

# Poplar Street Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106204
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	309052
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Ashton

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	338
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Neil Wagstaff
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Iain Linsdell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Ravenwood Drive Audenshaw Manchester Lancashire M34 5EF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3364134
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 3378327

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Poplar Street is a larger than average sized primary school on the western side of the borough of Tameside, to the east of the city of Manchester. There are 338 pupils on roll, including 46 who attend the Nursery part time. The school draws pupils from a range of social and economic backgrounds. Above average proportions are eligible for free school meals, or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils are from a wide range of different heritages, very few of whom are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The headteacher is new in post since September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Poplar Street Primary School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. They reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, which represents good achievement. They do this because of the consistently good, occasionally outstanding, quality of teaching they receive.

Parents make it abundantly clear that they are pleased with the school. Typical comments include, 'I asked my children what they thought of school and they said they wanted to stay there forever, they love it.' Parents stress, especially, how happy they are with the school's new leadership. 'A breath of fresh air,' they call the new headteacher.

Pupils also speak well of the school, especially lessons which are, 'full of fun activities'. They praise the teachers: 'They give us lots of help when we need it.' and also praise the much more hands-on leadership of the school. 'He is always around the school and in the playground with us'. The pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school. They are increasingly fit and healthy and thoroughly involved in helping their own school community, although their awareness of other cultures outside Audenshaw is not as strong as it should be. The curriculum pupils experience is good, except for a shortage of experience of self-learning through using information and communication technology (ICT). They are well supported and cared for in school.

Just two terms into taking over the leadership of the school, the headteacher is demonstrating very well his flair and panache. The school is a buzz of productive activity and morale is high. He is building well upon the good work of the previous leadership: the capacity to improve further is good. Middle leadership is now strong in depth and governance is satisfactory and improving. Both of these were judged areas for improvement at the last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is good with some outstanding features. The children quickly settle in the Nursery and really enjoy learning. All groups of children make good progress from below the expected level on entry. They attain most of the standards expected by the time they leave the Reception class. Focused work on language and literacy leads to good improvements in children's progress and they now reach standards which are just below national expectations in this area. Teaching and learning are good and occasionally outstanding. For example, a lesson with sandcastles provided a tremendous opportunity for the children to experience the very best science teaching at their level. Children's behaviour, attitudes and their personal and social development are good. This is because of the staff's high expectations, the good levels of care, support and guidance and the effective way in which staff are now working in teams throughout the Nursery and Reception classes. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by an effective team of teachers and teaching assistants who work very closely and very effectively together. A notable strength is the very good monitoring of individual children's progress through regular planned observations by skilled teaching assistants.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of opportunities for children to use ICT in more subject areas across the curriculum.
- Prepare pupils more thoroughly for living in a diverse community.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter nursery with a range of skills and abilities which, taken overall, are below those typical of their age. From their starting points, pupils make good progress so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Overall, pupils achieve well, but their rate of progress, though never less than satisfactory, varies between key stages. Although the trend in standards over time has generally been one of improvement, there was a dip in 2007. This was because too few pupils gained the higher levels in English and science, but given their lower starting points this represented good progress for this year group. The school has now successfully addressed this issue, reflecting its commitment to challenge the more able pupils in order to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well in class and respond positively to encouragement. They are eager to learn and persevere very well with activities, with even the youngest children showing tenacity and perseverance with independent activities. They encourage each other a great deal. Attendance levels are satisfactory and improving: the school promotes good attendance well with a system of valued rewards. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but multicultural education is not as strong as the other areas. Pupils have an increasing knowledge of healthy lifestyles and of how to keep themselves safe. Empowering others is a strength of leadership that extends to the pupils. Pupils take their leadership duties very seriously and have a very positive impact on the orderly nature of the school and playground. Along with their progress in literacy, numeracy and science, such social and leadership skills make a valuable contribution to pupils' future well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is much more consistent than it used to be at the time of the last inspection. It is now good overall, with some that is outstanding. It has pace and keeps pupils fully occupied with interesting tasks, which challenge them all. It is well planned and lesson objectives are clear. There is a good measure of specialist teaching for the older pupils in English, mathematics and science. This works well and, within each class, various tasks are pitched at the right level to stretch pupils of differing abilities. Pupils' written work is conscientiously marked; at its best, in English for example, it tells pupils why the work is good and has helpful comments from teachers which point out what the pupils need to do to improve. Teachers display good subject knowledge using a range of teaching strategies. They use questioning well to help children recall previous work and talk through how they arrived at the answer. Pupils respond positively to lessons where the teacher makes imaginative use of ICT, for example, interactive whiteboards. Pupils, however, are not given sufficient opportunities to use ICT themselves, as an everyday learning tool. Effective support from teaching assistants enables those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, the curriculum has a positive effect upon pupils' learning and their personal development. It is enriched by a wide range of educational visits and visitors, including specialist sports coaches, and a good number of extra-curricular clubs and activities. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are not being allowed sufficient opportunities to study other subjects through the effective use of ICT, which is essential preparation for the next stage of their education. The quality of the science work in Year 6, as observed in the books, is excellent, with a clear focus on pupils' understanding of how to set up an investigation. Science and physical education make good contributions to health education, which is further enhanced by the extra-curricular sport on offer. A particular strength of the curriculum is the way in which staff adapt it to meet the needs of all learners, enabling good progress for all pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school works very well with parents and other agencies to ensure that consistently good care and support are given. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school. Safeguarding procedures fulfill current guidelines. Academic support and guidance are good. The school has improved the marking of pupils' work and this is especially evident in literacy in Key Stage 2. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are efficient and provide staff with very useful information which in turn enables them to set appropriate work for all groups. The newly introduced review days enable staff to work together to ensure a collective responsibility and accountability. This in turn is having a positive impact on the learning in class for those children identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those who are gifted or talented.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The new headteacher is building extremely well on the solid foundations left by the previous leadership. Working in productive partnership with his present senior and middle leaders, he has already achieved a great deal in the short time he has been at the school. The school has made good progress in tackling the issues for improvement left in the last inspection report. For example, subject leaders are much more involved in leading and monitoring the development of their subjects than they used to be. More systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and more focused support for all staff have raised the overall quality of pupils' learning, especially in Key Stage 2. Governance is rapidly improving and governors are beginning to be well enough informed to be able to challenge as well as support the school effectively. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, if a little modest in places. School improvement planning is developing well and the school's identified priorities are appropriate to secure further improvement.

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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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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

<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.



## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

Inspection of Poplar Street Primary School, Audenshaw, M34 5EF

Thank you for making us so welcome on our recent inspection of your school. We were impressed by how hard you were working, how well behaved you were and how thoroughly absorbed you were in the activities in the lessons.

A very special thank you should go to the lively groups of pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us about how happy they are at Poplar Street School.

I can see why you are so pleased to attend your school. We think it gives you a good standard of education. Everyone is so friendly, you are well taught, well looked after, the school is well led and managed, and you are making good progress in your learning.

We have asked your headteacher to ensure that you have more opportunities to use computers yourselves to help your learning. We have asked him also if he could arrange for you to learn even more about the wide range of people of different cultures living further afield than Audenshaw.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard and always taking your learning as seriously as I saw you doing.

On behalf of the inspectors, I wish you all continued success in the future.