

# Hermitage Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	100936
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	376487
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Barbara Firth

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	284
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jake Kemp
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zoe Howe
<b>School address</b>	Vaughan Way E1W 2PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7702 1037
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7702 4458
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@hermitage.towerhamlets.sch.uk">admin@hermitage.towerhamlets.sch.uk</a>

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Barbara Firth

Additional inspector

John Croghan

Additional inspector

Clare Gillies

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons, taught by 13 teachers including observations of lessons with a particular focus on the teaching of letter sounds and combinations (phonics). Inspectors listened to the reading by, and held separate discussions with, two groups of pupils. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, including looking at pupils' books. They scrutinised a number of documents, including assessment data, relevant policies, monitoring evidence, curriculum and strategic planning, and questionnaires completed by 87 parents and carers, 27 staff and 97 pupils.

## Information about the school

Hermitage Primary School is of an average size and has one and a half forms of entry from Nursery to Year 4 and one form in each of Years 5 and 6. The school's roll is growing as it increases in popularity in the community. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced significant changes and challenges, including the appointment of a new headteacher and a period of staffing turbulence. Almost all of the pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, with the largest group being of Bangladeshi heritage. The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals are well-above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the current government floor standards for performance at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. The Nursery and Reception classes provide for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has achieved the Silver Eco Award.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Hermitage is a satisfactory school, which is improving rapidly. The overall effectiveness is satisfactory, rather than good because:
  - the improved rates of pupils’ progress evident at the time of the inspection have not yet been sustained for a sufficient period of time
  - progress in Key Stage 1 is improving, but at a slower rate and, consequently, attainment in national assessments and especially in mathematics for this key stage is below average overall
  - the teaching, although satisfactory overall, is not consistently sufficiently good.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall because the pattern of progress is variable across the school. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from low starting points and, recently, progress across Key Stage 2 has been good overall, allowing pupils to reach average attainment by the end of Year 6. Progress across Key Stage 1, however, and in some Key Stage 2 classes is less consistent and is satisfactory overall.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with the proportion of good teaching increasing, but not yet consistent enough. In the best lessons, teachers’ subject knowledge is good and they use questioning effectively to assess pupils’ progress throughout the lesson. However, too many lessons lack challenge, the pace is not brisk enough, and assessment information is not used to best effect to match work to pupils’ individual needs. Pupils have short-term targets, but are not involved in the setting of long-term goals, limiting their responsibility for their own learning.
- Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes, showing enjoyment and enthusiasm in their activities. One parent said ‘My children enjoy going to school and are enthusiastic about what they learn.’ Good behaviour is promoted by a safe and welcoming learning environment and pupils’ good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

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- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's very clear vision for school improvement and accurate monitoring and self-evaluation have enabled leaders at all levels to drive improvement strongly through robust performance management and a training programme, so that the quality of teaching is improving significantly.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- ,Raise attainment in all subjects in both key stages and particularly at Key Stage 1 by July 2012 by ensuring that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- Accelerate and increase all pupils' progress by quickening the school's drive for consistently good teaching through:
  - using and building upon the existing thought-provoking teaching and learning in the school to inspire and challenge all pupils
  - making use of the school's progress information at all times to match activities closely to age, ability and interests of all pupils
  - getting lessons off to a rapid start, with pupils spending less time listening and more time actively involved in learning activities
  - increasing the responsibility of pupils for their own learning and progress by sharing longer-term curriculum targets and increasing opportunities in lessons for self-assessment.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Most parents and carers feel that their children make good progress in school. Inspection evidence shows that progress and attainment are variable and therefore achievement is satisfactory overall. The most recent national assessments of reading, writing, and mathematics in Key Stage 1 show that attainment by the end of Year 2 has been significantly below that found nationally. By the end of Year 6 in 2011, as a result of improved teaching and appropriately targeted support, pupils' attainment was average in both English and mathematics, indicating at least good progress from very low starting points for this cohort.

Children begin school with knowledge and skills lower than the levels expected for their age and, as a result of good provision, make a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach outcomes that, most recently, have been above the national average. Children cooperate well in pairs and small groups, taking turns and

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sharing fairly. In well-taught lessons, the teacher uses skilful questioning techniques to encourage children to explore their learning and make good progress. For example, in one lesson, children were enthusiastically engaged in placing shapes on the floor to make a tessellation mat. They waited patiently for their turn, listening carefully while individual children explained why they had put their shape in a particular position. One girl was able to explain clearly that it was 'because there wouldn't be a gap between the shapes because there are no gaps in a tessellation'.

To improve attainment and progress in mathematics across Key Stage 1, lessons are taught by senior teachers and, consequently, pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment is now closer to national expectations. With the introduction of a well-delivered systematic phonics programme and effective individual support provided by the reading recovery teacher, pupils' progress has quickened and attainment in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 is now closer to national expectations. When the activity is targeted to ability well, pupils make good progress with their learning. For example, in a Nursery/Reception class, a group of middle-ability children were observed linking sounds and letters and were able to demonstrate their ability to identify, say with good pronunciation, and write words that contained the sound 'oa'. At the same time, a group of more-able learners were supported well by a teaching assistant, exploring the sound 'oi' and using it successfully in words such as 'coin'. However, where the grouping of pupils is selected less well and pupils are repeating sounds that they are already secure in, pupils become restless. For example, in a Year 1 lesson when pupils were practising the sound 'igh', several pupils, already secure in this sound, lost concentration and made more limited progress in their learning.

Although not consistent across each year group, there is a rapidly improving picture in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics, with standards broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. As a result of increased opportunities for focused writing activities across the curriculum and regular guided reading lessons, pupils' progress in writing improves over time, so that by the time they reach Year 6, standards in attainment are closer to national expectations. In lessons observed, where activities were well-structured, pupils made good progress when working in ability groups on a range of well-planned reading and writing activities, including adult-led discussions and opportunities for children to read age-appropriate books independently at their own pace. It is evident, however, that, occasionally, progress is less good, especially when pupils are left for too long without adult intervention and do not have any strategies to find out the meaning of words that they did not understand.

There is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups. This includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils from minority ethnic heritages, and those who speak English as an additional language. Well-targeted and effective intervention and very good support from teaching assistants ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, or those at the early stage of learning English, make at least satisfactory, and some make good, progress overall.

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## Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires said that they felt their children were taught well. However, inspectors found a varying picture in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall and reflects some inconsistencies in the rates of progress across the school. However, as a result of robust improvement strategies and the development of a rich and balanced curriculum which enables pupils to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects, teaching has improved significantly. Good teaching was observed, but is not yet embedded in all classes. The best teaching is lively, well-planned and resourced, engages pupils of varying needs and abilities effectively and quickly, and contributes well towards pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development. Sometimes, learning is delayed because the teacher spends too long introducing the lesson, or tasks are not designed appropriately to meet varying needs. As a result, pupils become passive and progress slows. In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask questions which probe pupils' learning and understanding. They use strategies such as 'learning sticks' to select pupils to answer questions, enabling them to check constantly on all pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to learning, especially for those pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, when most pupils were writing a script for an interview, those who spoke English as an additional language were able to develop their speaking and listening skills while making a recording of an interview.

Pupils' progress is assessed accurately and tracked and this usually links well to individual short-term targets. However, pupils are less aware of their long-term learning goals and how to achieve them. Marking is often clear and evaluative and most pupils have a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and know what to do to improve. On the occasions when it is less thorough or when opportunities for pupils to assess their own work are limited, responsibility for their own learning is impeded.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

The tone is set from the start of every day, when the headteacher meets and greets every parent, carer and pupil at the school gate. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire indicated that their children feel safe at school and that the pupils behave well. The pupils confirm that view. The staff have ensured that the school is a harmonious community, in which pupils get on well together and with the staff, both in lessons and when socialising. Levels of attendance have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now average overall.

The inspectors found the pupils' behaviour to be good, especially when activities in lessons were challenging and pupils were well-motivated. Pupils, generally, respond

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very well to the teachers' instructions. School records indicate that behaviour is typically good and show that there have been few behavioural incidents over time and the incidence of exclusions is very low. There have been no racist incidents recorded in recent years. Pupils are well-aware that bullying takes different forms, such as cyber and homophobic bullying, and understand well how to respond if they come across any. However, they say that bullying very rarely occurs. A few parents and carers raised concerns about the school's response to bullying. Inspectors found that instances of bullying are very few, because bullying is not tolerated by the school. If it occurs it is dealt with promptly.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher has brought stability and a vision for improvement, shared by all staff, in every aspect of the school's work. Significant improvements in teaching have ensured that all teaching is at least satisfactory, with more that is now good, but the school recognises there is still more to be done. This has been achieved by a vigorous approach to professional development from which all staff, including support staff, benefit and good practice is recognised and shared. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate and feeds into the school's development plan, together with a planned programme of training for staff in order to raise their skills and pupils' attainment further.

Middle leaders have grasped the opportunity to be involved in school improvement eagerly and their work in developing the curriculum and improving literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is having a positive impact on attainment and progress. The governing body knows the school well, is very supportive and challenges it to do even better.

School leaders ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures and arrangements for child protection meet requirements fully and pupils whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable are supported very well. Discrimination of any type is not tolerated by leaders and staff and the school ensures that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed and that their views are valued.

The good curriculum contributes very well towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and contains a broad range of interesting experiences to extend learning opportunities. Pupils develop an appreciation of the wider spiritual and cultural values through an extensive range of visits, topic work, art and music. For example, all pupils are taught by specialist teachers to play a musical instrument.

The school works hard to promote a good relationship and partnership with parents and carers and a range of local businesses and educational establishments with considerable success. The recent improvements in teaching, pupils' progress, and in



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attendance and governance since the last inspection demonstrate the capacity for improvement.

## 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](http://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.**



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Hermitage Primary School, Tower Hamlets, E1W 2PT**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school this week. I would particularly like to thank those of you who gave up your free time to talk about the school and those of you that completed a questionnaire.

This is what we have said about your school in our report.

- Yours is a satisfactory school, which is improving quickly.
- Your achievement is satisfactory because not all of you progress as well as each other and some of you have attainment below the national average.
- The youngest children get a good start in the Nursery and Reception Year.
- The teaching you receive is at least satisfactory and often good.
- The curriculum is adding enjoyment to your learning and helping you to learn more quickly.
- You behave well, show respect for each other and know how to keep safe.
- Your school is led and managed well and that is why it is improving quickly.

This is what we have asked your school to do to help it improve.

- Help pupils in Key Stage 1 and in some classes in Key Stage 2 to make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make sure that all the teaching is as good as the best lessons and ensure that you are working in each lesson right from the start and that activities are matched to your needs and interests well.
- Find ways to share with you your long-term curriculum goals and ensure that you know what you have to do to reach them.

You can all play your part by attending regularly and continuing to work as hard as you can. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Firth  
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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