

Simon Marks Jewish Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100275
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	376308
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Howard Pallis
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Ross
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 May 2009
School address	75 Cazenove Road London N16 6PD
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	24–25 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard

Additional inspector

Chanan Tomlin

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons, or parts of lessons, taught by 10 teachers, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at work in pupils' books and at tracking data showing pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plans and records for safeguarding pupils were also seen. Inspectors considered responses to 80 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in one Nursery and one Reception class. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is above average, with very small proportions of pupils from a wide variety of different backgrounds. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language and a small minority of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs is below average and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. A greater-than-average proportion of pupils join and leave the school part way through their primary education. The school meets the current government floor standard. The school operates a breakfast club but the after-school club that shares the school site was not part of this inspection because it is not managed by the school. The headteacher joined the school in September 2011.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school where pupils’ achievement is good. Children get off to a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their subsequent progress through Years 1 to 6 is good. Pupils achieve particularly well in English.
- The school works effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, receive the help and guidance they need to learn and make good progress.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use assessment information well to match work in lessons to pupils’ learning needs and they set work that is suitably challenging. Marking and feedback in pupils’ books, and pupils’ individualised targets, make clear what they should do to improve their work.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils enjoy themselves in the school’s secure and caring environment. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe from harm, for example when using computers or travelling on public transport.
- Good leadership and management have enabled the school to identify successfully its key priorities and actions. As a result of improvements to teaching, and increased challenge in lessons for higher-attaining pupils, attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Developments to the curriculum, such as a particular focus on reading and writing, are helping to raise pupils’ attainment further in English, although similar improvements to the curriculum for mathematics throughout the school are not yet having the same impact. Some middle managers are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and securing improvements to the school’s work and pupils’ achievement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils make swifter progress in mathematics by enabling them to build steadily on their key skills and practise numeracy regularly across a range of curriculum subjects.
- Develop the role of middle leaders in checking the quality of the school's work and ensuring further enhancements are made by September 2012.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All groups of pupils achieve well and pupils' attainment is above average. In the survey, almost all the parents and carers who responded were confident that their children are making good progress at the school, and inspection evidence confirmed their view. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and capabilities that are similar to those expected for their age. They make good progress and outcomes are generally above average by the end of the Reception Year. They achieve particularly well in communication, language and literacy. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, is above average. Learning is typically brisk and purposeful. Pupils are enthusiastic, start work quickly and concentrate well on the tasks they are set to do. This was illustrated in an English lesson observed where pupils were developing their descriptive writing skills. The pace of learning was swift because pupils listened carefully while the teacher modelled a descriptive paragraph. They worked thoughtfully together in pairs to identify the key language features in the text. During independent writing, they followed the teacher's instructions closely in order to write their own descriptions of an imaginary place.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are keen to do well. They appreciate opportunities to work with teachers and additional adults in individual or small-group sessions to increase their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are friendly and welcoming so that those who join the school part way through their education are helped to settle quickly, make friends and do well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language show determination to make swift gains in their spoken English and their reading skills. Those who are the very early stages of learning English recognise key words quickly. They benefit from extra support in lessons so that they understand new topics clearly, and keep up. Higher-attaining pupils are motivated to work hard by the challenging tasks that teachers set them. For example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils were learning to multiply two-digit numbers, higher-attaining pupils worked independently and rapidly progressed to

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multiplying numbers with three and four digits.

Quality of teaching

In the survey, the vast majority of parents and carers agreed that their children are well taught at the school, a view endorsed by inspection findings. Teachers ensure that explanations of new learning are clear. They use a variety of resources to capture pupils' interest and enable them to take an active part in lessons. For example, pupils in a history lesson presented their research on Roman soldiers to the rest of the class using computers.

The school tracks the progress pupils make and teachers use assessment data carefully to ensure pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning. Marking and individualised targets are used well so that pupils know what their next steps are. When teachers mark pupils' work, they often set additional challenges for pupils to complete to reinforce key concepts. Well-selected improvements to the English curriculum ensure pupils write regularly at length in a variety of different styles and have daily opportunities to practise their independent reading skills. Themed events, including family reading workshops, and visitors to the school, such as those of a local poet and a children's book author, help pupils to have very positive attitudes to literacy and develop their skills quickly. Planning does not always ensure that the curriculum for mathematics is as relevant and engaging and opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to practise their mathematics in different subjects. When present, additional adults are used effectively in lessons to support pupils' learning and understanding of new concepts. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when pupils who finish quickly spend time waiting for the rest of the class to finish, or when only a few pupils are encouraged to answer questions or contribute their ideas.

Moral values are promoted clearly, for example through assemblies. Jewish studies and regular opportunities to learn about and celebrate Jewish traditions and festivals foster pupils' spiritual development. As a result, pupils build a strong sense of their shared culture and faith. The school choir sings in the local community and pupils enjoy singing together in Hebrew and in English in assembly. Visitors and activities during Black History Month, and links with schools in contrasting communities, ensure pupils' wider cultural awareness is also promoted. The breakfast club provides a calm and sociable start for the small number of pupils who attend.

Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage create an environment where children develop good personal and social skills, grow in confidence and are happy. There is a good balance between adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. Speaking and listening skills are particularly well promoted so that children develop strong communication skills. For example, children in the Nursery role-play café thoroughly enjoyed taking responsibility for serving one another refreshments. Opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills are not always as well planned.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils from diverse backgrounds get on well together. They behave well in lessons, at lunchtime and in the playground. Inspection findings endorse the views of parents and carers expressed in the survey. The very large majority of parents and carers feel that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school and confirmed that disruptive incidents in lessons seldom occur. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes make a positive contribution to learning in lessons and the friendly atmosphere around the school. Incidents of bullying are rare and the whole-school community is sharply aware of the various forms in which it might occur. Pupils say there is some name calling or, occasionally, demeaning remarks are made which are usually dealt with very swiftly by staff. Guidance on road safety and anti-bullying events ensure pupils are clear about the steps they should take to keep themselves safe from harm in a variety of situations. Pupils are punctual and are aware of the importance of attending regularly so as not to miss valuable learning. Strategies to promote attendance include certificates for the best attendance each term. As a result, attendance has improved in most classes, although it remains average overall.

Leadership and management

Leaders, managers and members of the governing body have worked effectively to secure improvements in key aspects of the school's work. Supported by well-targeted training and professional development, staff work well as a team and have a shared vision for the school. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained pupils' good behaviour, improved the overall quality of teaching so that it is now good and enhanced the quality of the curriculum for literacy throughout the school. As a result, rates of progress have increased and pupils' achievement is now also good. Leaders, managers and members of the governing body ensure the curriculum is well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils at the school, and that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is consistently prioritised. The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality well so that rates of learning and progress are good for all groups of pupils. All pupils have the chance to participate in activities in and out of school, regardless of their background or ability. The new headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's performance and is already raising the staff's expectations about what pupils can achieve. All these strengths reflect the school's good capacity to improve further. Middle leaders are not yet sufficiently accountable for managing and evaluating improvements designed to raise pupils' achievement. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements; staff have received recent training and the school site is very secure.

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.



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Simon Marks Jewish Primary School, London N16 6PD

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome and for helping the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you all very much and listening to what you had to say. We were very pleased to hear you singing so well together in Hebrew and in English in assembly.

Simon Marks is a good school. You behave well and are keen to learn. You have a good awareness of how to keep yourselves safe from harm. The very large majority of you told us in the survey that you like coming to school and that you learn a lot in lessons. The youngest of you get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and then you make good progress so that you are doing better than other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6. You make particularly good progress in reading and writing. Those of you who need additional help are well supported so that you also make good progress.

We have asked the school to plan more opportunities for you to develop your numeracy skills quickly, so that you reach higher levels in mathematics. All of you can help by continuing to work hard and checking that you are meeting your individual targets in mathematics. We have asked the school to make more checks on its work so that you can all do even better.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Lead inspector

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