

Poverest Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101641
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307763
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Tagoe
Headteacher	Miss Liz McIntosh
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Tillingbourne Green St Mary Cray Orpington BR5 2JD
Telephone number	01689 816060
Fax number	01689 603649

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a mixed residential community of owner-occupied and social housing. About a quarter of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, though the number speaking English as an additional language is below. About a third of the pupils in the school have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is above average. The school has a designated resource base for 24 pupils with autism, known as the ASD base. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is very high. Other learning difficulties within the school are mainly moderate learning difficulties or behavioural. Mobility of pupils is high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards in mathematics and science, and to the quality of teaching and learning. Too many pupils are underachieving in mathematics and science, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and their standards by the time they leave the school have been too low in recent years. There is not enough consistently good teaching to ensure that all pupils are able to cover lost ground and make the progress of which they are capable. Although teachers generally have good relationships with their classes and manage them well, there is not enough pace and challenge for pupils in lessons. Work is not well planned to meet the different needs within each class. As a result, many pupils do not feel motivated or inspired about their learning.

The school is aware of its weaknesses, and there are encouraging signs of recovery in the way it is tackling them. The current headteacher has shown drive and determination to improve the school's performance since she took up her post five terms ago, and is capably supported in this by the new deputy and the chair of governors. They are working to stabilise staffing and ensure consistent provision for pupils. Parents have been worried by staff turnover, but feel confident now that the school is moving forward. Good systems for monitoring the school's work and pupils' performance have been introduced and are beginning to have an impact. Pupils' achievement in Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science has improved this year, and standards have risen in Year 6, though they are not yet high enough. Achievement elsewhere in the school this year has been inconsistent and there is more work to be done in improving the quality of teaching and learning for these classes. The school has begun to work on improving academic guidance and target setting for pupils. However, this is still at an early stage of development and pupils are not always sure what they need to do to improve their work and make progress. Provision for pupils in the ASD base is good, and these pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils in the main school with moderate learning or behavioural difficulties, and those learning English as an additional language, make similar progress to their classmates.

Pupils are happy at school, because there is a positive ethos and adults and children get on well together. There is a consistently good approach to pastoral care and behaviour management which helps pupils feel secure at school. Pupils' behaviour in class is usually good, but there is some boisterous behaviour in the playground which often goes unchecked by the staff supervising them. The curriculum offered to pupils is satisfactory, and pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibility or take part in special events. Although pupils say that they like coming to school, their attendance is well below average. The school has worked hard over the last year to reduce absence, and has made a good start by improving attendance sufficiently to meet its target. The school is outward looking and willing to work in partnership with outside agencies and the local authority to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. Senior staff show an honest recognition of what needs to be done and a good understanding of how to do it. As a result of this clear-sighted approach to the task ahead, and the improvement that has already been demonstrated, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When children enter the Reception class, their level of skills is usually lower than that found nationally, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Thanks to the care and attention of the staff, the children settle quickly and soon feel secure and confident in their surroundings. Teaching and learning in Reception are satisfactory. The children enjoy their activities, and staff strike an effective balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. However, the range of activities available is limited by the size and organisation of the classroom, and by the lack of an adjacent outdoor area. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection but is only now being addressed by the school. The children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, and leave with skills which are in line or below expectations for their age. There has been an improvement this year. The provision is managed satisfactorily, but staff do not always make the best possible use of assessment information to analyse strengths and weaknesses and plan for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics and science, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that they are consistently good throughout the school.
- Build on the work already underway to improve pupils' attendance.
- Ensure that a suitable outdoor area is provided for the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' standards when they enter Year 1 vary from cohort to cohort, but they are generally below expectations. By the time they leave Year 2, they are still reaching below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but have made satisfactory progress. The school has identified that girls have been performing better than boys in these year groups, and has taken steps to increase boys' motivation and interest in what they are learning. These are beginning to have an impact on their achievement.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in English in Years 3 to 6. Although they leave the school with standards that are below average, there has been a gradual improvement over the last three years. The school has now arrested the sharp decline in standards in mathematics and science which has taken place over the same period, but standards are still too low and pupils are not achieving as well as they could in these subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and generally show respect for others, whatever their cultural or religious background. Pupils are supportive of one another and respond well to the school's clear rules and routines. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Some pupils do not show enough consideration for others in the playground. Their attendance is improving, but there is still too much absence, particularly for holidays during term time.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being members of the school council or play pals for younger children. The school council is helping pupils to be responsible for decision-making. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Their social skills give them a sound base for the next stage in their education, but their low standards in literacy and especially numeracy mean that they are not adequately prepared for secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although there are pockets of good practice in the school, too much teaching is not good enough to accelerate pupils' progress so that they can make up for lost time. Lessons often lack pace and energy and fail to capture pupils' interest, so that they are content to be passive learners rather than taking responsibility for what they accomplish. Teachers do not always make careful use of their assessments to plan work that matches pupils' needs closely enough. This means that the level of challenge for pupils is often wrong, so that some pupils are struggling while others are impatient to move on. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and are positive and encouraging, but they do not always give pupils a clear indication of what they need to do to make their work better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is rightly giving priority to English and mathematics and standards in these subjects are starting to rise. Science has been identified as the next area for improvement. Information and communication technology skills are taught effectively and used to underpin pupils' learning in English and mathematics. However, these skills are not developed in other subjects. The school has begun to establish links between different subjects and think of ways to interest and motivate pupils to learn, by making the curriculum more imaginative. This work is at an early stage of development. Enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory, with a reasonable range of clubs, a Year 6 residential trip, and special themed events such as pirate and carnival days.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school has a positive and welcoming ethos, focused on raising achievement. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied in class so that pupils understand what is expected of them. In the playground though, staff do not always make expectations clear, which leads to some over-boisterous play. Safeguarding procedures are robust and staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures. There is close liaison with outside agencies to support pupils' particular needs. Pastoral care in the ASD base is very good, so that pupils are very well supported and their needs very well met.

Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. The school has recently set up thorough systems for tracking pupils' progress and has begun to use this information effectively to plan extra support for particular groups. Teachers have begun to set targets for pupils, but these are not always matched well enough to their individual needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher leads and directs the school well, and has formed a good working partnership with the deputy. They share a common sense of purpose and a commitment to improvement. The development of other leadership roles has been hampered by the turnover of staff, but the school is confident that it has recruited capable staff for the new academic year and that it will be able to build a strong leadership team. Structures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work have been established so that the expectations for new leaders are clearly defined. Governors carry out their duties effectively, and are well directed by the chair of governors. They have a secure understanding of their role and are increasingly holding the school to account over its performance.

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Annex A

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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Poverest Primary School, Orpington, BR5 2JD

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We know that you like going to school because everyone gets on well, and we were impressed with your good behaviour in lessons. However, some of you need to be more aware of other people in the playground and think about how your behaviour will affect them.

At the moment many of you are not doing as well as you could at school, especially in mathematics and science. This is because the work you are given is not always well chosen. You should all be getting work that challenges you without making you struggle to understand it. Many of you are often absent from school, which means you have gaps in what you have learnt.

The headteacher and her staff are working hard to improve the school and have made a good start on this, but there is still a long way to go. That is why we have given the school a Notice to Improve, which tells the school what needs to be done. You have an important part to play in this. You can help by letting your teachers know if the work they give you is too hard or too easy, or if there is anything you do not understand in your lessons. You can also do your best to make sure you never miss school unless you are ill, and ask your parents not to take you away on holiday during term time.

Well done to you all and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield

Lead Inspector