

# Furness Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101525
<b>Local authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	376583
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jeanie Jovanova

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

---

<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>	557
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Spencer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sylvie Libson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11–12 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Furness Road London NW10 5YT
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8965 5977
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8963 1938
<b>Email address</b>	admin@furness.brent.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376583



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova

Additional inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional inspector

Liz Kissane

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 32 lessons taught by 17 teachers, including the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent). They held meetings with staff, pupils and a representative from the interim executive board, which acts as a governing body. They attended an assembly and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, child protection, the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, minutes of meetings of the interim executive board and data relating to pupils' achievement. Inspectors took account of the responses to the 82 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is higher than the national average. There has been an increase in the number of pupils who attend the school, resulting in additional classes in both Year 1 and Reception. The proportion of pupils representing minority ethnic heritages is much higher than in most schools, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, many of whom are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. More than double the proportion of pupils than in most schools nationally is known to be eligible for free school meals.

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a number of staffing issues, including a high turnover of teaching staff and changes in the management structure. The current executive headteacher began to support the school in January 2011 and an interim executive board took on the governance of the school in July 2011.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is not satisfactory because pupils' attainment is consistently low and not improving rapidly or securely enough. While pupils' progress from low starting points is satisfactory this is not strong enough to support a rising trend in attainment. Attainment in English and mathematics is significantly lower than average by the end of Year 6. Attainment in English has been in decline for the last three years. Although attainment in mathematics rose slightly in 2010, it fell again in 2011.
- Despite pockets of good practice, teaching is satisfactory. In some lessons, work is not well matched to the different needs of all pupils and questioning does not always develop pupils' ability to think for themselves. Marking does not consistently help pupils to know how to move forward in their learning. The curriculum offers imaginative opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills across a range of subjects, but there are fewer chances for them to apply their mathematical knowledge in other lessons.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. However, when the work in lessons does not fully meet the needs of pupils this adversely affects their attention and interest, and occasionally leads to low-level disruption. Pupils say they feel safe and that the adults who work at the school care for them.
- The leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory. Since the arrival of the executive headteacher there has been a clear drive for improvement. Significant staffing issues have been dealt with successfully and routines and expectations have been clearly established. This has resulted in noticeable improvements for most pupils in the majority of year groups.

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

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that, by July 2013, it is at least in line with the national average by the time pupils leave the school, through:
  - developing pupils' abilities to learn independently
  - improving intervention strategies for pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English
  - ensuring that, through careful marking, pupils understand the next steps to take to improve their learning and to raise the standard of their work
  - creating opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching to provide continuously good learning by:
  - using assessment to tailor planned learning tasks more closely to the needs of pupils, including those of higher ability
  - ensuring teachers check on pupils' progress during lessons and amend tasks if needed
  - embedding the use of high quality questioning that engages all pupils and extends their thinking
  - ensuring instructions to pupils are always clear.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Although pupils now make satisfactory progress in lessons, over time they have underachieved. There is now evidence of improving and increasingly good progress. However, over time progress has not been rapid enough to raise attainment as it remains low at the end of Year 6 and so pupils' achievement is inadequate. Nevertheless, parents and carers are happy with their children's achievement.

Children start school with skills that are below age related expectations, especially in communication and language. They make no better than satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Consequently, their attainment in reading is still low by the end of Year 2. The rate of progress made by pupils is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but their attainment in reading has remained low by the end of Year 6. In some classes, good and better teaching is now accelerating progress and enabling pupils to overcome previous low levels of attainment. For example, in a good phonics lesson in Year 1, boys as well as girls were keenly using newly acquired skills to read simple sentences and, although they found some words challenging, the careful support from the teacher ensured they had the confidence to succeed. The lesson promoted good progress because the work was well matched to the pupils' learning needs given their low starting points. In other classes learning and progress are still not rapid enough to consistently raise attainment. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils' progress was slowed when they were unsure of the difference between a sentence and a phrase but needed this knowledge to carry out the task of identifying the punctuation needed in a sentence. The teacher had not anticipated

what was needed to ensure pupils moved forward in their learning and so the lesson was spent practising existing skills rather than developing new ones.

Girls outperform boys at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, due to successful adjustments to the curriculum, such as the introduction of a well-planned and consistent approach to the teaching and learning of phonics, the gap has narrowed by the end of Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, the needs of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are well met and they are making better progress than their peers nationally. The special educational needs coordinator has now established good individual education plans for all disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The guidance these plans provide for teachers means that work is more closely tailored to pupils' individual circumstances and, as a consequence, the gap is now narrowing between them and similar groups nationally, and faster than it is for other pupils in the school. The school is not as successful at narrowing the gaps for pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly in writing and mathematics and for those who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. This is because intervention strategies are not sufficiently well targeted to meet the particular needs of this group of pupils.

### **Quality of teaching**

Inspectors found teaching to be satisfactory and improving. Work in pupils' books and the school's tracking for this academic year show that the impact of teaching is now often helping to accelerate the progress pupils make in their learning. However, over time, teaching has only had a satisfactory impact on pupils' progress because there has been a significant amount of lost ground to make up for most pupils. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk, questioning is challenging, expectations are high, the work is matched well to pupils' starting points and teachers' explanations of the activity are clear and unambiguous. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson about shape and co-ordinates in Year 6, the teacher invited pupils to model the day's activity on the interactive whiteboard. The teacher used precise mathematical language and asked pupils to explain key vocabulary using their own words. Pupils who seemed to be having difficulties were noted and the teacher provided additional support during the independent task. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had grasped a difficult new concept and the teacher knew who was ready to move on and who needed further consolidation.

However, in some other lessons, pupils were unfocused during the independent activity. This was because the work had not been matched to their ability levels, the teacher's instructions had not been sufficiently clear for them to know how to proceed, and the adults in the room had not taken the time to check on the pupils' progress. The limited challenge in some teaching slows the progress made by pupils of higher ability, but also affects pupils at a variety of different ability levels.

The school now teaches guided reading and phonics systematically. Pupils, including new arrivals, are assessed as to their level of phonic knowledge and placed in appropriate groups where progress is often good. In guided reading, many adults demonstrate good skills in asking questions that probe pupils' understanding of texts and empathy with characters. However, the independent activities are not always designed carefully enough to enable pupils to make the same level of progress as

when they are supported by adults, and books chosen do not always present an appropriate level of challenge.

Careful choices of topics and themes within the curriculum promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers then take every opportunity to draw this out. For example, a group of pupils reading 'The Sheep Pig' were encouraged to explain the moral of the story, which was that if you believe in yourself you can achieve anything. Pupils in a Year 3 lesson were excited about learning mathematics because they could see how being able to add and subtract money would help them in real-life situations. There is evidence of growing links between literacy skills and other areas of the curriculum, for example, writing about plants in science or writing diary accounts of evacuees in a topic on the Second World War; however, there are fewer opportunities to practise mathematical skills in other subjects such as science.

In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, most parents and carers indicated that they are pleased with the quality of teaching in the school.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. They behave well around the school, for example, waiting calmly in the lunch queue and moving purposefully between lessons. Their behaviour for learning is not as good because pupils have not been given sufficient opportunities to develop independent learning skills. In lessons, pupils become restless when the work is either not challenging enough or when the teacher's explanation is overlong or confusing. While this mainly manifests in fidgeting and a lack of concentration, on rare occasions pupils' behaviour is more disruptive to an otherwise purposeful learning environment. Parents' and carers' responses highlight behaviour around school as better than behaviour in lessons. This aligns with the inspection team's findings, although pupils feel it is the other way around.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from a number of dangers, although their understanding of cyber-safety when using the internet is more limited. Occasional name-calling does occur, but there are few incidents of bullying of this or any other type; most pupils state that any occurrences are dealt with effectively by staff and most staff agree. Most parents and carers are of the view that the school keeps their children safe. Attendance is below average but is improving due to the school's concerted efforts such as contacting the family on the first day of an absence and working more closely with the education welfare officer.

### **Leadership and management**

The school can demonstrate from its records how it has improved the work of individual teachers. Senior and middle leaders are now monitoring the progress of individuals and groups of pupils more effectively. Termly meetings with all teachers provide a range of valuable progress data. The special educational needs coordinator has strengthened her role and is now taking a much more active approach to helping pupils' progress accelerate. This is resulting in improving outcomes for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Consequently, as well as

tackling discrimination effectively the school is able to meet its duty to promote equality of opportunity more thoroughly. However, many of the improvements have yet to be fully embedded throughout the school. As a result, although progress is improving rapidly in many classes, the full impact on raising attainment is not yet sufficiently evident. Since the findings of the last inspection, the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and is now satisfactory. The range of improvements that have taken place, and the resulting increase in rates of progress, demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve further. Parents and carers appreciate how well the school communicates with them and say that the school has improved considerably under the guidance of the new headteacher.

All staff who completed the questionnaire agree that leaders are helping to improve the quality of teaching, and most say that the school meets their professional development needs well. Members of the interim executive board offer a breadth of experience and meet regularly to discuss progress and attainment data. The school makes good arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is planned to ensure that pupils have a range of opportunities to apply their literacy skills in other subject areas, though this is less evident in mathematics. Pupils' learning is enriched with opportunities for visits away from school and through sports and other cultural experiences that include music and singing. These experiences, complemented by assemblies and lessons focused on personal, social and emotional development, ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and culture awareness are all well promoted.



## 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.**



10 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Furness Primary School, London, NW10 5YT**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently, and for being so polite and helpful. Thank you also to those of you who talked to us and filled in a questionnaire about your school. We were pleased to see that your attendance at school has improved recently. You told us that you feel safe in school and that bullying is very rare. We noticed that most of you try hard in your lessons and you behave well at playtimes and lunchtimes. While there are many positive things about your school, the standards pupils reach are not yet high enough. This is why we have given your school a notice to improve. We have asked school leaders to make the following improvements as quickly as possible:

- help you to reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics, so that you reach at least expected levels for your age by the time you leave school
- make sure that in lessons teachers explain exactly what you should be doing
- help you to learn better when you are working on activities without any adults supporting you
- make sure that teachers give you work which is at the right level for you and then check it is still hard enough as the lesson goes on
- ensure your work is marked carefully to help you to understand how to improve further
- ask you really good questions to make you think and to motivate you
- provide you with opportunities to use your mathematical skills in other subjects
- give better help to those of you who are just starting to learn to speak English.

Another inspector will visit the school in the next year to see how well things are improving. You can also help by coming to school as often as you possibly can, making sure that you behave well in all lessons and trying your very best at all times.

Yours sincerely  
Jeanie Jovanova  
Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**