

# The James Oglethorpe Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102268
<b>Local Authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	307950
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 February 2008
<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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	313
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Marion Sach
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Deborah Rowles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Ashvale Gardens Upminster RM14 3NB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 225202
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 641050

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Children begin the Reception classes in small groups over the first part of the autumn term and attend full-time by half term. Apart from the Reception classes, all pupils in this larger than average primary school are taught in mixed-age classes. Almost all pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is below that usually found. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a sound education for its pupils with significant strengths in pupils' personal development, the care and support that they receive, the Foundation Stage provision and parental links. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and are currently reaching broadly average standards. Results over time have usually equalled or exceeded national averages. However, they fell significantly in 2007 and were below average at Year 6, except in reading which has been a continual strength and in which pupils make good progress. There are signs of a recovery.

The monitoring of science, English and mathematics has not been sufficiently rigorous to assure quality. As a result, there are imbalances, such as too little emphasis on science investigation, too few opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and insufficient evaluation of pupils' inconsistent progress in mathematics. The leaders have sought advice and taken steps to improve. A recovery is now evident, for example, pupils' wider range of writing in English and better punctuation. Nevertheless, further improvement is still needed so that pupils make consistent rates of progress in science and mathematics across the school and in ensuring pupils write purposefully in all age groups.

Teachers work hard to manage learning in the mixed-age classes and are generally successful, although pupils do not know well enough how to improve their work and what they need to do to get to the next level. The curriculum is organised effectively for the age spread, for example, by planning work over a two-year cycle. Special group sessions for pupils with learning difficulties support their English skills well, but some teachers do not consistently cater effectively for these pupils in class lessons because work is not always planned to meet their needs. Extra-curricular provision is particularly strong and the pupils enthuse about these opportunities.

The headteacher sets a good tone and manages the school well. Parents are very supportive. They value the good partnership that the school has forged with them. Regular meetings keep parents informed of their children's progress and they value the advice that they are given to support their children. This is particularly successful in reading. Parents speak highly of the friendly, caring environment, the approachability of staff and of 'the happy school', a sentiment echoed by the pupils themselves. Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and engage successfully in the very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils contribute well to the school community in various ways and their participation in local community events and the residential visit support their development as young people most effectively. Pupils clearly enjoy school and are prepared soundly for their future.

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and given its recent history demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to make further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is typical of children of this age. The well led and imaginative provision enables the children to get off to a good start. Teaching is stimulating and, as a result, the children make good progress. Most securely reach the expectations for the end of the Reception year and several children exceed them. The children quickly develop

independence and thoroughly enjoy the thoughtfully planned activities. For example, children made egg fried rice in their study of 'change', which included the Chinese New Year, and they used chopsticks to eat it. The well organised curriculum helps the children to share, take turns and work with others. Consequently, their personal and social development is a strong feature of their good progress. The children are encouraged to 'have a go'. They are confident to try out their developing knowledge of letter sounds, as when they each wrote a letter to a sick child in hospital. The outside area is a more limited aspect of the provision and the school recognises the need to improve this.

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

- Ensure pupils make consistent rates of progress in mathematics across the school.
- Improve pupils' investigative skills in science.
- Ensure senior and subject leaders' monitoring has more impact on improving pupils' quality of work.
- Use assessment more incisively to help pupils know more clearly how to improve their work and what they need to do to get to the next level.

A small number of 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 visit.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

There is some variability in attainment and progress in different aspects of work. Reading is a significant strength throughout the school and above expectations for their age. This is because of the good emphasis placed on it, effective teaching of reading and good parental support. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing but in some classes do not always engage in a sufficient range of writing styles because there is too much concentration on exercises. While pupils reach broadly average standards in mathematics, progress is inconsistent with some underachievement. This is because pupils are not always challenged with the right level of work. Pupils make better progress in mathematics in the upper part of the school because more account is taken of their capabilities. Pupils' science knowledge is secure, but their investigative skills are not yet sufficiently well refined.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well and enjoy school as shown in their above average attendance. Their attitudes to work are usually good. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good, and spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils understand healthy living and practise it through being active members of various sporting groups, both in school and outside. They know the importance of fresh fruit and vegetables in their diet. Pupils appreciate how they can keep themselves safe, such as taking part in cycling proficiency schemes. They are confident to turn to known adults if they have a worry. The school council is active and has raised money for playground markings so that playtimes are better organised than they were. Pupils undertake their various responsibilities as class and school monitors conscientiously and with pride. They engage regularly in inter-school competitions and communal events and have also represented local schools at recycling events.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage them well and so pupils are confident to contribute to lessons. Lesson planning and marking are satisfactory, with some that is exemplary. Teachers mark work conscientiously and pupils are clear how well they have done. However, pupils are not always sure how they can improve their work. They generally present their work neatly, but there is considerable variability from class to class dependent on teacher expectations. Staff manage the teaching of most subjects successfully in the mixed-age classes. However, it is weaker in mathematics because work is not always finely tuned to pupils' needs, resulting in variability in progress in different parts of the school. Although teachers ensure pupils' science factual knowledge is secure, they do not always make sure that they have good skills in science investigation, such as explaining their predictions and planning experiments for themselves. Teaching assistants are soundly deployed.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The provision for personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' all-round development. The curriculum is soundly organised with a particular strength in the extra-curricular opportunities for all ages, which cover a wide range of activities and contribute effectively to pupils' healthy life-styles. The enrichment activities, such as science week, add good variety to normal routines. Pupils enjoy these and gain socially from working with others. Visits to places of interest, such as to museums for history work and a residential visit, enhance the range of pupils' experiences. The use of computers in different subjects is a significant strength, but links between other subjects are at an early stage. Satisfactory arrangements are made for pupils with learning difficulties and with special talents. The curriculum is enhanced by the inclusion of French and a residential journey. Visiting groups support pupils' cultural development, such as an African drumming group.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The pastoral oversight of the pupils is a significant strength. Pupils describe their school as 'homely' and find their teachers to be very kind. The school has very good systems to ensure pupils are safe. Child protection procedures are secure. The school has very good links with parents and regular meetings for different purposes ensure that school and home work very well together. External agencies provide very good support and pupils who have learning difficulties are identified quickly. Risk assessments are most thorough and pupils' health and safety receive a high priority.

The school has good tracking procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress and to pick out those pupils who are falling behind. They often arrange extra sessions for these pupils to help them catch up. However, staff do not always use this information well enough to measure the effect of different interventions and to ensure that any improvements are maintained.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The school's management is stronger than its leadership. Management systems are thorough as seen, for example, in the great detail in the school's policies and procedures. The combined leadership of senior staff and subject leaders is mainly satisfactory. The headteacher has a strong vision and commitment to improve the school. It has made good adjustments to its leadership structure, but it is still too early to see the full impact of this re-organisation. Past monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' progress and the quality of their work has not been sufficiently rigorous, resulting in inconsistencies in practice and in pupils' progress.

Subject leaders have taken advice and are clear what they need to do to increase attainment, have written plans and are taking action. These are currently being more successful in English than in mathematics and science because it has been a priority for a longer time.

The governing body provides the headteacher and school with good support. It is very well led by its chair and it is very effective in calling the school to account for its actions. Governors keep up to date through regular attendance at courses. Financial management is good and is closely linked to the school improvement plan, which takes in a range of opinion when it is written.

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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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	2
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	3
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	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**

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The James Oglethorpe Primary School, Upminster, RM14 3NB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited. We really enjoyed meeting you and learning about your activities. You clearly enjoy school. The school provides a satisfactory education for you and there are some particular strengths. Your development as young people is good and we were impressed with your good behaviour. You take part enthusiastically in the very good range of extra-curricular activities that are provided for you. The care that the staff take of you is also very good and they ensure that you are well looked after. You are making satisfactory progress, but some of you are not making enough progress in mathematics and in carrying out investigations in science. We have asked the staff to ensure that you improve these aspects of your work.

The systems that your headteacher has put in place to manage the school are very detailed and carefully thought out and she receives good support from staff to ensure your school is a happy one. While the systems are good, we found that there is too much variation in what different staff expect from you, for example in the way that you present your work and in the way that they mark it. We have asked the school to make sure there is better oversight of such matters so that you make even better progress. In the main, the staff do not help you enough to know how you can improve your work and how you can get to the next level.

Children in the Reception class get off to a good start and we found that the school has very good links with your parents so that they are working together as a partnership. This is helping you to make good progress in reading and reaching a standard above expectation in this aspect of your work. In other subjects, you mainly reach the standards expected of you.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and that you will lead happy and successful lives.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector