

Mowlem Primary School

Mowlem Street, Bishops Way, London E2 9HE

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The proportion of pupils leaving school with above average attainment has risen considerably since the previous inspection. Overall attainment is above average and attainment in reading is well above average.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and those eligible for additional funding, achieve well.
- Teaching is typically good, and is characterised by good questioning, very good use of assessment and good use of support staff.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They behave well, have positive attitudes towards learning, feel very safe and well cared for in school, and enjoy taking on responsibility. Pupils' attendance is above average.
- The headteacher is relentless in her drive for continued improvement. She is supported in moving the school forward by a governing body which is knowledgeable and challenges the senior leadership constructively.
- The leadership's management of teaching and learning has been very effective in ensuring improvement and positive results for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The attainment of girls in mathematics is not as high as it should be.
- Although more-able pupils have improved their results in the previous two years, in some lessons teachers miss opportunities to set more-demanding tasks which would enable these pupils to achieve their very best.
- In a minority of lessons the pace is not brisk enough to fully build upon pupils' evident desire to learn.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which four were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and with groups of pupils, staff, governors and parents.
- Inspectors did not receive any responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Some letters were submitted to the inspection team by parents and carers.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a variety of documentation, including records of monitoring, curriculum planning, safeguarding and minutes of the governing body. They also looked at the school’s data on pupils’ recent and current progress.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Linda Rafferty

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of its pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage and their first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is below average; the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Although the headteacher has been in post for several years, in the last two years there have been significant changes in staff at all levels, including at senior leadership level. At the time of the inspection, several teaching staff had only just joined the school.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring a higher level of challenge for more-able pupils in lessons, so that all reach their full potential
 - ensuring a brisk pace in all lessons, so that pupils are always fully engaged and challenged..
- Improve girls' progress in mathematics: by further developing the skills of teachers and support staff. Ensuring more-demanding tasks are set and effective continuing professional development and modelling of good practice is put in place.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment of pupils by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6 has been rising since the previous inspection, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils' attainment in reading is above average in Key Stage 1 and well above average in Key Stage 2. Attainment in mathematics has also risen, although not to the same extent.
- Children join the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge well below expectations for their age, and join Reception with levels below expectations. Children in these classes make good progress, particularly in developing the skills of linking letters and sounds, writing, and in creative and social development. Good progress is maintained throughout the school, although it is slower in mathematics than in English. In particular, girls make slower progress than boys in mathematics, mainly because they are less confident in practising higher-level skills.
- The proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress compares favourably with national figures. This includes all groups of pupils, including those whose first language is other than English, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium, and those known to be eligible for free school meals. Achievement is particularly good in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties receive excellent support from skilled and committed support staff as well as from teachers. Occasionally pupils do not achieve to their full potential in individual lessons, usually when teachers do not sustain pace, or when, in the case of more able pupils, teachers do not give them sufficiently challenging tasks early enough in the lesson.
- Parents and carers consulted during the inspection agreed that their children make good progress.
- The good quality of learning and progress made was evident in several lessons observed during the inspection, as well as being demonstrated in the school's tracking and assessment data. For example, in an English lesson for younger pupils, the teacher skilfully used a range of interesting objects to capture pupils' enthusiasm and imagination so that they all made rapid progress in developing a range of 'interesting' language to use in their story writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved, principally because the leadership has invested considerable time and resources in appropriate professional development for teachers and support staff.
- A major improvement has been teachers' use of assessment, which has contributed significantly to pupils' progress. Teachers were observed in lessons using success criteria and pupils' targets to make it clear to pupils exactly what they were aiming to achieve and how to go about it.
- Teachers' marking of work is impressive: there are detailed and constructive comments showing pupils how well they have done and how to proceed to the next steps in learning. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work, and they value their targets as a means of helping them to improve.
- Other strengths in the teaching include good questioning to reinforce and extend understanding, particularly for those who do not speak English as a first language, the use of a range of resources to stimulate interest and understanding, and the very effective use of teaching assistants, learning mentors and other staff. The adult support, observed both inside and outside the classroom, increased the understanding of, reading and writing and was particularly effective for those pupils with learning difficulties.
- Typical of the good teaching observed was a mathematics lesson for older pupils in which varied questioning and skilful deployment of support staff were very effective in helping pupils learn ways of using data to solve practical problems.

- Although teaching is typically good, occasionally in some lessons the pace of learning slows. This is usually when the lesson is so tightly controlled by the teacher that more-able pupils are not given sufficient freedom to develop their ideas in a more free and imaginative way.
- Parents and carers consulted during the inspection agreed strongly that teaching in the school is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils behave well most of the time in lessons and around the school. Staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils themselves all confirm that behaviour has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils enthusiastically explained to an inspector how they took a key role in developing the behaviour policy, and members of the school council have conducted 'learning walks' around the school, focusing on behaviour.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the various types of bullying and why this is wrong. All pupils, including those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, say that they feel safe in school and are confident that any misbehaviour will be quickly dealt with. Parents and carers confirm this.
- There has been only one pupil exclusion in the past five years, and the very few instances of racist or homophobic behaviour have been dealt with promptly, rigorously and sensitively.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, not only in the school council, but in helping younger children through peer mentoring and organising games.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their above-average attendance. Staff and the home-support worker have successfully educated parents and carers about the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The amount of persistent absenteeism caused by extended leave of absence has been reduced.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership in managing a school which is emerging from a period of major staff changes at all levels, while sustaining significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- Governors, staff, parents and carers all refer to the headteacher's 'relentlessly high expectations', 'no excuses philosophy' and 'unremitting commitment' to continued improvement and aiming for excellence, while at the same time being fully aware of the individual well-being of every pupil in what is a very inclusive school.
- The pupil premium has been used decisively to support improved pupil progress, for example through helping to provide good professional development for staff and support for intervention programmes for pupils with various learning difficulties.
- The role of middle leaders and managers is still developing, but already they have more accountability and involvement in monitoring and evaluation than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The leadership manages teaching and learning well. There is a rigorous programme of monitoring teaching and learning, closely linked to the school improvement plan, which has identified the appropriate priorities for taking the school further forward.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school, particularly in providing consultants to develop teachers' expertise.
- The track record of improvement and the strengths of leadership, along with a commitment to improvement from all staff, mean that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The curriculum has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The themed

approach, involving projects such as the Fire of London and Apartheid, is popular with pupils. This has led to thoughtful work on issues such as discrimination and the meaning of Olympic values. The teaching of core skills, for example reading, is carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils.

- The curriculum is enriched by a range of after-school clubs and visits, which are very popular with pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about joint family learning projects, for example kite-making. Music tuition has a high profile in the school. Core skills are carefully planned into the curriculum: for example, a visit to the London Eye was accompanied by a mathematics project about the cost options of transport, food and ticket prices.
- The school uses partnerships with other schools to provide additional learning opportunities for pupils and opportunities for joint staff development. Pupils talk about their links with schools in Somerset (involving a joint visit) and France.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils' activities include group presentations on research into South African apartheid and a project on Fair Trade.
- The school has worked successfully to resolve the very few examples of discrimination once present in the school. Staff ensure equal opportunities for all pupils, as recognised by parents and carers, so that all can achieve well and be happy in school. Pupils told an inspector that 'the teachers never let us down' and will 'go the extra mile for us'.
- The school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is good, the governing body having significantly improved its involvement and accountability since the previous inspection
 - challenges the leadership, understands the strengths and areas for development well and is fully engaged in the school's self-evaluation
 - plays an appropriately rigorous role in managing the performance of the headteacher and other staff. Performance management procedures are effectively linked to demonstrable progress in school outcomes.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100914
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	400439

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Brown
Headteacher	Julia Burns
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 September 2009
Telephone number	020 73647930
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