

Plaistow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	132812
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	381473
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2012
Lead inspector	Lynda Welham

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	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Hale
Headteacher	Janine St Pierre
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2009
School address	Junction Road Plaistow E13 9DQ
Telephone number	020 854 85620
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Age group	3–11
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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

Introduction

Inspection team

Lynda Welham Additional Inspector

Olson Davis Additional Inspector

Maria Coles Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 22 lessons taught by 18 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, a National Leader of Education, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the work in pupils' books, the school's development plan, assessment data, monitoring and evaluation records, arrangements for safeguarding, and a range of policies and procedures. Inspectors also listened to pupils read. The inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 109 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Many of these pupils are from abroad and arrive with little English. The number of pupils who enter and leave the school other than at expected times is well above average. This is partly due to the high proportion of families who are housed in temporary accommodation in the area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion of pupils receiving intervention at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is an on-site children's centre managed by the governing body of the school. This was inspected separately. A breakfast club managed by the school provides out-of-hours childcare and was included in this inspection. The school is part of the E13 Learning Community, a soft federation of local schools. The school meets the current floor standard, which are the minimum standards expected by the government. There have been significant staffing issues since the last inspection. A new headteacher has been appointed and the governing body restructured and, following a period of staffing turbulence, a new leadership team and several new teachers are in post. The school has gained Healthy School Status.

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Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Plaistow Primary is a satisfactory school. After a period of staffing instability, it is showing clear improvement, for example in progress and attendance. It is not yet a good school because mathematics progress is slower than that in English, and because teaching is not always fine-tuned to challenge the different abilities in the class. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily and an increasing number make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Attainment is rising. The school has improved pupils' reading and writing. It has also improved their calculation skills but pupils are not so good at applying their mathematical knowledge to investigate and solve problems.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with a rising proportion of good teaching. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully so that those who are in danger of falling behind are identified and supported quickly. Some marking is good, but it does not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Most pupils are keen to learn and respond positively to a consistently applied system of rewards and consequences. Bullying is rare. Though a few parents and carers still have concerns, the very large majority who gave their views are happy with the school. As one said, 'I don't have any concerns about my children, they are getting all the support they need'.
- The leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory. The school is tracking pupils' progress very well and acting quickly to make changes when needed. The headteacher is working effectively with senior staff, a National Leader of Education and the reorganised governing body to improve

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the school. Subject leaders are starting to share in the school's leadership, but not all are monitoring teaching and learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate rates of progress in mathematics by extending opportunities for investigation and problem solving in lessons.
- Ensure that teaching is good or better by July 2013 by:
 - making sure marking and teachers' comments help pupils to understand ways in which to improve their work
 - checking that pupils have followed the advice given
 - ensuring activities and questioning meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those of the more able.
- Improve leadership by widening the role of middle managers, so they are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching in their subjects and act on their findings to bring about improvement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils throughout the school have made satisfactory progress over time. Previous attainment has been low as a result of too slow progress, but this has been addressed and pupils' current, more rapid learning has enabled them to catch up. Children join the school, whether in the Nursery or in the Reception classes, with skill levels which are well below those expected for their age, particularly in speech and language and in writing skills. In addition, many children speak no English. They make satisfactory and improving progress so outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage are rising year on year. Progress is also accelerating in the rest of the school, particularly in the upper part of Key Stage 2. During Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1, good foundations are laid for the pupils who speak English as an additional language, which enable them to make more rapid progress in their English in Key Stage 2. Because well-deployed support staff are offering targeted interventions, the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving in line with that of other groups, including those who enter the school midway through a key stage. Gaps in performance are narrowing compared with pupils nationally.

The use of more challenging targets to raise teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement, together with very specific interventions, has paid dividends in reading in Key Stage 1. As a result, current pupils are making good progress so that from very low starting points, attainment in this subject has now risen to broadly average levels on entry to Key Stage 2. Pupils show an appropriate understanding of phonics

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(the links between letters and sounds) because teaching is well planned. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics, but it is slower than the progress in reading and writing.

The pace of progress in Key Stage 2 varies between different classes, linked to some variability in the quality of teaching. The current pupils in Year 6 are on track to leave school with broadly average standards, including in their reading. They are developing a more secure grasp of standard and colloquial English. In mathematics, the school has rightly focused on improving pupils' skills in calculation. Pupils are enthusiastic about becoming 'Times Tables Titans' and confidently add, subtract, multiply and divide, but they engage less well in problem solving and applying their mathematical skills.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory, because over time it is leading to satisfactory progress. However, the proportion of good teaching is rising across the school, especially in upper Key Stage 2. Stronger elements in provision include good relationships between teachers and pupils and good opportunities for collaborative working between pupils. Following a period of instability in staffing, pupils and their carers appreciate the improvements made to teaching. Lower attaining pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs benefit greatly from the support provided when they are taught individually or in small groups. The teaching assistants demonstrate good professional knowledge and effective skills.

Assessment information is used to group pupils by ability for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2. However, across the school, in activities aimed at promoting pupils' basic skills, tasks are not always fine-tuned to match the ability of pupils, especially the more able. Some opportunities are lost to challenge these pupils through questioning during teacher-led sessions, both in English and mathematics lessons. In a good lesson, Year 4 and 5 pupils used their calculation skills to find simple percentages of whole numbers and then applied these skills to problem solving activities. Generally, however, pupils' mental and oral knowledge and skills in mathematics are not capitalised upon to get them to investigate and use their knowledge in a new situation, so valuable opportunities to extend understanding are missed.

Teachers mark work regularly but there is some variety in the quality of marking and how effective teachers' comments are in helping pupils to understand how to improve their work. Teachers do not all make it clear that they expect a response from pupils to points for improvement. Where this is done well, pupils are given time each day to make their work better. Older pupils know their targets in English and mathematics well and understand what they need to do to move to the next level of attainment, but this good use of targets is not yet embedded across the school.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

A small number of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel that behaviour is not as good as it should be and that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. However, the very large majority of pupils who completed questionnaires feel that behaviour is good in school. Inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory and found systems to promote good behaviour and challenge poor behaviour to be robust. Behaviour in the playground, whilst sometimes boisterous, is satisfactory and well-supervised, and adults are vigilant for any instances of bullying or unsafe play. Though a few parents were concerned about how bullying is addressed, pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and say that the rare occurrences are sorted out. They know that bullying which attacks or is unkind about someone's race, gender, family background or personal preferences is unacceptable.

Improvements to teaching mean that pupils show an increased commitment and enthusiasm for learning during lessons. Disruption is uncommon, although a small minority are less successful at managing their own behaviour when tasks do not closely meet their needs. Learning mentors have played an effective role in supporting the few children who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and proud of the influence they have on school developments by being part of the school council. Attendance is broadly average and improving. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe in different situations; for example, they are aware of the dangers posed by misusing the internet. Almost all parents and carers feel their child is safe and well looked after at school. The breakfast club provides a nutritious and secure start to the day.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has been successful in establishing a team who have a clear focus on raising attainment and within which is a strong sense of collective responsibility. Key to the school's improvements since the headteacher's arrival have been the now exemplary systems of tracking pupils' progress that have been established. They have led to more timely intervention programmes for those pupils in danger of falling behind. Coupled with lesson observation and well-established performance management procedures, they have also enabled leaders to hold the teachers robustly to account for pupils' progress and attainment. The headteacher and governing body evaluate the school's performance and identify key priorities accurately. Their work has had a demonstrably positive impact on the school's performance, and shows the capacity for further improvement. For example, all pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress, and previous pockets of inadequate progress have been resolved. Attainment is on an upward trend, and attendance, having been below average in previous years, is now broadly average.

Professional development such as the Pathways to Leadership course has had a

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good impact on improving senior leaders' skills. Middle leaders and those new to subject leadership have benefited from coaching and a programme of induction and support, but they are not all yet involved in monitoring the teaching of their subject in classes and taking action on what they find.

The governors are supportive and very knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work and how it can be improved. In partnership with the headteacher, they ensure that staff are suitably trained and arrangements to keep pupils safe are up to date. Safeguarding policies and practice are regularly reviewed to assess their impact and meet current requirements. Governors are also meticulous in promoting equality for all pupils and tackling any form of discrimination. As a result, the diverse school community is a very harmonious one.

The school has rightly focused on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but the pupils also gain much from participating in lessons such as science, music, information and communication technology and physical education. Many activities of the curriculum link strongly with initiatives to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils' understanding of democracy in Britain was enhanced by a visit to the Houses of Parliament and appreciation of art promoted by visiting an art gallery. The school provides a good range of additional activities and clubs.

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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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



23 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Plaistow Primary School, London, E13 9DQ

I would like to thank those of you who gave your time to talk about your work and to tell us about your school when we visited recently to inspect it. Thank you also to those who completed questionnaires and explained how much you enjoy school.

Yours is a satisfactory school, but one that is rapidly improving. We like the way you take responsibility, and help, for example as playground leaders or peer mediators. We were particularly pleased to see that your standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and how polite and cooperative you were, to us and to each other. We think some of you, such as those capable of doing harder work, could do a bit better at times.

In order to keep the school improving, we have asked the adults at school to:

- make sure your work is not too easy and not too hard
- help you to use your good number skills to investigate problems in maths
- make sure marking tells you what you need to do to improve and give you time to think about this and do what the marking says
- help the new leaders in the school to check in classes and see how well their subject is being taught.

You can help your school to keep improving by doing what the teachers tell you in their marking, continuing to work hard, attending as often as you can and continuing to behave well.

Yours sincerely

Lynda Welham
Lead inspector

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