

Harlesden Primary School

Acton Lane, London, NW10 8UT

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils' progress in English and mathematics is improving, it is not consistently good in all year groups.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching and not enough lessons are good or better. As a result of this, pupils' progress is uneven.
- Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work because activities in lessons are sometimes not challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- In recent years pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 have dipped in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although there have been some improvements since the last inspection, the rate of change is not yet rapid enough. Leaders and managers do not do enough to help teachers improve their practice.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not yet good and this limits pupils' progress in reading.

The school has the following strengths

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Staff make it clear that they have high expectations from the start, and children are very responsive because they are treated with warmth and encouragement.
- The school supports pupils facing difficulties well and specialist staff ensure that pupils feel safe and are fully included within the school. Pupils behave well and attendance is above average.
- Governors are now providing good quality support to the school which is helping to improve all aspects of its work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and her deputy. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons, including a walk around the school to look at behaviour. Inspectors also observed a whole school assembly.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and met with two groups including school councillors. They also spoke with two members of the school’s governing body, a local authority representative and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the four responses to the on-line Parent View survey when carrying out the inspection, and also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. Responses to staff questionnaires were also checked.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s data on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documents, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Nebesnuick	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is about the same size as most primary schools. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for looked after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is well above average.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs on site, managed by the governing body. The school uses its own facilities to teach pupils and does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in English and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1, by increasing the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better, ensuring that all teachers:
 - make better use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs and abilities of all pupils so that they are more engaged in their learning
 - check progress closely to make sure that the pupils have work that is demanding enough
 - expect more of pupils
 - make clear to pupils, through marking, how they can improve
 - help pupils to become more competent readers by delivering good phonics lessons
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills when learning in other subjects, especially by setting tasks where pupils can write at length.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by:
 - linking the quality of teaching seen in lessons with pupils' progress and actual results
 - working closely alongside teachers to improve what they do by sharing good practice continuing to develop thorough systems to check the school's work, so that the rate of improvement becomes more rapid.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below those typically seen for their age and leave with skills that are almost in line with the national average, rates of progress vary too much as they move through the school.
- Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are improving and 2012 figures showed an increase on those of 2011. However, standards by the end of Year 2 are declining and have fallen to below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching in phonics is not yet consistently good enough to raise standards and promote good progress from an early age for all pupils in reading.
- The majority of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making progress at similar rates to other pupils in the school, and some make good progress. This reflects the whole school picture of uneven progress.
- The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to other pupils. Those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other groups, with good progress being made in some year groups in communication skills as a result of the support provided by the school.
- Progress in lessons sometimes slows because teachers do not check pupils' understanding thoroughly and adjust their teaching in response. Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can do are not always high enough, particularly in the case of the most able, and this results in teachers setting work which does not adequately stretch or challenge these pupils.
- The school has made good use of additional funding received to support those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Pupils have received extra help and support in and out of lessons, lunchtime clubs have been set up to help with mathematics and some families have been given the option to borrow and even purchase computers. Their achievement is ahead of others in the school and shows that the school is successfully using the funding to narrow gaps in achievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching over time requires improvement. Not enough lessons are good or better. This means that pupils' progress varies and pupils do not make rapid enough progress in learning and developing key skills.
- Typically, teaching does not consistently enable enough pupils to learn well because:
 - planning varies in quality and does not always reflect consideration of the different abilities and groups in the class
 - not all teachers expect enough of pupils and often set unchallenging tasks
 - checks on progress during lessons are not thorough enough and some pupils who do not understand the work become restless, losing interest and concentration
 - teachers' marking does not contain enough detail for pupils on how they can improve their work.
- Teachers' confidence in using progress information varies and, in some cases, a lack of confidence stops teachers from helping pupils to learn even more. Often teachers set work for everyone in the class at the same level and because of this pupils are unable to make more rapid progress.
- There are inconsistencies in teachers' understanding of how to develop pupils' literacy skills effectively. For example, teachers do not always ask pupils to write their answers in full sentences or provide enough opportunities to write at length. Because of this, pupils do not improve their written work at a fast enough rate, both in English and in other subjects.
- The teaching of phonics, the sounds that letters make, is not good in all classes because new teachers are not sounding out letters correctly. This means that some pupils miss out on

essential early reading skills and it takes them longer to learn to read fluently and to catch up with others. The school has already put into place plans to improve this by providing more training for staff.

- Pupils make good progress in lessons where teachers check their understanding and plan carefully so that work is suitably matched to the different abilities in the class. Interesting activities engage and motivate these pupils and they have frequent opportunities to explain and use what they know. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the children were constantly encouraged to talk about what they were doing and the staff asked them questions which made the children think hard about what they had learned. In the best lessons, pupils know their targets and make good use of their teacher's advice and comments to help themselves to improve further.
- In most classes, and in small groups around the school, the active involvement of support staff makes a positive contribution to learning, even when the teaching is weak, and enables pupils to make better progress and become more confident learners.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and well behaved around the school. They respond well to the staff and show that they are keen to learn new things. Pupils are cooperative, enjoy working and playing together and treat each other, and staff, with respect.
- In lessons which are less interesting and not always well matched to abilities, some pupils occasionally lose concentration, and become restless, but generally respond to teachers' reminders about their behaviour. The school is good at managing behaviour and all staff follow the school policy conscientiously. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well cared for and there is a strong emphasis on including all pupils in the school's activities.
- The small number of parents and carers who responded to Parent View and staff who completed the staff questionnaire generally agree that behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and they know how to keep safe outside school.
- Pupils are happy to be part of the school and feel that they have a say in how things are done. The school council represents them well and is good at taking suggestions forward. Pupils treat each other with mutual respect and are tolerant of each other's differences. There have been few racist incidents and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it occurs. Pupils understand risk and know about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, especially on the internet. This is because the school raises their awareness through assemblies and teaching in different topics.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average across the school. This is because the school has worked hard with families to make sure that pupils get to school on time, and regularly. The school's parent support adviser makes daily contact with some families and provides extra breakfasts for pupils during the morning.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership overall is not yet good because pupils' achievement and teaching require further improvement. In recent years, not enough has been done to improve the quality and consistency of teaching across the school so that pupils make good progress. The headteacher and school leaders know what must be done and are working to increase the rate of improvement.
- Addressing the pattern of declining standards at the end of Year 2 and improving the teaching of phonics and overall progress for all pupils in the school have been correctly identified by leaders as important priorities. There is also a drive to provide more chances for pupils to write at length in all areas.
- Leaders and managers have a secure awareness of the school's strengths and areas for

development and are now working to develop teachers' understanding of how best to use information about pupils' progress. However, leaders are aware that the current systems for checking the quality of the school's work require improvement to bring about more rapid success.

- The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and this is beginning to have a positive effect on teaching across the school; there are also secure links between this monitoring and the school's systems for performance management, meaning that staff are not automatically rewarded if their work is not of sufficient quality. However, in the past, monitoring has not placed enough emphasis on linking teaching with pupils' progress and data on their achievement. Leaders recognise that there is scope for teachers to improve by sharing best practice.
- The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection and it is based on themes which the pupils enjoy. These are enhanced by more clubs, activities and visitors to school. Pupils have formed a press club with a former journalist and actively seek ideas for articles. Year 6 pupils attend a residential event at an outdoor education centre, which they say that they really value and helps them to feel more grown up.
- The school has an established and effective partnership with the local authority and also with a neighbouring school. Teachers and leaders are already working together to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Parents and carers are happy with the school, which is continuing to open its doors for parents, such as developing a girls' mathematics club, especially for those eligible for the pupil premium funding, and continuing to invite parents to work with the mathematics specialist after school.
- All statutory requirements are met which relate to safeguarding. The school carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. All staff have undergone training at the required levels.
- Considering the improvements since the last inspection in progress for some groups, attendance and behaviour, the school has shown it has secure capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The quality of governance has improved recently and this is now starting to have a positive impact on the school's work. Governors work in close partnership with the school. They show a clear determination to improve standards, while holding on to a strong belief in each pupil as a unique individual. They know the pupils and their families and understand what is needed to help them to succeed. They ensure that finances continue to be efficiently managed, for example in the way that pupil premium money is spent on providing additional teaching support for pupils who are behind in their literacy and numeracy. The governors are also aware that continuing to improve writing is essential, and have committed some funding towards the purchase of individual computers which families can use and have the option to own. This has been successful in closing gaps in achievement between groups of pupils. Governors ask searching questions about the school's work and know exactly where further improvement is needed. They have a realistic picture of the quality of teaching as well as an awareness of performance management and how this relates to improving teaching. Governors make sure their monitoring includes regular visits to check directly on key areas of the school's work such as achievement, the quality of teaching, or leadership and management. Governors regularly challenge the school and are determined to continue to do this in their drive to make the school even better.

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	101499
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	404763

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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Narinder Nathan
Headteacher	Miss Linda Perrier
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2011
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