

Alexandra Primary School

Western Road, Wood Green, London, N22 6UH

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

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

- Leaders and managers have planned the different subjects imaginatively so that pupils learn and achieve well, often from low starting points to reach standards which are broadly average by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils, including those who are disabled and have special educational needs, make good progress in reading and writing and mathematics across the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly settle to school life and develop a wide range of skills rapidly.
- The quality of teaching has improved year on year and is now good, with some high-quality practice.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are polite and relate well to teachers and each other. They feel safe at school.
- Leaders and governors have secured significant improvements to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- Governors support and hold the school's leaders to account effectively for the performance of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics at the end of Year 6 is not as good as that in reading and writing.
- Teachers do not always use the information they have about pupils to set challenging work and targets for pupils, especially the more able.
- In lessons, pupils are not always provided with useful comments on how to improve on their learning.
- Pupils' attendance, although improving, remains below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Seven of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors reviewed the different subjects that pupils learn and how teachers plan lessons. They examined pupils' books and closely looked at teachers' marking of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation report and development plan, pupils' achievement information, records relating to the quality of teaching and learning, safeguarding procedures, and attendance and punctuality figures. Inspectors observed displays around the school and visited a school assembly.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders as well as representatives from the local authority. Inspectors held discussions with pupils about various aspects of the school and listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.
- They took account of responses from 11 parents and carers to the online Parent View survey. Inspectors met parents and carers at the start of the school day and sought their views about the school.

Inspection team

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Monica Raphael	Additional inspector
David Gutmann	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alexandra Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- A large proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English is high.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is the additional funding provided for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is above average.
- Since the previous inspection, a large number of teachers have left the school and new ones have joined.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils.
- 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 the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement across the school, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers systematically use the information they have about pupils to provide activities and targets that challenge them to improve, especially the more able
 - ensuring that teachers provide clear guidance so that pupils know how to improve on their learning in order to make better progress.
- Improve pupils' attendance by working with school welfare services to ensure that parents understand the importance of regular attendance for their children.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many pupils arrive at the school at different times of the school year but they make good progress. This is because the intervention sessions are well planned and enable pupils to acquire skills and knowledge swiftly.
- Nearly all children arrive at Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below the levels expected of their age. They are supported very well in a thriving learning environment through a wide range of adult-led and independent learning activities. As a result, they acquire skills quickly, particularly in communication and numeracy, so that by the end of Reception their abilities have improved remarkably.
- Pupils join Year 1 with levels of skills and abilities that are below the national expectations. They are supported extremely well and they make faster progress. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson on 3D shapes, the teacher used well-prepared learning resources to explain the differences between cuboids, cubes and spheres. The pupils enjoyed the session very well because of the fun, flair and imagination that were used to explain the concept. Pupils knew what to do, completed tasks to the best of their abilities and made outstanding progress.
- In Year 2, pupils' progress is quickened by good team teaching and they reach the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. Pupils are challenged to think deeply and they achieve well. Across the rest of the school, pupils are making rapid progress to reach standards in all subjects that are at least average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing throughout the school is particularly good. This is because the different support sessions for pupils are effectively planned and enable pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English to acquire skills quickly. Pupils read a wide range of books regularly in guided reading sessions and at home.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6, although improving, is not as good as that in reading and writing. This is because until recently, pupils had not developed their problem-solving and calculation skills well enough. There are well-planned mathematical activities in lessons and small groups to tackle these weaknesses. As a result, pupils are making rapid progress in mathematics to reach at least the expected national levels.
- Pupils who are eligible for free school meals are supported through one-to-one sessions and they develop skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics quickly. Consequently, their levels of achievement, based on the average points scores, are in line with those of all pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported very well in lessons and through effective intervention sessions. The national and school's assessment information over the past years shows that these pupils make the expected progress and the gaps in their learning are closing, especially in reading.
- Occasionally, the targets set for pupils, especially the more able pupils, are not challenging enough to stretch their learning so that they make even better progress. The achievement of pupils whose attendance to school is low is not as good as nationally expected levels because the school's effort to support them has not yet had sufficient impact.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. Leaders have supported and challenged teachers to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, all inadequate teaching has been removed.
- Teachers plan lessons that take into account the learning needs of pupils. For example, in an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson, the variety of learning activities supported by an excellent explanation of concepts enabled pupils to make outstanding progress in calculating the area of quadrilateral shapes. In a few lessons, however, teachers do not use the information they have

about pupils well enough to set them hard enough work and challenging targets, especially the more able. Pupils do not always receive clear guidance on how to improve their work to ensure that they make even better progress.

- Teachers create a purposeful and thriving learning atmosphere, with excellent relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst pupils. Therefore, pupils are always motivated to engage with learning activities.
- All pupils are expected to work hard and achieve as well as they should. Teachers plan with other adults to provide support effectively to pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, so that they make better progress than their peers.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and, in contrast to what was seen in some lessons, teachers provide comments on what they have to do to move on to the next stage in their learning. There are some opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments. This enables pupils to achieve well. However, in a few books the guidance provided is not challenging enough for pupils to extend their learning further.
- There are a number of opportunities for pupils to develop skills and abilities in reading, writing, communication and mathematics effectively, including in art and design and technology. For example, work in pupils' books shows that there are opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and skills in design and technology while at the same time developing their writing and mathematical skills.
- Teachers set homework in different subjects on an online platform. This encourages pupils to develop a wide range of skills, especially their research and information and communication technology skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are always willing and keen to learn. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes that support their learning. Around the school, pupils from different background relate and play together well without a fuss. There were few cases of exclusion in recent years.
- There is a warm and thriving atmosphere around the school. Pupils well looked after and they relate well with each and with adults. They show that they are courteous by listening to and holding doors for others.
- The school values and celebrates the diversity within its community. For example, teachers and pupils support new arrivals to the school very well, which enables them to settle quickly and play an active part in the school community.
- All parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey indicate that their children feel safe at school. Pupils highlight that 'the good relationships with teachers make them feel safe' because they are well looked after.
- Pupils understand the different types of dangers they have to be careful of, especially dangers associated with roads, fire and drugs. They indicate that racist incidents are no longer an issue because the school leaders do not tolerate such incidents. They show awareness of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils indicate that bullying, such as name-calling, rarely occurs because the school leaders deal with such incidents swiftly and effectively.
- Sometimes, when pupils' enthusiasm for learning is not sustained, they lose focus in lessons and sit passively. However, pupils indicate that behaviour in lessons and around the school is continually getting better because of the school's systems that reward positive behaviour.
- Pupils are motivated to take up take responsibility such as playground mediators and school monitors and they value these roles. They say that they feel valued because they are listened to.
- Although pupils' attendance has improved over the past years, it remains below average. While most parents have responded well to the school's robust procedures for encouraging good attendance, a small minority do not send their children to school regularly enough.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the senior leaders support and challenge teachers and other adults to improve the quality of teaching, achievement and behaviour and safety. Leaders, governors and managers are focused on securing further improvements across the school.
- School leaders regularly assess how well the school is performing in providing high-quality education for all pupils. The areas of the school that need improvement are clearly detailed in the school's improvement plan, which has clear objectives and actions to be taken to raise pupils' achievement further. The plan sets out clearly how success can be measured.
- All teachers and teaching assistants are set specific targets based on the school improvement objectives. They receive training to address weaknesses in their performance. Leaders review targets termly through lesson observation cycles and performance-management meetings. All targets must be achieved before request for a pay rise will be considered.
- The leaders have planned the different subjects that pupils learn creatively and this ensures that pupils develop reading, writing and communication skills rapidly. However, they have not been successful in developing mathematical skills as quickly. Other learning activities are well planned for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in art, design and technology and history well. Pupils learn Spanish as a modern foreign language.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well through history lessons as well as through personal, social and health education and physical education and sex and relationships programmes. Pupils' educational experiences are enhanced through many different after-school activities.
- The school's equal opportunity and discrimination policies are focused on ensuring that all groups of pupils, especially those at risk of underachieving, receive support to enable them to succeed. The one-to-one support programme for pupils who require additional support is well planned. As a result, pupils achieve well.
- The school engages parents and carers well through various events such as assemblies and Black History months. Parents and carers are actively involved in school events and they accompany their children on trips.
- The local authority representatives support the school to improve pupils' attendance. They also ensure information about pupils' progress is accurate.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have received training to enable them to challenge school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They ask challenging questions about the school's performance compared with the national picture, and track the development plans to ensure that the school is on track to achieve its objectives. Governors are linked to various aspects of the school. They visit the school regularly to monitor the work that teachers and check of pupils' performance in lessons do so that they can support and challenge leaders to tackle weaknesses quickly. Governors scrutinise performance management procedures and support the headteacher to challenge any form of underperformance. They allocate pupil premium funding appropriately to provide one-to-one support for eligible pupils. They know that this additional funding has enabled pupils who require extra help to make good progress. Governors ensure that the school's finances are deployed to acquire appropriate educational resources to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. All governors have undertaken safer recruitment and child protection training. They fulfil their statutory duties by ensuring that all school staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

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	130358
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	402418

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	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joel Brookfield
Headteacher	Jane Flynn
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 November 2009
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