

Duncombe Primary School

Sussex Way , Islington, London, N19 4JA

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average, and improving.
- The school celebrates diversity well and ensures that everyone is included. It is a community and family school, where pupils from a wide range of cultures and faiths integrate well together.
- Senior leaders and the governing body are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They rigorously search for good ideas and customise these to meet the needs of their pupils.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers build on what pupils already know and involve them quickly in activities that further develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons and talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe from harm. They enjoy taking on roles of responsibility as 'bully busters' and playground friends.
- The curriculum provides all learners with a wide range of experiences, including off-site visits and memorable first-hand experiences, such as the art club and music events.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the pace of lessons slows because teachers' explanations to the whole class take up too much time and reduce the amount of time available for independent work.
- Priorities to improve performance in teaching are not always checked rigorously enough to ensure that sufficiently swift gains are made. As a result, a few inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which almost half were jointly observed with senior staff. In addition inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives from the local authority, members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Informal discussions were also held with parents and carers.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also scrutinised information received from more than 100 parents and carers, more than 200 pupils, and 53 staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books; the school's records on progress and attainment; the school website; minutes of governing body meetings; monitoring records; school improvement plans; self-evaluation; and local authority reports of their visits to the school.

Inspection team

Des Dunne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Madeleine Gerard

Additional Inspector

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average.
- Almost all pupils are eligible for free school meals and supported by pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is above average, with the largest groups being from Somali, Bangladeshi, Turkish and White British heritages.
- An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, some of whom are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of these have speech, language and communication needs.
- The headteacher leads the Local Authority Schools Forum and represents all schools on the Safeguarding Committee. The school currently supports another school in challenging circumstances.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The Sussex Way Extended School, which is not managed by the school's governing body, provides breakfast and after-school clubs as part of a partnership with local schools, sports and cultural centres.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - Ensuring that all pupils are given sufficient opportunities to complete independent tasks by setting them as early as possible in lessons
 - ensuring the pace of learning is not hampered by explanations which are too long.
- Enhance the skills and expertise of all staff by:
 - improving further the performance management of staff with a view to improving their skills in analysing pupils' progress information to ensure that all learners reach their potential, particularly those with low starting points in Key Stage 1
 - providing clearer guidance to additional adults in the classroom about their role, particularly during partnership teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards of attainment are broadly average in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave Year 6. All groups make good progress from their starting points. During the inspection, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on calculating unknown angles, the interactive whiteboard was used well to capture the pupils' imagination which motivated them to solve problems and achieve well.
- Mostly, children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills generally below those expected for their age. Children learn and progress well in the Nursery and Reception classes. They work and play well together and share resources readily and enjoy working with staff.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has seen steady improvement over the last three years, but is still below average. Their progress across Year 1 and Year 2 is uneven and the senior leadership team has put in measures to address this situation.
- There is very little difference in achievement between groups of pupils from all minority ethnic heritages and from backgrounds of differing social and economic advantage.
- Those who speak English as an additional language make good progress as a result of well-planned teaching resources, such as words from their own home language which are used to enable the pupils to progress as well as their peers.
- Almost all pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding make good and sometimes better progress across Key Stage 2. In 2012, attainment was for the first time in recent years securely above national averages in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective small-group and one-to-one support.
- In Years 1 to 6, all groups continue to make good gains as they progress through the school. This was observed during a literacy session where different groups of pupils successfully learnt how to highlight the key features of a play script and confidently moved forward with their reading because the work was pitched at exactly the right level.
- Additional support in lessons and in extra sessions outside the classroom helps pupils at risk of not doing well, and those who need extra help, to keep up with their peers and do equally well. Consequently, gaps in attainment between these pupils at the school and all pupils nationally are closing successfully.
- Pupils read across a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and many say they read for pleasure outside school. As a result of good progress, standards in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average because of well-developed whole-school strategies for teaching sounds and letters.
- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View, together with the school's own surveys, are rightly confident their children are achieving well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall and there is some outstanding practice. Teachers use a variety of resources including computers and a sound field system that bring subjects to life. This included one Key Stage 1 phonics lesson when the teacher whispered instructions that captivated the pupils who then showed a secure grasp of the sound 'ai' in words, such as rain and train.
- Teachers generally plan work at the right level of difficulty for the range of pupils' abilities in lessons. They are quick to modify and alter tasks to ensure pupils are suitably challenged. Pupils make particularly swift progress in their learning when teachers plan tasks that are relevant to pupils' interests and experiences, particularly so in Years 4 to 6.
- In some lessons, additional adults are not given clear direction about their specific role in learning. For example, in some lessons one teacher takes the dominant teacher role while

the other takes on a support role, rather than both adults having an equal impact on learning.

- Teachers present lessons that effectively build on what pupils already know, can do and understand, and particularly at Key Stage 2 use regular review activities to reinforce, consolidate or redirect learning as necessary.
- Adult-led activities for younger pupils sometimes restrict the amount of time that pupils have for independent learning and this occasionally limits the rate at which they make progress.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and there is plenty of evidence for this on display around the school. There are a range of opportunities for pupils to develop artistic skills, for example working with an artist in residence and a musician using African drums.
- The staff have planned a wide range of activities that enhance learning for the pupils, such as the Shakespeare Schools Festival where pupils performed in a theatre. This made a significant contribution to developing their language and auditory skills as well as increasing self-esteem and confidence. In a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson, pupils thought carefully while writing a description of a pirate and what he looked like using as many different adjectives as possible. As a result of the teacher's careful questioning pupils were fully engaged and made good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils typically behave well and there is no disruption to their learning. They are courteous and polite and get on well with each other. Pupils say that bullying is rare.
- Behaviour logs indicate that any reported instances of 'name calling' type of bullying is handled well by the school. Parents and carers in a recent survey asked the school to be honest about behaviour, but no concerns were raised that needed to be investigated by the inspectors.
- The school overwhelmingly promotes good behaviour. The pupils are well aware of dangers to themselves and know how to keep safe. There have been no exclusions in the past three years and there are clear procedures for staff to record any child protection concerns, which are rigorously followed up by senior leaders.
- Pupils are keen to take on roles of responsibility like 'Bully Busters' and enjoy decision-making activities, such as the way the school council has influenced playtime games, and the repair and maintenance of the toilets. They were pleased to tell inspectors that they regularly request the attendance of the school cook to influence the lunchtime menu.
- Additional pupil responsibilities, which successfully encourage pupils' personal development, also include ambassador roles, stairway monitors and administrative tasks that require them to show their own initiative.
- Duncombe pupils are experienced fund raisers for charities, such as those for child deprivation in London or famine in Africa.
- There are a large number of activities used by the school to improve attendance which has shown a steady increase in recent years. The school has to work very hard to achieve broadly average attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and the school prides itself in developing its own leaders. There is a large management structure with clear lines of responsibility and all staff fully support the vision and direction of the school.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and planning and they hold formal progress review meetings, linked to performance management, with teachers. However, senior leaders do not always check on the success of targets regularly enough or make their evaluations of the quality of teaching of individual teachers sufficiently clear when providing feedback on

strengths and areas for development. This can sometimes leave teachers with a more positive view of their performance than is actually the case.

- Curriculum projects and continuous professional development is strong. There are a wide range of experiences provided for the pupils, such as links with schools in Berlin and Paris or specific activities like the 'Talk for writing' project.
- Leaders and managers have identified appropriate strengths and areas for development. However, the evaluation of information on children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils in Key Stage 1 has only recently been completed and, although there are positive signs of success, this has not yet had a measurable impact on raising achievement.
- Senior leaders have introduced a detailed tracking system which allows them to monitor the progress made by individual and groups of pupils very closely. Thorough analysis is at an early stage of development and evaluation has not been sufficiently embedded to have an impact on pupils' achievement, particularly for the younger pupils.
- Duncombe is a community and family-orientated school with strong relationships with parents and carers with many volunteering to help in school. Everyone is welcome and the school holds regular meetings to support parents and carers. This has recently included subject learning sessions for parents and carers so that they can learn with their children at home.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and a strong feature of the school. The school's child protection documentation is used as a model for other schools.
- The local authority has, in recent years, provided light touch support to the school with guidance that has accurately identified improvements, for example in building further on the strengths of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- makes good use of governors' skills effectively to ensure the school is financially secure and achieves cost effectiveness for services, including a request to the local authority to rewire the school so that new technologies work well for the pupils
 - knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and ensures that pupil premium funding is used well to benefit the education of pupils by employing extra staff and reducing class sizes
 - provides appropriate challenge, for example as to how sports provision should be improved and how the school can maximise learning particularly for more-able pupils.
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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	100403
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	402825

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	461
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucia Garret
Headteacher	Barrie O'Shea
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 September 2007
Telephone number	020 7272 5620
Fax number	020 7281 9180
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