



# Poplar Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 102644  
**Local Authority** Merton  
**Inspection number** 286448  
**Inspection dates** 16–17 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter McGregor

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 address</b>	Poplar Road South
<b>School category</b>	Community		Merton Park
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		London SW19 3JZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8542 6989
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	443	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8543 6177
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Foster
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Katharine Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is bigger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the number for whom English is an additional language. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. Children's attainment on entry is below average. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The school has a nursery.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Poplar Primary School provides a good education for all its pupils, and has some outstanding features. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress, building a solid bedrock for future success. In Years 1 to 6, pupils progress well, particularly in science, where standards are above average. As a result of good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly average overall, reflecting a good level of achievement. For the many pupils for whom English is an additional language, several of whom are at an early stage of acquiring English, the quality of specialist support is outstanding. The focus on developing all pupils' basic skills is preparing them well for the next stage in their lives.

Pupils are very happy at school, knowing that they will be well looked after and supported if problems arise. Teachers check effectively on their academic progress. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. Their personal development, well-being and behaviour are good. Pupils get on very well with each other, although a few are too lively at times. They respond well to the very good environment, where displays and resources make learning enjoyable. They take responsibilities very seriously, such as membership of the school council, and make an outstanding contribution to community activities.

Teaching staff have a quiet authority which pupils appreciate. Occasionally work is not well matched to the needs of individual learners, and then some pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils' written work indicates that they work hard and it is regularly marked, sometimes with helpful comments. Foundation Stage teachers understand their pupils very well and know what to do to help them make progress.

The school curriculum is outstanding. The rich and varied range of subjects, courses and activities helps to make work interesting and exciting. Pupils and their parents welcome the many sports and other clubs provided after school, the visits to places of interest, and visitors to the school.

A clear vision for the school is directed at achievement and enjoyment. The headteacher has established a strong school ethos, both caring and encouraging. This is supported by all staff and governors and much appreciated by parents. Governors know the school very well, understand its strengths and know where it could improve. Subject leaders, several new to their posts in the past year, are effective and are improving their evaluation skills. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good overall, although inconsistencies remain in practice. Processes for self-evaluation and subsequent development planning are thorough and accurate. Good improvement since the last inspection is apparent in the quality of the curriculum and in provision for ICT. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Through more rigorous monitoring and support, improve teaching and learning, making sure that work is always matched to pupils' needs

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress. Children build very successfully on their starting points, which include weaknesses in language and social development. An average proportion of pupils attain the goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage, a very good achievement, though some weaknesses remain in language. By Year 6, standards are average and are gradually improving as teaching focuses on learning all the necessary skills. The overall picture of standards masks the fact that a significant proportion of pupils do well at the higher levels and that large numbers of pupils have joined the school late or speak English as an additional language. These two groups, despite making good progress at Poplar, take some time to catch up. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities generally make similar progress to their peers. In a few classes, the highest and lowest attainers do less well.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school very much, appreciating particularly their caring teachers and interesting activities. Attendance is just below average. This is largely the result of a few families having long stays in their countries of origin. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are especially strong. Pupils learn enthusiastically about their classmates' different faiths and have a very good knowledge of other cultures. They are very welcoming to pupils who arrive at school speaking very little English. Their understanding of taking responsibility in school and in the community is outstanding, seen in their play-pal work during breaks and their involvement with a local church. Most pupils behave very well. A few are particularly boisterous and the school is trying hard to involve these pupils more effectively, so that they do not interrupt the learning of others. Pupils have excellent understanding of how to stay healthy, through exercise and eating the right foods, and participate enthusiastically in school. They are very proud to be members of an 'eco-school'. They are clear how to keep themselves safe, and good at building up skills to help them in their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils achieve well because teachers relate positively to them and make work interesting, often through using interactive whiteboards. Constructive comments on pupils' work provide useful guidance on how to improve but not all work is marked in this way. Pupils in most lessons show their enjoyment by behaving well and taking part enthusiastically. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good, which stimulates pupils to make very good progress. Most tasks set a

good level of challenge. Some pupils, however, do not receive work sufficiently well tailored to their needs, in particular those who tend to find work either easy or hard. Teaching assistants play a valuable part in providing additional support to groups of pupils outside lessons and to individuals in classes. Specialist support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very effective, following early diagnosis of their needs.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

All pupils benefit from the rich and exciting curriculum. It is enhanced by specialist teaching in French, music and physical education, including very popular sports coaching. Each subject has a good, fair allocation within the generous overall time available. Staff plan together well, developing a range of imaginative topics. All areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are covered well, with a strong emphasis on language and personal development. The interesting, varied programme of clubs, visits and visitors always has the progress and personal development of pupils as its focus. Residential trips, and visits of drama groups and a 'Roman soldier', exemplify the wide range of pupils' experience. The curriculum provides very effectively for pupils to contribute to their own and the outside community, through such nationally recognised initiatives as the eco-council.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support systems are good. Adults look after pupils very well and pupils are conscientious in looking out for each other. Children are settled in very sensitively to the Foundation Stage, including helpful home visits. As one parent remarked 'The ethos of caring for each other is clearly apparent'. Staff know the pupils very well. This is particularly valuable for pupils joining other than at the usual admission date, and for the high proportion of pupils from abroad. The needs of vulnerable pupils are understood well so that appropriate care can be provided. Pupils are confident they can turn to an adult if they feel upset or worried. Procedures to ensure pupils are safe, healthy and well protected are all successfully followed. Teachers effectively monitor how well each pupil is doing academically and are further improving their approach so that pupils receive the help they need as early as possible. Clear targets are set in English but not always in mathematics and science.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good and focus successfully on improving pupils' learning and personal development. The headteacher, in post for just over a year, is a very good leader and has reorganised management systems to involve more people and to open up lines of communication. As a result managers feel valued, and this creates good will and a common sense of purpose among staff. The leadership team,

and the governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in most areas. They understand the importance of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously, to improve teaching and raise standards. Resources are very well used to bring about improvements in the learning environment. The school works very well in partnership with parents, and values their involvement in the school.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

Thank you for welcoming and helping us when we were in your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing what was going on.

Your school is good with some really excellent things happening. You enjoy coming to school very much and make good progress in your work. Your standards are highest in science. You are learning to speak, read and write well, learn your tables and do problems in maths, and all of you have the chance to learn computer skills each week. You behave well and look after one another very well. A few of you can be very lively at times and it's important to remember not to be too silly! You are very polite to visitors like us. You know how essential it is to eat the right food and to take part in sport and other exercise regularly, in order to stay healthy. Being safe is very important to you and the school staff. Your school council is very good at letting the school know your views.

Your teachers work hard to help you do well and you like the way they hardly ever raise their voices. The new interactive whiteboards in the classrooms help you learn because the pictures make work interesting and the writing is easy to read. Work you are asked to do is sometimes too difficult or too easy for some of you and we have asked the school to check that it is just right for you all. Staff who know a lot about the way you learn English, if you don't speak it at home all the time, are excellent at helping you. You are very lucky to have an amazing variety of activities which make learning very interesting and enjoyable. There are lots of visits, including chances for you to stay away from home overnight, and visitors such as drama groups. Many of you join the excellent range of clubs and activities. You also have specialist teachers for subjects like French and coaching for games.

The headteacher is very good at her job and all the staff and governors like the way the school is changing. You all particularly like the equipment you get to use and the lovely buildings and grounds where you work and play.

Best wishes,

Peter McGregor(Lead inspector)