

Upton Cross Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 102750 |
| Local Authority | Newham |
| Inspection number | 308108 |
| Inspection dates | 25–26 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Ruth McFarlane |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 342 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Abdul Rahim |
| Headteacher | Mr Nick Turvey |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 June 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Churston Avenue Plaistow London E13 0RJ |
| Telephone number | 020 8552 1081 |
| Fax number | 020 8470 2545 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Very few pupils have White British backgrounds in this above average size school. The largest groups are Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani. A great many pupils enter at a very early stage of learning English. The number eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or with statements of special educational needs, mainly for speech, language and communication difficulties, is about average. The number of pupils entering or leaving the school at times other than normal is higher than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has places for 105 children. The school is part of a federation of eight local schools providing and sharing extended services that include before and after school clubs and family learning activities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Upton Cross is an outstanding school. Excellent leadership from the headteacher and his very capable senior team is driving up standards at all levels. Success has had a considerable impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, their personal development, and the quality of teaching. The vibrant and motivating curriculum is supported by an exceptionally imaginative backdrop of enticing and stimulating display, which has been designed in response to pupils' ideas of what an interesting school should look like. Every corner is an Aladdin's cave of discovery, inspiring learning.

In this environment, pupils achieve well. Starting school with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in speech and language, they get off to a flying start in the EYFS. Throughout the school, progress is rapid. Standards are rising at all levels and are now broadly average. Pupils do well because the school places importance on providing a caring, happy and supportive family atmosphere in which to develop their personal skills. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding, as reflected in their infectious enthusiasm for all that the school has to offer. They are well-motivated, very well-behaved, confident learners. They fully understand how they can stay healthy, keep themselves and others safe, and become responsible and caring members of their school and local community. The strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) is providing them with secure abilities to be lifelong learners. Pupils have an excellent understanding about other religions and cultures and form a notably harmonious and tolerant community.

Pupils benefit from the strong partnership that the school fosters with parents, carers and other groups, to support the very many families at an early stage of learning English. Many parents are effusive in their praise for the school. 'My child is bursting with confidence, and it's thanks to the hard work and dedication of the staff,' said one, typically. The school's federation with several other schools in the immediate area is a good catalyst for developing links with the community to enrich pupils' educational experience.

Highly-focused staff training, together with checking of its impact, has led to improved quality of lessons so that the majority are outstanding, brimful with enjoyment and challenge for each individual need. Pupils are fully involved in checking their own progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in planning the way forward in these subjects. Because of this, they make major strides in their learning. Progress in other subjects is carefully checked, but the system is not as consistent or rigorous, so pupils are not always as clear about their next steps in these subjects.

Governors are very supportive. The enormous confidence that staff, pupils and the vast majority of parents have in the headteacher and management of the school is well placed. The marked improvements made since the last inspection, the successful initiatives to raise standards, and the strong teamwork that is so evident, all show that the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enjoy an exceptional start to their education. The progress they make is often outstanding, enabling them to reach standards that are close to national expectations by the

end of the Reception year. This represents excellent achievement. Much is due to the outstanding teaching and the emphasis placed on each child being an individual. Learning activities are very well planned in an inspirational learning environment, where children are helped to learn English and lessons are a hive of excitement, interest and fun. A balance is struck between activities where children are directly taught key skills and those where they are encouraged to explore, investigate and find things out for themselves; how well they respond! They become engrossed in their work and play, behave extremely well, and show a real sense of perseverance even when they find things difficult.

Assessment is very good and fully incorporates the requirements of the new EYFS framework. Exemplary use is made of the outdoor accommodation to provide a range of different learning experiences. The provision is very well managed. Thorough induction procedures help children settle quickly into school routines, and this forms the basis of their exceptional personal development. Their welfare is promoted well. Links with parents are strong, laying the foundations for the close effective partnership that continues when children move on up the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress by developing and implementing checks and guidance for a broad range of subjects, to match the consistency and rigour of those in the core subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The majority of pupils in Year 6 now reach the nationally expected level in English, mathematics and science, with a good many exceeding these levels. This represents outstanding achievement from their individual starting points. Excellent progress is currently evident throughout the school. The management initiative for the upward drive in standards has had the strongest impact at Key Stage 1. Here pupils have responded very well to the increased challenge and pace in lessons and to the requirement for their own input into their learning. As a result, standards in Year 2 have lifted sharply from well below average to average in reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout the school there is no significant difference in attainment between the various ethnic groups. The progress of the very many pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is rapid, because support for them is exemplary and teachers are particularly skilled in this area. Pupils with learning needs also receive first-rate support and as a result they also make rapid progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show a genuine interest in and respect for their friends' rich variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This key strength of their harmonious school community is indicative of outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as exceptional personal development and well-being. Pupils demonstrate that they enjoy school immensely through their excellent behaviour, their great enthusiasm in joining in with all that the school has to offer and increasingly, through good attendance. As one pupil said, 'This is a very friendly school where you make friends quickly.' Pupils confidently explain why it is important to eat and drink sensibly and their love of exercise is demonstrated by their enthusiastic participation and keen interest in sports activities. Pupils contribute fully to school life by diligently fulfilling a range of roles. One school councillor said 'We help to make the school a better place.' A recent

example is an anti-bullying charter that they have recently instigated. Pupils' progress in their core subjects prepares them well for their futures. So does their teamwork, which is exemplified by their 'fruit hut', providing healthy snacks at break times and operated entirely by themselves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The driving force behind the rise in standards is the excellent teaching that assists pupils to make rapid progress. No noteworthy weaknesses were observed. Teachers are passionate about their work, knowledgeable and highly committed to raising pupils' aspirations and achievement. Focused professional development and regular comprehensive checking of quality leads to lessons that are exciting and fun, providing plenty of challenge. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn. They remain intensely engaged in a wide range of learning experiences that often require them to solve problems, take decisions or make choices. Teachers use computers very well to support learning. Teaching assistants are a real strength. They contribute considerably to the quality of pupils' learning, particularly for those who find learning difficult and for the many with EAL. Marking is often excellent and points the way forward. Pupils benefit because they often determine for themselves how much they have learned in class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Excellent provision for those with EAL, or with learning needs contributes to an outstanding curriculum that responds sensitively to each individual's needs and interests. The rich tapestry of provision contributes appreciably to pupils' enjoyment, assisting them to make the best possible progress academically and in their personal skills. For instance, the personal, social and health education programme enables pupils to learn about relationships and team working. The use of ICT supports learning well. Educational trips, visitors to school and the well-attended array of extra activities and clubs provide further enrichment. Some activities are organised through the school's federation with several other local schools. Even though curricular planning is very good, it is under review in order to develop even more meaningful learning across a broad range of subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' first-rate personal development is very well supported by exemplary care provided by enthusiastic, skilled staff. Successful strategies to improve attendance have been implemented, including a daily breakfast club and making the school look like a very inviting place to learn. Strong support for families and firm relationships with outside agencies help ensure precisely the right provision for each individual. Due care is taken to ensure that pupils are safeguarded. Risk is carefully assessed, and health and safety managed well. The meticulous school-wide analysis and guidance in reading, writing, mathematics and science is a key feature that ensures pupils understand the next steps they should take to work to their individual potential. This underpins their excellent progress, whatever their needs. Guidance and measurement of progress in the rest of the curriculum, though good, is not as consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The senior leadership team shows a dogged determination to raise standards, backed by a clear shared vision of how this is to be done. Subject leaders work well in support. They credit the leadership with instigating new initiatives that have resulted in raising aspirations and focus. The reward is pupils' outstanding achievement and personal development. Like much in the school, promotion of equal opportunities is exceptional. Target setting in the core subjects is exemplary, because it is fully shared with pupils. It is based on extremely accurate analysis of pupils' attainment and progress and on rigorous checking of teaching and the curriculum. The school challenges barriers to learning, for example by providing, as part of the local federation, a number of well-attended parents' learning events to help parents support their children's learning. This initiative to promote community cohesion is part of the good range of strategies which unite different local faiths, cultures and ethnicities. A wider brief is planned to include different communities in the rest of the UK and beyond. Governors understand their responsibilities well and provide good advice and challenge. The school improvement plan shows a clear understanding of the school's needs and priorities. Rigorous self-evaluation by the leaders of the school, its record of continuous improvement and its commitment to securing the very best education for every pupil indicate an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 1 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 1 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upton Cross Primary School, London, E13 0RJ

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you so much for the very friendly way you welcomed us to your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, especially the school council and the school ambassadors. It was so good to hear how valued and proud you feel because you are making a difference to your school.

You go to a super school and it was a real privilege to be able to come and see for ourselves how excellent it is. When we saw the fantastic displays that turn corridors into magical wonderlands, we thought 'Wow!' Your headteacher and teachers make school such fun and help you learn such a lot.

We were pleased to see how very well behaved you are, how much you enjoy school and how hard you try. You all seem to know the importance of eating sensible food and taking lots of exercise. Do keep that up because it is important for staying healthy and fit. All of you know a lot about the way your school friends live. We really like the way you listen to each other with such interest when your friends talk about their families, different foods and religious ceremonies.

You make excellent progress in your learning in reading, writing, mathematics and science. We could see by the work in your books that most of you are now reaching the standards expected of you in those subjects, while some of you are doing better. You know how you help your teachers check what you have learned in these subjects, and together you think about the next steps. We think that really helps you learn. We know your teachers are thinking about the best ways of teaching you the other subjects. We have asked them to make the same checks in your learning in these subjects. We think this will help you do even better.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Yours faithfully

Ruth McFarlane

Lead Inspector