



# Argyle Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 100008  
**Local Authority** Camden  
**Inspection number** 285699  
**Inspection dates** 9–10 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Steven Hill

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Tonbridge Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		WC1H 9EG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7837 4590
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	452	<b>Fax number</b>	020 7833 1384
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Sally Jones
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Laura Wynne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large inner-city primary school with a Nursery. It serves a multi-ethnic population in an area where levels of deprivation are twice the national average. This is reflected by high levels of free school meals. Over half the pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage and almost a quarter are of Black African origin, with the rest from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. Almost 90% have a mother tongue other than English, and almost a half of the pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Almost a fifth of pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry is very low. A high proportion of pupils leave or start at the school at other than at the usual junctures. The school has relatively high levels of teaching-staff turnover, in common with many schools in central London.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils thrive in the positive, multicultural environment. Achievement is good because of good teaching. Pupils' personal development is good and they make an outstanding contribution to the community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The outstanding curriculum includes excellent opportunities for enrichment and creative activities. It prepares pupils very well for life as citizens of a changing world. The support, care and guidance given to pupils are excellent. Their academic needs are tracked and met well and their pastoral care is outstanding.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. Standards remain below average throughout the school, but this represents a good level of achievement because of pupils' low starting points, and the significant numbers who join the school at different times, often with weak skills in English. Standards move closer to the national average as pupils get older. Bilingual pupils are given good support and improve their fluency in English quickly. Standards have varied from year to year since the last inspection, but have gone up overall in Year 2 and have fallen in Year 6. Records show that pupils make good progress overall through the school, with most Year 6 pupils attaining standards higher than could be expected in the light of their starting points. However, the progress varies between subjects and between classes from year to year. This is largely due to variations in teaching, and to some frequent staffing changes.

Teaching and learning are good overall, and vary from satisfactory to outstanding. Classes are managed well and pupils say they enjoy lessons because of the fun activities provided. Relationships are good and pupils work hard and take a pride in their achievements. Where lessons are just satisfactory, this is usually because of gaps in teachers' subject knowledge, or too slow a pace in the lesson.

The school is well led and managed. Good achievement has been maintained since the last inspection and attendance has improved remarkably. Good self-evaluation is based on regular monitoring of teaching, and careful assessments of pupils' progress. Effective action is taken to address any issues that are identified. Subject leaders provide clear direction, but have not had enough opportunities to work alongside colleagues to help improve their practice. The school has identified this as a priority for development in the coming year.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching by giving subject leaders more opportunities to share their expertise by working alongside colleagues.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good, and pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science from generally very low starting points. Standards are below average overall, but get closer to the national average as pupils get older. Good support for bilingual pupils ensures that they make good progress in learning English. Vulnerable pupils, including refugees and asylum seekers, also make good progress.

Many children start in Nursery or Reception with very weak skills. They achieve well, but by the time they start in Year 1 their standards are still below average, particularly in their emotional development, and aspects of their early literacy and mathematical skills.

Standards at the ages of seven and eleven are below average overall, but vary from year to year, often because of the different abilities in different year groups. In 2005, for example, standards at age seven were broadly average, but in 2006 were below average because of higher levels of special education needs in this group. Overall standards at age 11 fell in 2006, but detailed records of assessments show that most pupils made good progress during their time in the school. The fall in results was mainly because of a number of pupils with particular difficulties, who joined the school late. Good support to such pupils enables them to settle in quickly and they achieve well once they are established.

Progress varies between year groups and subjects from year to year. This is due principally to variations in teaching, often caused by staff changes, but also because of variations in teachers' subject knowledge.

The school's broad curriculum means that achievement is good in a number of other areas. For example, high standards in art are apparent in the wide range of work on display. Pupils have good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) as was seen when pupils in Year 4 used computers with confidence.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good with some outstanding features. Pupils enjoy coming to school because, as one commented, 'There is a nice cheery atmosphere. Everyone is pleased to see you.' This positive ethos is found at all levels, with older pupils helping younger ones, for example, in the playground and with spelling. Pupils say that lessons are fun and they feel proud of their achievements. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding and is very well supported by the enriched curriculum and links with the community. Attendance is satisfactory and has risen considerably since the last inspection. Pupils behave well and know how to keep safe and live a healthy life. Many make good use of the opportunities to take part in sport or other physical activities. The contribution pupils make to the community is outstanding, both in school and beyond. Pupils are well prepared for the future, as they grow in their understanding of sustainable lifestyles and learn how to be active

citizens, for example by attending a Children's Rights Day. They have very good relationships, work well in teams, and play together happily.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Orderly and purposeful lessons are underpinned by good relationships and clear expectations. Teachers treat pupils with respect and consideration. Pupils like their teachers and try to please them by behaving well and working hard. Pupils take a pride in their work and say that they enjoy lessons because teachers make learning fun through interesting activities. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to clarify teachers' explanations and to develop pupils' enthusiasm. In the best lessons a fast pace, and lively presentations by the teachers, result in excellent learning and high levels of engagement. Conversely, a more mundane pace sometimes leads to learning only being satisfactory.

Teachers use collaborative work effectively to develop pupils' skills and understanding. For example pupils work as 'talking partners' to sort their ideas out in discussion. Lessons are planned carefully. Particularly in English and mathematics, teachers prepare different work for different groups so that tasks are challenging but manageable. Occasionally, gaps in teachers' subject knowledge result in learning that is only satisfactory. Good use is made of skilled teaching assistants, particularly in helping those pupils who might otherwise struggle with their work to make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school has developed an outstanding curriculum that is aimed at empowering pupils in a changing world based on Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development. This scheme, which takes good account of the cultural and social needs of its pupils, has been recognised by external bodies as a good example of a cross-curricular thematic approach. The school makes good use of its local area and makes excellent use of educational visits to enhance pupils' learning and make relevant links to their everyday lives. Pupils in Year 4 talked excitedly about visits they have made, and of how they were looking forward to others planned this term.

Pupils are involved in local issues such as the channel tunnel link and the proposed new tram service and regularly communicate with local government to give their views. The school environment supports learning and has its own area with solar panels and wind turbine. Pupils measure how much energy has been produced, learning about science and 'green' issues.

The rich array of creative work displayed in the school is evidence of a vibrant curriculum that celebrates the cultural diversity of the school and its area, drawing fully on pupils' own cultural backgrounds. Very good strategies to support bilingual pupils are in place and all staff are involved in ensuring these are implemented well.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are outstanding. The strong commitment of the staff provides a happy and safe learning environment in which each pupil does well in all areas of development. Very effective procedures ensure that individual pupils have their specific needs quickly identified, and successful strategies are put in place to enable them to progress. The care provided for pupils who arrive at different times helps them settle happily into school. There are good child protection procedures and thorough risk assessments, for example for the many trips pupils make from school.

The school works very hard and effectively to involve parents in their children's learning and the life of the school, through initiatives such as a home reading focus or cultural celebration days. Parents are very confident in the school because, as one summed up, 'There is a very clear conscious effort to engage and involve parents and keep them up to date with children's learning'. The school works well with outside agencies, so that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress.

The school has very thorough and effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. This information is used well in teachers' planning. Pupils who are not making the expected progress are identified and the school uses a wide range of intervention strategies to support them and make sure they catch up. Regular guidance and encouragement helps pupils prepare for their next step in their education.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher's clear lead in her determination for pupils to reach their potential is followed by all staff. The strong and successful emphasis on personal development gives pupils a very secure base for their good achievement. Self-evaluation is good; school leaders have an accurate view the effectiveness of the school and how it needs to improve. The effective management structure, recently updated, identifies clear roles and responsibilities. The leadership team are fully involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning and rigorous systems are in place to drive improvements. Test results are evaluated carefully and action taken to improve standards.

Subject leaders give a clear lead in their areas of responsibilities, and have a good understanding of future needs. As yet, not enough time has been spent working alongside colleagues to help them improve practice, although the school has clear plans to do this soon.

Governors are an effective part of the team and have a clear understanding of the school. The chair of governors liaises effectively with the head, helping the governing body to be fully informed. Financial management is good and clear targets are set for the use of the current large reserves to improve facilities.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work in lessons. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see why. This is what we decided.

Argyle Primary is a good school. You make good progress in your lessons because of good teaching, and because you all try hard. Your teachers plan interesting things to do, and are good at using the whiteboards to help explain things. You have lots of trips to interesting places that help you learn. We thought that the art work we saw was very good, and I was very impressed by how good Year 4 are at using the computers.

Your behaviour is good, and you all get on well with each other. We were particularly pleased by how sensible and responsible you are, and how older pupils help to look after younger ones. You are growing up into young people that the school and your parents can be proud of.

The school is very good at looking after all of you and making sure that everyone is included in what is going on. Children who speak different languages at home learn English quickly because they get the right help from the staff. Children who are new to the school soon settle in because they are made welcome by the staff and by the children.

The headteacher and all the staff and governors are good at organising the school. They keep a careful eye on things and are always trying to make improvements. We have agreed with them that, to make things even better, teachers who are the experts in different subjects should spend more time working together in class, so they can give each other tips on how to make lessons even more interesting, and help you learn even more. You can help by carrying on behaving well and working hard.

I hope you enjoy the rest of term,

Best wishes,

Steven Hill.

Lead Inspector