



Woolmore Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100928
Local Authority Tower Hamlets
Inspection number 285924
Inspection dates 22–23 February 2007
Reporting inspector Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Woolmore Street
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		E14 0EW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7987 2778
Number on roll (school)	236	Fax number	020 7537 1563
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Lawrence
		Headteacher	Ms Tracy Argent
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school is situated in an inner city area where many homes suffer from severe disadvantage. Three out of five pupils are eligible for free school meals, a very high proportion. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, by far the largest group being Bangladeshi. The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language and four fifths of them speak Sylheti, a dialect of Bengali. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. The school, which has its own Nursery and a well attended breakfast club, is full and has waiting lists in each year group. It has received awards for its wide range of after school clubs and for promoting healthy lifestyles.

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 with many strengths. The effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy head is clearly focused on raising standards and achievement and overcoming the many barriers to learning. Together, they have built up a very committed staff team, who help pupils to reach broadly average standards from well below average starting points. One parent spoke for many when commenting, 'The culture of the school is very positive and enthusing, which encourages pupils to learn and express themselves.' Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and effective support for those who need it. Some of the more able pupils do not attain the high standards they could because, at times, the work is too easy for them.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding because the school has extremely effective systems to identify those pupils who are vulnerable, and deploys staff very well to support them. Good academic guidance is given to pupils so that they know what to do to improve. Their personal development and well being are good. They feel safe at school and have many people to turn to if they have a problem, including the effective learning mentor, home school worker and counsellor. Pupils value having a voice through the school council and help one another as playground pals, in the lunch club and as recyclers.

Teachers plan effectively and clearly explain what they want pupils to learn, checking that they all understand. Pupils enjoy working in small teaching groups for literacy and numeracy, where they get the individual support they need. Information about pupils' progress is used well to identify those who need additional help. Provision and achievement in the Nursery and Reception class are good, as children have an exciting range of practical activities to enjoy.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The shared vision of the headteacher and deputy head is reflected in all that goes on, with well-established procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's work. This gives senior leaders an accurate view of the school's performance and means strategic plans are clearly focused on improvement. There are excellent links with parents and other groups, which places the school at the heart of its community. The team of middle managers do not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which means that their subject expertise and management skills are not used as effectively as they could be. Governors are very supportive of the school but could hold it to account more. Standards and achievement are rising, teaching is improving and the school is well placed to continue to make good progress under the good leadership of the headteacher and deputy head.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the more able pupils attain the highest standards by consistently setting work that challenges them.
- Increase the effectiveness of middle managers by ensuring that their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and by making full use of their expert subject knowledge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average and pupils achieve well. Children enter the Nursery with abilities that are well below average, especially in language and communication. Many speak no English at all. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching and the many opportunities they receive to develop their understanding. Despite this, they enter Year 1 not yet attaining the expected learning goals for their age. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, with particular gains in reading. In 2006 national assessments at the end of Year 2, all pupils, apart from those with special educational needs, attained the expected levels in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics dropped slightly, but the school has put in place measures to raise achievement and the impact of this is visible in the current Year 2. In 2006 national tests in Year 6, standards were slightly above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Fewer pupils attained the higher levels, and this was because they were not always given the challenging work they needed. All other groups of pupils, including those at the early stages of learning English and those with learning difficulties, achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Over fifty pupils attend the free breakfast club each morning, often accompanied by parents, a popular social occasion. Pupils are learning to become good citizens and celebrate all major festivals together, whatever their individual faith or background. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They have a good awareness of healthy living and run a healthy tuck shop. However, some pupils get more physical education than others. Pupils say they feel free from bullying and harassment, and know there are places they can go for support. A pupil attending the lunchtime club said, 'When you feel sad and lonely you can come upstairs and feel happy'. Pupils really enjoy school and the majority attend well. They like the projects they do with arts and theatre companies, the composer in residence, and the many reading and number partners who help them from local businesses. Apart from helping one another around the school they also contribute to their wider community, for example in singing to the elderly, and putting on exhibitions at a local art gallery and community centre. They leave the school with a good set of basic skills and are well prepared for secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Aspects of them are outstanding, but there is also some satisfactory teaching. Teachers plan well and share with pupils exactly what they

want them to learn and how they are going to go about it. They make lessons fun and develop in pupils a hunger for learning. One lesson began with the teacher lamenting how dreadful her fast-food breakfast had been and asking pupils to speculate what could have been wrong with it. This motivated pupils to consider what they might write in a letter of complaint to the restaurant. A Year 6 pupil commented, 'They encourage you to do your best and help you with all your targets so you get a high level.' The teaching takes into account pupils' different levels of ability, but sometimes the work set for the more able pupils does not extend their learning sufficiently to enable them to make the progress they could. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, and cooperate together well in pairs and small groups. A strong team of teaching assistants enables pupils with learning difficulties to make good progress because of the valuable support they give them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In the Nursery and Reception classes, a good range of stimulating activities are planned across all areas of learning, with effective use made of the outside space. The school has devised its own curriculum with the emphasis on key learning skills and a thematic approach. This suits the needs of its pupils well, especially those at the early stages of learning English. There is an appropriately strong emphasis on developing skills in literacy and numeracy, but in some classes this has reduced the amount of physical education pupils do. The curriculum is enriched well and contributes effectively to pupils' good personal development and their enjoyment of school. There are visits to places of interest and pupils are involved in special projects, such as creating a tree mural from coloured concrete. Year 6 pupils enjoy an annual school journey to Arundel where they can experience the Sussex countryside. There are many after school clubs and regular visits by artists, theatre companies and reading and number partners from local businesses. Pupils visit them too, which gives them an understanding of the workplace. A programme of talks from successful professionals helps to raise pupils' aspirations and prepares them for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has excellent systems in place to identify and organise support for pupils with learning difficulties or who are vulnerable in other ways. The progress of pupils is carefully tracked and those at risk of falling behind are given the help they need to catch up. Regular meetings are held to discuss the progress of individual pupils and to measure the effectiveness of the support they are receiving. The school is active in harnessing the expertise of outside professionals, and has employed its own speech therapist and counsellor for one day per week. This has resulted in all pupils, even the most vulnerable, making good progress in their learning and personal development. Pupils are given good guidance about what they need to do to improve, and know how to go about it. One said, 'If any of us has a weak point in literacy or numeracy, our teachers give us extra time to learn about it individually.' A focus on marking has

led to more consistency across the school, with helpful comments in books showing pupils what they need to do next. Extremely effective procedures safeguard pupils, with all checks in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy head provide good leadership with some outstanding aspects, particularly in the way they have developed the extremely effective pastoral care of pupils and reached out to parents. They have had a positive impact on pupils' progress, because of the effective use of rigorous systems to measure it. There is a common sense of purpose amongst staff dedicated to raising pupils' achievement, and recent initiatives to improve mathematics and marking have been successful. One teacher carries responsibility for mathematics, science and information and communication technology, which is too much. There are other very experienced teachers on the staff with expertise in these subjects who could be taking a greater role in leading and monitoring them. One parent commented, 'The relationship between the school and parents is excellent'. Parents come along to the breakfast club and join in with all the celebrations of different festivals throughout the year, even if they are not from their own cultures. The governors offer good support and are actively involved in the life of the school, but do not systematically monitor its effectiveness through focused visits.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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 very much for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out what you like about the school. We agree that yours is a good school. Here are some of the things the school does particularly well:

- You make good progress in your learning.
- The teaching is good and teachers make lessons interesting and fun.
- You help one another well in school and also go out into the community to exhibit your work and bring pleasure to people.
- The school involves your parents extremely well in all that goes on and has excellent contacts with the community and other people who help in school.
- The way the school cares for you is outstanding. You are given good guidance and support in how to improve your work.
- The school is led well by the headteacher and the deputy head.

Some of you find the work a little easy at times, and we would like you to be given work that makes you really think. This way we believe you will do very well in national tests. There are teachers on the staff who are experts in English, mathematics and science, and we would like to see them getting more involved in checking how well these subjects are taught. We think they could make a real difference to helping you achieve even better. We are sure they would be pleased to hear your views about how you think you are doing.

Thank you once again for your help. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Butt, Lead Inspector