

Purley Oaks Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101733
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	286165
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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 on roll	
School	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Eileen Pears
Headteacher	Mrs Sheryl Kent
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2001
School address	Bynes Road South Croydon CR2 0PR
Telephone number	020 8688 4268
Fax number	020 8688 4210

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Purley Oaks is a primary school of above average size. It is an inner city school which serves a mixed social and economic area. Children enter the school with below average basic skills. Many different ethnic groups and faiths are represented in the school and make up half the school roll. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and with statements of special educational need are above average for a school of this size. Higher than average numbers of pupils leave or arrive at the school other than at the usual time. The school has been led by an acting headteacher since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school accurately perceives itself as providing a satisfactory standard of education. Since September 2006, the acting headteacher, with the wholehearted support of teaching, support staff and governors, has maintained high levels of morale within the school community. A parent stated that 'any problems we have had at school have been sorted out in a very professional manner'.

Overall, progress in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory but standards at the end of the Reception are below age-related expectations. In Years 1 to 6 pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved in recent years but still remain below average, especially in reading. By the end of Year 6, standards for all groups of pupils have also improved from a low base, especially in mathematics and science, but still remain below average. Recent initiatives, such as the revised system for tracking pupils' progress, are still at an early stage of development but are helping to improve standards and giving teachers a much clearer view of how well pupils are getting on. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, as do those with learning difficulties.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their education, adopt satisfactory safe practices and healthy lifestyles and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. These successes help them to develop satisfactory skills for the next stage of their education and a future as lifelong learners. Behaviour is good. However, attendance is poor and well below average. The erratic attendance patterns of a number of pupils adversely affects their progress. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good social skills and are clear about what is fair and just. Spiritual and cultural skills are satisfactory. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory overall although a number of strategies for supporting pupils' academic work are still at an early stage of development. However, parents praise the quality of pastoral provision. A parent commented, 'Purley Oaks is clearly full of committed and caring teachers and staff.'

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Provision in the Foundation Stage is improving, but record-keeping procedures and the quality of group work is not yet well structured. In Years 1 to 6 there have been significant improvements in lesson planning, classroom management and relationships. Pupils are eager learners, but until recently there has been too little focus by teachers on how pupils learn best. The curriculum is satisfactory although there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication (ICT) skills creatively in other subjects or topics. Clubs and out-of-class activities are satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring procedures are well established. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Given its recent track record and the improving effectiveness of senior managers, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance and punctuality throughout the school by more direct contact with parents.
- Ensure that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are applied creatively to their learning in other subjects and topics in the curriculum.
- Improve the record-keeping procedures in the Foundation Stage and ensure that group work is more consistently structured.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily, but standards are below average. Termly monitoring of each pupil's progress, however, shows that most are now making satisfactory progress between Years 1 and 6, with progress accelerating in Year 6 and pupils making up lost ground. Pupils who have been in school from Year 1 to Year 6 generally do better than pupils who join the school after Year 2. Generally, the results of boys lag behind those of girls, reflecting their attainment on entry to the school. However, the recent 'Motivational and Personal Success' (MAPS) project has contributed to boys from minority ethnic backgrounds in Year 6 significantly improving their achievement. The recently introduced termly tracking helps to identify those pupils at risk of underachieving. This quickly results in action being taken to help them to improve. However, some pupils could achieve more and standards are still not high enough because of some weaknesses in the way the curriculum is taught.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils' personal development is satisfactory with a number of good features. Their moral and social development are good. They behave well, showing consideration by, for example, holding doors open for others. They collaborate well, such as when asked to be 'Talking Partners'. They clearly enjoy coming to this school and are proud to receive the 'Star of the week' award. They are well motivated when their team is awarded the weekly 'Team Point' cup. Punctuality and attendance are monitored carefully, but overall attendance is poor. Poor attendance has had an adverse impact on the achievement of some pupils. However, there are good examples where improved attendance, following school action, has resulted in marked progress. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for exercise and healthy eating. 'It will help us to live longer and we won't get fat', remarked one pupil. Pupils contribute well to the school through the school council. They are pleased with the playground equipment that the school has been able to buy with the money from fund-raising. They feel safe and know that any incidents, such as name-calling, will be taken seriously by staff and action taken to stop them. Pupils develop a sound grasp of basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Lessons are well-planned and there is a clear focus on literacy and numeracy. Teachers seek to engage children in structured talk. Whole-class teaching is effective, but group work is less effective because some children

are provided orally with a menu of activities and then expected to educate themselves. Some children are unable to benefit from this approach and wander around. The teaching assistants are effective. Record-keeping is better in Reception than in the Nursery, but is not sufficiently detailed or comprehensive in either.

In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan their teaching of literacy and numeracy well and have good strategies which effectively reward good learning. However, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills creatively across topics and subjects. New resources such as interactive whiteboards and a greater focus on practical work are beginning to further enliven pupils' learning. Teachers are now beginning to make more effective use of the new tracking procedures for monitoring pupils' progress. Adults work closely with teachers in the classroom and around the school and make an important contribution to the progress of all groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is adequately matched to the needs of most pupils. When different subjects are linked, for instance in themed weeks, pupils learn particularly well and become enthusiastic about the focus topics. There are relatively few good models of a creative approach to learning and the school recognises this as priority for development. Overall, the curriculum is well planned to take account of the different needs of pupils in vertical groupings. It is adequately supported by a programme of guest speakers and visits to places of interest, and there is a satisfactory number of clubs and extra activities. Pupils are given good opportunities to contribute to the wider community, for instance through the School Council and by fund-raising for the school. These enterprises enable them to make a start in building workplace skills which will help their economic well-being in the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral care. Although pupil mobility is higher than usual, teachers make a point of getting to know each pupil's needs as soon as possible. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well looked after because of the school's close links with external agencies. Pupils feel safe and are confident to turn to staff if they have worries. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory and support for those whose home language is not English is also satisfactory. The school works well with a good range of outside agencies to provide specialised support. The school welcomes the involvement of parents to promote care and learning but recognises that not enough resources are allocated to contacting parents directly. Systems to track pupils' progress and support their learning are satisfactory and, although at an early stage, are developing well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since September 2006, the acting head teacher has led the school well at a difficult time and maintained a stable and positive ethos in the school and in the wider community. She leads a team of committed and dedicated staff who are committed to raising standards. The staff's shared enthusiasm and their commitment to ensure that pupils do well demonstrate the school's

satisfactory capacity to improve. Although there have been improvements, standards overall are not high enough and there is more to do to ensure that the full impact of new structures and initiatives are fully effective.

Monitoring and support of teaching is satisfactory and senior staff are giving increasingly effective emphasis to improving the quality of pupils' learning. Good links with outside agencies have benefited the school by providing additional support and professional development for staff. The school promotes equality of opportunity and works hard to include and value everyone. The management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and for those at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory.

Governance is satisfactory, and governors are gaining expertise in acting as critical friends and in holding the school accountable for standards achieved. The leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's performance and knows what needs to be done to improve it. Financial controls are good. The school gives satisfactory value for money and is gaining expertise and confidence in evaluating whether specific resource allocations are offering good value.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Purley Oaks Primary School, Bynes Road, South Croydon, CR2 0PR

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed by how friendly, helpful and polite you all were. It made our visit a very pleasant one. Yours is a satisfactory school which is making every effort to improve.

We liked the work that was on display in classrooms and corridors including the interesting 'Journey of a Banana' work and the exciting 'Mod-Rock Flamingo' models. Staff take good care of you and help you to feel happy at school. Your behaviour is good and you say you enjoy your learning and feel safe at school. You act responsibly and make a good contribution to the school.

These are things we asked the school, with your help, to do to make it even better.

- Improve the attendance figures so that they compare to the average for all primary schools.
- Ensure that you have many more opportunities to use your literacy and numeracy skills in all your subjects and topics.
- Improve record-keeping for younger children and planning of group activities in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Your teachers cannot help you to improve your work unless you help them, and the best way you can do this is to make sure that you come to school on time and don't take time off when you shouldn't.

Thank you again and best wishes for the future to all of you.

Brian Evans

(Lead inspector)