

Arnhem Wharf Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130352
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	341031
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Ayten
Headteacher	Sara Haynes
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. About half of the time was spent looking at the pupils learning in 30 lessons. Eighteen teachers were observed. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies, records of pupils' progress and teachers' plans, and the questionnaires submitted by pupils, staff and 139 parents and carers.

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

- achievement in writing, especially of the more able pupils
- the achievement of White British boys in Key Stage 2
- how well the school supports new pupils who join mid-key stage and come from homes where English is not the first language
- the impact of middle leaders on pupils' progress and achievement.

Information about the school

Pupils from a wide area attend this large school. The large majority come from Bangladeshi backgrounds and many other ethnicities are represented in smaller numbers. A significant number of pupils start at the school midway through the year, many of whom do not speak English. In the past year, more than a quarter of pupils have transferred in or out of the school. Currently, three quarters of the pupils on roll come from homes where English is not the first language. In total, 28 languages are spoken, the most common being Bengali and Sylhetti. About one in twelve of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English on entry to the school. About one in five pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities, most commonly associated with emotional, behavioural or social difficulties. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is much higher than in most schools. The school has won a number of awards in recent years, including the Healthy Schools and the Activemark awards.

The school premises are currently being extended, as part of a phased project, to enable the school to admit more pupils to meet the increased demand for places in the area.

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 and rapidly improving school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear direction and a good impetus to school development. They know the school well because of the established systems in place to evaluate performance. Prompt action is taken to address weaknesses. Previously low attainment in writing has been successfully raised this year by extending opportunities throughout the curriculum for pupils to practise their writing skills for specific purposes. Year 6 pupils wrote diary entries about the Second World War evacuees, for example, and reports of science investigations into electrical circuits. Consequently, pupils' achievement in writing and in all other subjects is good and standards are rising.

The school has a clear view of the needs of its pupils, families and the community it serves. High levels of pupil mobility, especially in Key Stage 2, present a considerable challenge and school staff work hard to ensure these pupils settle in quickly and begin learning. Tracking information shows that they make good progress from their starting points although they do not always attain as highly as their classmates who have been at the school longer.

Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy lessons, as their active participation and good levels of effort show. Teachers plan and present lessons well. They use interactive whiteboards to explain concepts and to make it clear what pupils are expected to achieve. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for successfully, either through well-planned activities or through additional support from teaching assistants. More able pupils sometimes find the work too easy and are capable of much more. This is borne out by the results of national tests and assessments in Year 2 and Year 6 in which not enough pupils reach the higher levels.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they show care and respect for one another's feelings, backgrounds and beliefs. They play together happily in the playground and readily share their ideas and opinions in lessons. Attendance is broadly average and has improved greatly in recent years because of the school's rigorous approach to monitoring absence and the good work done to support pupils and families.

Excellent partnerships with community groups, locally and further afield, add much to pupils' experience of school. Pupils benefit greatly from links with Creative Partnerships, Trinity College of Music and the Laban Dance Studio, for instance, which help them to develop confidence and self-esteem as well as their individual skills and talents. Links with health and social services organisations ensure that staff gain expert advice about how to support specific pupils and families.

Senior leaders have implemented effective management structures which are having a

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good impact on developing consistency of approach. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and developing their monitoring roles well. Governors are supportive of the school and have good skills with which to help the school. However, the governing body lacks well-organised systems to monitor the school's work and evaluate its performance. Nonetheless, the school's good improvement in recent years in raising standards, improving attendance, behaviour and the quality of teaching, coupled with the clear leadership of senior managers, means that it is well placed to continue to improve well in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils who gain higher levels in the 2011 Year 2 and Year 6 national assessments and tests in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the work set by teachers in lessons is at a sufficiently challenging level for the more able pupils
 - encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for setting their own targets and reviewing progress towards them
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in open-ended investigations and independent research.
- Extend governors' evaluation systems to ensure they gain a full picture of school performance so they can take a more active role in planning for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are attentive in lessons. They work hard and try their best to meet the targets that their teachers set. Girls and boys from different ethnic backgrounds, including Bangladeshi pupils, White British boys and those pupils from homes where English is not the first language, achieve well and enjoy learning. Work seen in books and in classrooms shows that pupils are generally making good progress. Attainment in science, an area identified at the last inspection, has improved and is now average. Pupils enjoyed experimenting with bulbs and batteries, for instance, to see how they could make a bulb shine more brightly.

Pupils take an active role in evaluating their own and each other's work. In Year 6, for example, they assessed how well they had achieved the objective of using 'personification' in their writing. They made sensitive comments about how improvements might be made. They respond well to the comments that teachers write in their books, although seldom set their own challenges and targets for improvement. Sometimes the more able pupils waste time completing work at levels in which they are already secure, rather than beginning at higher levels.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ' including those with emotional or behavioural difficulties ' make good progress, especially in the small intervention groups organised to help them catch up with different aspects of their learning. Pupils feel very secure working with the learning support assistants who help

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them. They understand clearly and respond well to the rewards and sanctions in place to help them maintain acceptable levels of behaviour. Pupils who have significant disabilities are involved exceptionally well in lessons. One such pupil was invited to nominate a classmate to record her response to a question on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils valued her success which was warmly applauded.

The school's work to gain the Activemark and Healthy School awards helps pupils know the importance of healthy lifestyles and most adopt them. Many enjoy nutritious school lunches and a good proportion participate in after-school sports activities. Pupils feel safe in school. They know what to do if bullying occurs. They say this can happen occasionally but it is swiftly dealt with. Pupils readily accept responsibilities as school councillors and bike marshals. They support new pupils through the buddy and playground friends systems. They have fewer opportunities to develop their initiative and independence in directing their own learning. Pupils' satisfactory, though not good, levels of attendance and punctuality, coupled with broadly average levels of basic literacy and numeracy, mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

¹ 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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The curriculum is effective in engaging pupils in their learning. A strong focus on developing pupils' literacy skills through links with other subjects has engaged boys and girls alike. Year 3 pupils wrote about how they made moving monsters which was part of their work in design and technology. Pupils in Year 5 wrote exciting ghost stories, connected to their history work on the Tudors. These curriculum developments have made a good impact so far, but senior leaders are aware that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended research and investigations. The arts have a high priority in the school, with pupils having good access to specialist tuition in art, music and drama. A successful partnership with the Ex Cathedra Choir resulted in the school choir participating in a performance involving many London schools in the launch of the One Young World organisation. Pupils enjoy the wide range of after-school activities, for example Bengali, drumming and gardening clubs.

Teaching is generally good. A few lessons are outstanding. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. They manage them extremely well and there is seldom any disruption in lessons. Good subject knowledge means that explanations are clear and questioning is effective in provoking pupils to think deeply about their answers. Lessons are well planned and move at a good pace but occasionally lack challenge. In a few cases, teachers spend too much time talking, rather than engaging pupils actively in their learning.

Pupils are guided effectively about how to improve their work through teachers' effective marking. Pupils' responses to these comments in their books show just how well they have taken on the advice. Although pupils are competent at evaluating their own and one another's work, they are not involved enough in setting their own targets and reviewing progress towards them.

There are effective systems in place to ensure that pupils are well cared for and receive good support in and out of lessons. Procedures to support those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective in identifying and supporting these pupils. The inclusion advocate, learning mentor, home-school workers and play therapists all help to ensure that pupils and their families who need support receive it. Successful partnerships with local special schools ensure that pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties receive the right provision to help them make effective progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders provide a clear direction for the school's work and share this effectively with staff. They have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and have taken decisive action to drive forward improvements. These have included a review of the curriculum and the development of middle managers to ensure more consistency of practice throughout the school. These middle managers are extremely capable and are keen to develop their monitoring roles further to have an even more effective impact on pupils' achievement.

Community cohesion is good. There is a strong sense of community within the school ' a celebration in fact of the diverse range of cultures and backgrounds represented. The school has a plan to develop community cohesion still further by developing links with bodies overseas to support pupils' understanding of life in places outside their immediate environment.

There are clear procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding policies are appropriate and reviewed regularly. Staff are trained effectively in safeguarding and new staff are checked carefully to ensure their suitability. Staff promote equality of opportunity well, analysing information about pupils' progress to ensure all are achieving well, whatever their background or needs. A lift between the ground and first floors ensures that pupils who have physical disabilities can attend the school. Racist incidents are rare, but senior staff and governors tackle them promptly if they do occur.

Governors are supportive and have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, gained mainly through reports from the headteacher and presentations from middle managers. A few governors visit regularly and are involved well in the school's work but many others are new and have yet to carry out their roles and responsibilities more fully. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully and have been involved in making decisions about the development of the premises. However, most do not make a strong enough contribution to evaluating school performance and planning for the future.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction procedures ensure that children feel safe, settle quickly and develop their self-confidence. The atmosphere is warm and inviting and children come into class happily, ready to engage in all the activities provided.

Many children enter Nursery at levels that are below those typical for their age. Most have extremely limited English skills. Children make good progress through Nursery and Reception. They benefit greatly from a strong focus on early language skills which help them develop confidence and fluency. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most reach expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical development. However, many are still below the levels expected nationally in other areas, especially in communication, language and literacy.

Children enjoy the outdoor area which is organised well with a wide range of activities to stimulate children's interest. Children develop their physical skills well, for example when they squeeze through the play tunnels and ride on the tricycles and scooters. They dig in the 'mini-beast village', and 'write' their own sentences to describe their findings. 'This is a nice place for spiders', reported one child. There are many good opportunities provided for children to explore their feelings. They took photographs of each other to represent different emotions such as excitement or fear. Teaching is generally good although occasionally adult-led activities are not focused clearly enough on exactly what children are expected to learn. Staff have had recent training on assessing children's achievements and this is beginning to improve the accuracy of their assessments which have been rather generous in the past.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

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Parents and carers were mostly positive about the school's work. They were pleased that their children are learning English quickly and that the school keeps them safe and secure. Most said their children enjoy school. A few expressed concerns about how the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour but inspectors found that there were clear procedures in place which were working well. A few were worried that their children's needs were not being met effectively. Inspectors have some sympathy with this, particularly that the more able pupils are not always challenged enough in lessons. However, the school caters well for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors did not agree that there were insufficient opportunities for parents and carers to contribute their suggestions and express their views as the school actively seeks their views in a number of ways, for example through meetings and consultations. However, the school is currently extending its systems to seek parents' views in different ways.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Arnhem Wharf 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 139 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 448 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	43	72	52	4	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	58	42	73	53	5	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	36	74	54	11	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	32	73	53	15	11	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	49	36	76	56	9	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	34	70	52	15	11	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	34	69	51	15	11	2	2
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)	34	25	76	56	13	10	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	19	86	63	16	12	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	17	85	63	14	10	6	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	20	79	59	17	13	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	26	20	86	64	13	10	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	33	74	54	8	6	5	4

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arnhem Wharf Primary School, London, E14 3RP

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school recently and telling us your opinions about your school. Your views, along with everything else that we saw, helped us form a clear view about how well your school works. This is what we found.

- Your school is giving you a good education which is preparing you well for the future.
- Your school keeps you safe. All the adults take good care of you.
- You understand what it means to be healthy and many of you enjoy the nutritious school dinners.
- You are happy in your school and support and respect each other well.
- Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- You enjoy all the exciting activities organised for you in and out of school to help you develop your confidence and individual skills and talents.
- The teaching is good and you make good progress.
- Your school welcomes new pupils and you all go out of your way to help them settle in and make them feel at home.
- The adults in charge do a good job in helping the school continue to improve.
- A few of you who learn quickly find the work too easy in lessons, and we have asked the teachers to make sure that it is pitched at just the right level to help you make more rapid progress.
- The school governors need to keep a more careful check on what is happening in school so they can help the headteacher and teachers plan for the future.

You can play your part in helping your school become even better by making sure you continue to work hard, behave well and attend school every day.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead inspector

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