

Old Palace Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100892
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	276413
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2006
Reporting inspector	Andrew Marfleet

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Martin Mrs Lin Osborne
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Leonard's Street Bow London E3 3BT
Telephone number	020 8980 3020
Fax number	020 8980 2221

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Old Palace Primary is a popular and oversubscribed school in one of the poorest areas of the country. Most of the pupils live very near the school, with over 80% being from the Bangladeshi community. Over 90% have a first language other than English, with a high proportion being at an early stage of learning English. Their attainment on entry to the school is very low. Well over half are entitled to free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties is similar to that found nationally. A higher than average proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school at other than the usual times.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- Encourage parents to become more involved in their children's learning and in the life of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Pupils learn so well because of the outstanding teaching and support they receive, particularly from Year 3 onwards. Teachers have clear objectives and plan with the learning needs of all pupils in mind, including the large majority for whom English is an additional language, leading to their outstanding progress. All teachers know their pupils very well and manage their classes very effectively, fostering very good relationships. This leads to excellent working habits and effective use of time. Support staff are deployed to extremely good effect, particularly in group work. An example of this was in a Year 4 literacy lesson where groups, each supported by a different member of staff, succeeded in using more powerful verbs to enliven their writing.

Very good attention is paid to teaching letter sounds in Years 1 and 2, and this helps pupils to make good progress in reading and writing. Assessment systems are very thorough, particularly in English and mathematics, and are used very effectively to plan new learning. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own learning to help them improve their work. New staff receive excellent induction. Very good guidance to staff about teaching strategies, such as calculation methods in mathematics, ensures a consistency of approaches across the school. Very good arrangements for teaching pupils with learning difficulties ensure that they make comparable rates of progress to other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is broad and relevant, including provision for learning French. Very good quality planning allows teachers to link subjects and make learning interesting, although pupils commented on the fact that literacy lessons tend to predominate. The development of literacy skills within other subjects is, however, impressive, contributing to pupils' outstanding progress. Mathematical links are less well established although planning for the subject is good. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory but improving as new hardware is being installed. Provision for the support of pupils with learning difficulties is exemplary, enabling all pupils to have the best possible access to the curriculum.

'Focus weeks', when the school's curriculum is devoted to a particular subject or theme, create variety and enrichment. There is a good range of clubs, visits and visitors to school to enhance

pupils' experiences, including personnel from local banks promoting an understanding of economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding, and has a very positive impact on personal development and, particularly, on achievement.

There are secure arrangements for risk assessment and child protection. Children are shown how to be healthy and stay safe; there is an impressive programme for personal, social and health education.

The very thorough assessment and tracking procedures lead to outstanding guidance and support for all pupils. Those with learning disabilities are speedily identified, even when they are also disadvantaged by knowing little English. Effective intervention ensures that they achieve as well as others. Those children for whom English is an additional language make outstanding progress, because of the way specialist staff and class teachers work together in teams to provide high quality support for every child. Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and meet challenging targets, and this is reflected in what they achieve.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

We want to thank you for your warm welcome and for sharing with us your thoughts about the school. We really enjoyed looking at your work and watching you in lessons and assembly. Our conversations with the school parliament and other children left us in no doubt that you go to an outstanding school.

Although the headteacher and the other staff and governors are keen to improve the school further, it is really a case of keeping up the excellent work they do already. It would be great to see more of your parents getting involved with the school, as happens in most schools now. Your school is very successful in so many ways:) You make wonderful progress in your work :) You behave very well, and you really enjoy being at school :) Your headteacher is excellent and she has a great team to help her :) The teachers and other staff make learning fun and inspire you to succeed :) You are supported and cared for really well :) The school has improved since the last inspection, and looks as if it will keep on improving.

We wish you well in the future and hope that you will always be as happy as you are at Old Palace Primary.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Marfleet

Lead Inspector