

Princess May Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100239
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	354820
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Michelle Winter HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kristofer McGhee
Headteacher	Stephen Spooner
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were observed and 15 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and examined documents including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation, assessment data used to monitor pupils' performance and attendance information. They also analysed the content of 34 questionnaire returns from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality and consistency of teaching, including the use of assessment information.
- The school's evidence that care, guidance, support and engagement with parents and carers are now outstanding.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in securing accelerated progress and attainment for all pupils, particularly in mathematics and English.
- The impact of the school's strategies to improve attendance.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. It serves a diverse community. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are very high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in most other primary schools. Pupil turnover is high. The school offers extended services, including a breakfast club and a play centre which serves a cluster of local schools.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school which is improving well. This is due to strong leadership which has established an enthusiastic and committed staff team with a clear sense of direction and purpose. Leaders at all levels monitor the quality of provision rigorously and have a precise understanding of how to improve the school. Teachers appreciate the systematic monitoring of lessons and value the feedback they receive, so teaching is improving. However, some lessons do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to work independently. The good curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. It is adapted to meet the needs of pupils and provides many enrichment opportunities.

The school is successfully addressing the legacy of past gaps in pupils' learning so that standards in mathematics are now broadly average, but not yet in English, by the time pupils leave. Rapid improvements to the management of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language are having a positive impact. These pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Effective group and individual support has accelerated progress for many of these pupils. However, in some lessons, the support provided does not give them sufficient opportunities to work independently and, in such cases, learning is only satisfactory.

The effective Early Years Foundation Stage lays the foundations of very good parent and carer partnerships. A major strength of the school is its outstanding engagement with parents and carers. The school reaches out to families in an impressive number of ways, including through the regular use of translations and interpreters to ensure that parents and carers are well informed about their child's progress. They are also helped to support their children's learning, for instance through popular courses, including training for English as an additional language.

Staff provide good care, guidance and support for pupils. The many newcomers to the school are welcomed warmly and settle quickly, helping to create a happy and harmonious community. The school has strong links with the local area and beyond. The school works well to improve the generally average attendance, including through its partnership with the local authority welfare service.

Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Precise development planning is directed firmly towards improving pupils' life-chances. Past success and a strong impetus from all leaders underpin the school's good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - developing activities to engage pupils effectively through independent learning tasks
 - reducing the lengthy teacher explanations
 - ensuring that all teachers learn from the good and outstanding teaching that exists in the school.
- Improve attainment and progress, particularly in English, for all groups by ensuring the support provided for pupils in lessons offers sufficient opportunities for independent learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment is low because of a legacy of underachievement; however, there are clear signs that it is improving strongly. Progress is broadly satisfactory, with signs here too that it is improving strongly from very low starting points when pupils enter the school, particularly in language development. The school's own data are indicating that progress for all year groups in mathematics and English is building towards good progress for all groups. This is evidenced in lessons, although progress is variable across year groups and between classes. In the best lessons, progress is accelerated when activities challenge pupils to think for themselves and build on previous learning. However, in some lessons, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and they spend too long listening. Therefore, achievement is satisfactory overall.

Pupils say they feel safe at school and are confident that any issues will be dealt with appropriately. They are polite and friendly and appreciate the wide range of cultures present in each class. Pupils enjoy their learning. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and pupils are clear about the school's expectations. The small proportion of pupils with behavioural difficulties is well supported, individually and in groups. Behaviour in lessons is generally good, but this is not consistent in all areas of the school. ♦ Pupils are being encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own behaviour at times when things are less structured, for instance on the playground, around the school or in unfamiliar lessons.

Learners adopt healthy lifestyles with enthusiasm and are keen to take part in physical activities in lessons, at play and in after-school clubs. They understand the impact of poor health choices. Pupils contribute purposefully to the school community by taking on responsibilities in the classroom and around the school, including acting as mentors for newly arrived pupils. The school council provides a strong pupil voice and was successful in requesting the newly improved dining provision.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is variable, but improving. The use of assessment information to plan appropriate work is now embedded and challenging targets are set. Lessons include specific success criteria which are matched to pupils' different learning needs to support all learners, including the higher-achievers. Pupils are clear about how to improve their work because regular marking gives good feedback and highlights the next steps for pupils. In the best lessons, pupils make good or better progress because work is stimulating and teaching is precise and challenging; for example, older pupils were using their good knowledge of number bonds to solve complex calculations. They were encouraged to work together and to explain their thinking. When learning slows, it is because pupils are required to listen to the teacher for too long or are not challenged to work independently. The appropriate use of technology, including interactive whiteboards, adds interest and aids the pace of lessons.

Teachers adapt the planned curriculum to ensure that it engages the interest of different groups of learners. Some subjects are taught within a theme; this adds to pupils' enjoyment because they can see the links in their learning. Activities are made more meaningful to them through the use of real-life experiences, including visits to the local area and visitors into school. Parents' and carers' skills are harnessed to support the good extra-curricular provision, including language clubs in Polish and Spanish led by parents and carers. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. The environment is

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stimulating and welcoming. The school works well with individual families to encourage good attendance and to support children with specific learning needs. The school meets the needs of parents, carers and pupils well, through popular extended services, including the breakfast club and play centre. The 'school-gate' project also supports parents and carers very well in areas such as debt-management and routes to employment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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

How effective are leadership and management?

All leaders are ambitious for the school and clear about how to improve it. Senior leaders are very visible in the school and know the children as individuals. The headteacher works imaginatively to engage with some hard-to-reach families; for instance, regular meetings are held with specific language groups to gather their views and policies such as that for homework are adapted as a result. The school ensures that all parents and carers meet regularly with teachers to discuss their children's progress, through flexible arrangements for meeting times. Parent/carer volunteers support learning well, particularly reading, and some go on to become trained teaching assistants. Effective partnerships, particularly with local trust consultants, are supporting staff in improving leadership and provision.

Staff morale is high because everybody is included in the school's mission to meet the needs of this diverse community. Teachers appreciate the stability now provided by the leadership team and the professional development opportunities they are offered. Many teachers are involved in a project to promote excellent teaching and learning. They work together to evaluate their work and set targets for improvement. There are now many examples of good or better teaching, but there are missed opportunities to share these examples with all teachers.

The school promotes community cohesion well, particularly in the local area, based on good knowledge and understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context of the school. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and tackles discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet statutory requirements. The newly reorganised governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is beginning to use external and independent sources to monitor the work of the school more systematically and to hold it to account in key areas such as pupils' progress.

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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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The environment is stimulating and well organised to encourage good independent learning. Detailed assessments contribute well to the high-quality planning across all areas of learning, both in classrooms and outdoors. Daily observations and the sensitive guidance of adults ensure that learning is enhanced; for example, one child making a paper boat was encouraged to use the water play area to sail it. Children have good opportunities to work both indoors and outdoors and they are confident to make choices about what they are going to do. They work well also in activities led by adults. There is a good balance of activities chosen by children and those that adults lead. During the inspection, children were particularly enjoying playing in a group with a large parachute. All children show curiosity and interest in their learning and the world around them. Activities are stimulating and well matched to pupils' needs and interests and, consequently, they make good progress. Children are enthusiastic about sharing their learning with parents and carers through weekly open-mornings when learning journals are reviewed. One parent/carer described how this process encouraged her confident engagement with the school.

Adults demonstrate a concern for the welfare and progress of individual children and all children have a key worker who is known to them. ♦ The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is ambitious and highly focused on raising standards for children. Teaching and the curriculum are regularly reviewed and analysed to ensure there is an appropriate provision to meet the learning needs of all children; for example, a topic on 'Where The Wild Things Are' promoted learning for boys well.

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

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

A very low proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and very few made additional comments. Responses indicate a high level of support and confidence in the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Princess May 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 404 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	62	12	35	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	47	16	47	2	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	56	14	41	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	50	15	44	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	18	53	14	41	1	3	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	53	13	38	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	41	18	53	2	6	0	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)	8	24	17	50	2	6	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	29	15	44	4	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	47	11	32	4	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	35	16	47	4	12	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	13	38	18	53	1	3	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	56	11	32	4	12	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Princess May Primary School, London N16 8DF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We, certainly, enjoyed talking with you and were impressed by your politeness and confidence. We know from talking to you and reading your questionnaires that you enjoy being at school and feel safe there. Your school council is making a difference to the school and some of you happily take responsibility for welcoming new pupils and supporting each other at playtimes through your buddy system. The headteacher and the staff take good care of you and work well with your families. We were pleased to see that your progress is improving because you are enjoying your lessons and all of the extra-curricular activities you have. We know that the school listens to your suggestions, for example in the sort of clubs that you would like. The teachers also provide special opportunities to learn in new ways and we enjoyed seeing your hard work and costumes in 'Book Week Assembly'.

We have asked Mr Spooner, the staff and governing body to try to make your school even better by:

- making sure that more lessons are as good as the very best so that you make at least good progress
- making sure that all of you have the opportunity to work independently more often.

We hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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