

# Poplar Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102644
<b>Local Authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	335940
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Atcheson

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	491
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Wilkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katharine Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Poplar Road South Merton Park London SW19 3JZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons and observed all of the 15 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, governors' minutes, planning documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned from 259 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of groups of pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in raising standards and bringing about consistently good teaching and learning
- the development of international and national dimensions to the promotion of community cohesion.

## Information about the school

This is a large school. One third of the pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder are from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups. Just under half of the pupils are of White European heritage. Half of the pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below the national average. Their needs mainly relate to speech, language and communication difficulties, emotional and social difficulties or autism. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into a Nursery and two Reception classes. There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governors.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are outstanding and accordingly pupils behave well, have good relationships with adults and other pupils and respect each other's achievements. With a higher than average proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at different points in the school year, this cohesive community provides a warm, welcoming, and stimulating environment where pupils feel cared for, safe, secure and ready to learn. As a result, pupils make consistently good progress, from their starting points. Those pupils who have had the benefit of the school's good teaching and outstanding curriculum throughout their school career do particularly well and a significantly higher than average proportion of pupils reach higher than expected levels at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The school has a good programme of interventions to close the learning gaps for new pupils. However for some, particularly older pupils who are new to the country, it is a step too far and so overall attainment for pupils at the end of Year 6 is average.

Children get a good start to school life in the Nursery and Reception classes, which provide a bright, stimulating learning environment in which children make good progress to reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. New pupils joining the school in Years 1 and 2 make strides in learning English because of the school's good programme to support these pupils and their families. However, some do not have enough time to practise what they have learned, while others are not sufficiently challenged to reach the higher Level 3, particularly in writing. At the time of the last inspection, although teaching was good overall, there were some inconsistencies. Regular monitoring of the school's staff development programme has ensured that teaching is now consistently good, with some outstanding teaching in Year 6. There has also been an improvement in the quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection. With such a diverse school population, leaders have focused on ensuring that there is a cohesive school community. Consequently, their plans to widen their commitment to community cohesion are still at an early stage. Leaders have an accurate picture of the school and this information is used carefully to plan further improvement. Meticulous tracking of pupils' progress, and carefully targeted support for those at risk of underachievement, have ensured that all pupils consistently make good progress from their starting points. These factors, together with the drive and commitment of the headteacher, the hard work of the senior leaders and staff and the strong support of the governing body, ensure that the school has a good capacity for continuous improvement.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By March 2011, improve the attainment and progress in writing of more able pupils in Key Stage 1 through:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - providing a planned programme to consolidate and extend higher order writing skills.
- By September 2010, improve pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in the United Kingdom by fostering links with a contrasting school so that pupils can gain first-hand experience of meeting pupils from other backgrounds and cultures.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain average standards in English, mathematics and science with an above average number of pupils set to reach higher than expected levels in all three subjects. This mirrors the picture for the last three years, where pupils who have been at the school all the way through make consistently good progress. Just under half of the pupils in Year 6 are latecomers to the school. Those who are new to the country quickly get to grips with learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture. This is because the school has good intervention strategies for working with these pupils and their families, so that while they do not attain the higher levels they make good progress from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because their learning is well tailored to meet their needs and they benefit from the school's good support.

A key factor in the pupils' success is their obvious enjoyment of learning, particularly where they play an active role in it. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson the teacher's enthusiasm and high expectations meant that the pace of learning was fast and pupils really enjoyed the challenge as they played 'round-up bingo', putting their knowledge and understanding of rounding up numbers to the nearest ten or hundred into practice.

The positive ethos that results from the outstanding care that pupils receive enables them to develop excellent personal qualities. They work and play harmoniously, come to school regularly and their behaviour is outstanding. They say there is very little bullying and know that there will always be someone who will listen to them. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe and have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a healthy choice at lunchtime and fruit for their break. They are proud to be members of the school council and enjoyed selling cakes and old toys to raise money for the beautiful big pirate ship which enhances their playtime activities.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Much teaching is lively, engaging, focused and purposeful. Year 3 pupils loved using real toy catalogues to find two items that they would like to buy for  $\square\square10$ . They then applied their newly acquired skills in column addition to solve a related problem. Where teachers use assessment proficiently and have good subject knowledge, learning is carefully tailored to meet the needs of all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. For example, the teacher extended the learning of a group of more able pupils in a Year 5 numeracy lesson to writing a formula. They said they enjoyed a challenge and were excited by the prospect of doing an investigation related to this for their homework. Teaching assistants are well deployed throughout the school and they support learning well.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the practical activities they experience in the curriculum, especially during themed weeks such as the science week that was being held during the inspection. Pupils relished the opportunities to use their skills of enquiry, problem solving, discussion and practical investigations as they became engineers, helping to make and launch a rocket. All pupils benefit from the many extra-curricular activities such as dance, rock climbing and gardening club which give them confidence and widen their experience and enjoyment of life.

Teachers know the pupils and their families well. Pupils feel happy and secure because they know that there is such a high level of care, guidance and support and that there is

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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always someone there to listen, help or advise. Vulnerable pupils blossom because they are in such a nurturing environment and receive excellent support which is tailored sensitively to their needs. Pupils benefit from a breakfast club which provides a range of activities from skipping to reading, chess and board games.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and her senior leaders work hard and provide a strong and clear direction. They work together with staff as an effective team to provide a high quality learning environment. Excellent relationships with parents and carers support pupils' learning in a highly positive way. The school's performance is monitored and evaluated systematically and used carefully to make effective plans for improvement. Provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination is good. All teachers are held to account through pupil progress meetings where the school's accurate tracking system highlights any underperformance. Consequently, the school recognises that too few more able pupils reach the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2, particularly in writing. Governors make sure that they are well informed and they challenge and support where and when necessary. Procedures for safeguarding are good and ensure that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. The school's strategy to promote community cohesion has ensured that pupils learn from each other within the rich diversity of the school population. However, the school is aware that not enough has been done to ensure that pupils appreciate and know about the lives of those who live in other parts of the United Kingdom.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills and capabilities below those expected for their age. Over the last two years children have made good progress to reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Children settle quickly into the welcoming atmosphere because personal development is good, relationships are strong and children are well cared for. Staff foster positive attitudes to learning and, as a result, children behave well, are confident and sustain their concentration well. Children in the Nursery enjoy the excellent opportunities that exist for exploration and discovery both in and out of doors. Adults in both Nursery and Reception classes interact well with children's play, encouraging them and providing good models for their language. Children in a Reception class enjoyed writing well-formed letters on large pieces of paper because the learning was broken down into small steps and built on the movements they had remembered making in 'Write Dance'. Leadership and management are effectively focused on helping children to make good progress, promoting their welfare and ensuring that partnerships with parents and safeguarding procedures are good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed mostly positive views about the school. They are very happy with all that the school provides and particularly pleased with the welcoming, caring ethos. Evidence from the inspection supports parents' views that children really enjoy school and that care for children's health and safety is



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outstanding. The small number of individual concerns did not fall into any particular pattern.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Poplar Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 259 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 491 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	190	64	98	33	5	2	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	186	63	108	37	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	145	49	135	46	14	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	120	41	158	54	15	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	155	53	136	46	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	126	43	149	51	16	5	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	144	49	142	48	5	2	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	118	40	137	46	15	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	122	41	151	51	15	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	111	38	156	53	13	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	106	36	160	54	12	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	153	52	132	45	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	165	56	121	41	5	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



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20 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Poplar Primary School, Merton Park, SW19 3JZ

Thank you for being so friendly when we came to your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You really helped us. We think your school gives you a good standard of education and there are quite a lot of things your school does very well. These are the main things that helped us come to this conclusion.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start because they enjoy exciting activities and are taught well.
- You really enjoy school, behave very well and come to school regularly.
- Teaching is good. Teachers work hard to make learning fun.
- You work hard in lessons and make good progress.
- The school provides very interesting lessons and a wide range of extra activities.
- You have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and really know how to keep safe.
- The teachers look after you very well.
- Your headteacher and her staff have made sure that the school is safe and they are working hard to make learning better for you.

We have asked the school to do two things.

- It should help those of you in Years 1 and 2 who find learning easy to do better in writing.
- It should develop a link with a school that has pupils from different backgrounds so that you can make friends and find out what life is like for them.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector

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