing and drawings. Children's achievements are recorded in their learning journeys and shared with parents.
- Staff expectations of children's behaviour are consistently high across early years. As a result, behaviour is good. Children interact well together and have good attitudes to learning. Adults' interactions with children help them extend their replies beyond single words, so that they develop their confidence in using and exploring language. Adults listen attentively to children. This helps them ensure that they are providing children with appropriate experiences to extend and enhance their pleasure and excitement in learning.
- Achievement is good and the number of children reaching a good level of development is rising year on year. This is due to good teaching, an increasingly consistent approach and higher expectations from all staff.
- Before children start school, staff carry out visits to homes and other settings to gather information to ensure a smooth start. The early years leader and her team carefully monitor the impact of this outreach in order to identify ways to improve it and further develop and strengthen links with families. Parents are welcomed into school at any time to discuss their child's learning. The safety and well-being of children are paramount and there are established and quickly activated systems in place to ensure this.

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	100928
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	448213

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	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sister Christine Frost
Headteacher	Tracy Argent
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 March 2010
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