

# Poole's Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131741
<b>Local Authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	315861
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sudworth

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	336
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Gail Mistlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Greg Crawford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lennox Road Finsbury Park London N4 3NW
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7272 2655
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7281 6804

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Well over half the pupils at this larger than average, two-form entry primary school are refugees or asylum seekers. Approximately two-thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language and many are at an early stage of learning the language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is around the national average. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is very high. Many different ethnic groups make up the school's population, the largest of which is Black African pupils. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the usual ones is very much higher than in most schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is an improving and supportive school working in very challenging circumstances. Under its current leadership, it is emerging from difficult times. The school has successfully overcome a very large financial deficit and staffing is now more stable. It provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pastoral work is an outstanding part of the overall good care, support and guidance and marked by a deep concern for pupils' individual circumstances. Very good arrangements to welcome new children and the very effective work of the pastoral care team ensure that pupils settle quickly. The staff significantly ease the sense of trauma many children have experienced and ensure that pupils integrate quickly into the very supportive and inclusive school culture. Nevertheless, standards are exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics due to the significant number of pupils who come and go and to the pupils' weaker than usual command of English. They achieve satisfactorily, though some individual pupils have achieved exceptionally well by obtaining GCSE's in their home language.

Pupils' enjoy school and participate fully in all that it provides. Pupils understand how to keep safe. They contribute well to the school community through various duties that they fulfil. They derive much benefit from the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which support their healthy lifestyles. Parents are pleased with the school. One parent expresses the sentiments of the small number of parental returns to the inspection questionnaire. 'We really love Poole's Park Primary School and the education they give .... the teachers are very polite and kind.' The school tries very hard to overcome parents' mainly limited support for their children's education because of language difficulties. New approaches to reach out to parents are gaining some support, for example, a few Somali parents have recently volunteered to help in the school.

Although a significant number of individual lessons are good or outstanding, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Marking has not always been sufficiently helpful. Academic guidance for pupils is developing, but target setting does not yet focus on individual needs precisely enough so that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work. Good relationships support learning and enable staff to manage classes in a fair and positive way that wins the pupils' respect.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Nevertheless, its new leadership is determined that it will become more effective as the critical friend in holding the school to account and it has clear plans that it will do so.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with a strength in the Foundation Stage where children make good progress, especially in their speaking and personal and social development. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Under the present leadership and the enthusiasm and skill of new subject leaders, it shows every sign of making more rapid gains in its progress. There are already clear signs of this in some of the pupils' current written work and science and pupils' love of school.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Attainment on entry is very low because many pupils have difficulties with communication when they first enter. The attainment of most children is below that expected by the end of Reception, except in personal, social and emotional development in which they reach expectations. Nevertheless, children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage

because of the very good relationships and the secure and caring learning environment. Good use of assessment to plan the children's learning and a good range of activities that interest the children help to take their learning forward. The Foundation Stage staff work hard to engage the parents as partners in their children's education and to overcome the language barrier, for example using interpreters and visiting the children's homes. This is beginning to reap some benefits. For example, meetings have encouraged parents to take a greater interest in their children's reading progress and they are beginning share books with their children more frequently.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve marking and target setting so that pupils are clear how they can improve their work.
- Ensure that the governing body is more effective in supporting and challenging the school as it seeks to improve further.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are exceptionally low but, from their starting points, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Results in Year 2 fell in 2007 because of a higher number of pupils with learning difficulties than the previous year. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well below national averages. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is also well below average but in 2007 results rose very substantially in science because of the good improvements made to the science curriculum and staff knowledge. Results also improved significantly at the higher Level 5 in mathematics due to greater demands placed on able pupils in the subject. Results in English were quite similar to the previous year. Writing standards were very much weaker than those in reading with two-thirds of pupils not reaching the expected level. The work of current pupils shows that writing standards are much higher this year, but there is still more to do. Targets were missed because a large number of pupils changed schools since the targets were set. There is little difference in the rates of progress between different groups of pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They demonstrate good attitudes and enthusiasm about many aspects of school. They particularly enjoy sporting activities, science and 'making things'. They have a good awareness and keen interest in 'eco' matters, managing their own garden and wild-life areas and looking after the chicken. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils put into practice effectively those elements of their good moral, social and cultural development which promote healthy and safe living, high levels of care for each other and thoughtful behaviour. Their spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils contribute to the life of the school with a good sense of responsibility and confidence, for example as monitors, raising money for charities and mentoring pupils new to the school. The school council is active. Its voice has resulted in improvements in the quality of lunches and to playground arrangements. Taking into consideration the difficult circumstances that many pupils have endured outside school and their many different home languages, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their futures.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

A significant amount of teaching in lessons is good. A little is outstanding. Teachers make learning intentions clear to pupils and structure lessons well making good use of modern technology. In a Year 6 English lesson, a video extract of pirates successfully encouraged pupils to write purposefully about different characters. Marking has not been effective enough in helping pupils to improve their work and some staff have not had a high enough expectation of how pupils should present their work.

Teachers are very successful in planning work for different abilities in most classes, which motivates pupils to work hard. This is less successful in the mixed-age Year 4/5 classes in mathematics, because similar material is taught to a wide spread of ability and ages. Consequently, some of these pupils do not fully understand their mathematics work because it is too difficult. By contrast, well matched and outstanding teaching of writing in Year 6 rapidly developed pupils' expressive language skills and stretched all pupils. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The very good range of extra-curricular activities caters for a wide range of interests and supports pupils' enjoyment of school. Visits to places of interest enhance learning. For example, pupils' visit to 'I-Recycle' enhances their appreciation of the need to preserve the earth's resources. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. It gives pupils the skills to deal with the shifting make-up of each class as the year moves on. The good involvement of the police and theatre groups adds to this very effective provision.

Planning for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. The school's experiment to change the style of curriculum in Years 1 and 2 to make it more creative is still in its infancy; as yet some activities still lack sufficient rigour. The school is rightly developing its links between subjects to make learning more meaningful.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school takes great care to ensure that new admissions settle into school and the local area through home visits and very good links with other agencies. The provision of a special friend for all new children supports the way that new entrants adjust to school life. Staff keep meticulous records about children who may be at risk and the pupils' care manager monitors their well-being most closely. Child protection arrangements are very secure. Health and safety arrangements are very good. The inconsistent quality of marking has not ensured that pupils know how they can work towards reaching the targets that are set for groups of pupils in English and mathematics. They do not have precise targets that arise from their work. As a result, individual pupils are not always sure what they need to concentrate on in order to improve. The arrangements for pupils with English as an additional language and learning difficulties and disabilities are satisfactory and developing rapidly under new leadership. Tracking

of the pupils' progress over time is good. Staff use this information well to plan intervention groups for pupils who are not making expected progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are growing strengths in the work of new subject leaders and the revised senior management team in tackling weaker aspects of the pupils' work, such as writing. Monitoring of teaching and learning enables senior staff to know the school's main strengths and weaknesses well. They have used the information effectively to improve classroom teaching. Past monitoring has not always been rigorous enough in identifying specific weaknesses in teaching, such as the quality of marking.

The school development plan is satisfactory. Some priorities in it do not address areas for development in sufficient depth. This is because the criteria to judge the different initiatives are not thorough enough and the means by which leaders are to judge success are not apparent.

Subject leadership has shown considerable recent improvement. Very perceptive monitoring in science has led to significant improvement in standards. The new inclusion leader has developed very good systems to support pupils with learning and language difficulties, but the recent development of these has not yet had the impact of accelerating rates of progress for these groups.

Governance is improving after a period of uncertainty about roles and responsibilities. The new chair is already planning training so governors understand how to challenge the school's performance. The headteacher creates a very good climate for the school's further improvement and leads the school well.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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?	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>	3
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	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	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

1 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Poole's Park Primary School, London, N4 3NW

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and learning about what you do. You are right to be proud of your garden areas and your success in growing vegetables, and also your management of the chicken. You clearly enjoy school and participate well in the extra-curricular activities. They are certainly helping you to keep fit. You are developing well as young people and know how to keep safe.

The staff take very good care of you. You are very welcoming to new pupils who arrive from different parts of the world and who speak different languages. You all get on very well together. We think that the school provides a satisfactory education for you and the staff work very hard to keep you interested in your work. You make satisfactory progress, but because a large number of you do not speak English fully, results are below those normally seen in schools, especially in your reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked your teachers to help you improve your work.

The staff provide you with a satisfactory range of learning experiences but we feel that marking could be better and more helpful to you. We have asked the teachers to attend to this and to set you clear targets that will help you to improve your work.

The school's governors have not always been sure how they can help the school but the new chairperson wants to provide more training for them so that they can perform their duties better.

You attend a happy and supportive school, which is keen to improve further. We would like to wish you well for the future and hope that you will lead contented and successful lives.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector