

# Seven Sisters Primary School

South Grove, Tottenham, London, N15 5QE

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Until very recently, the school's leaders did not manage the school well enough, leading to a decline in standards. Attainment in the school has been low for several years and has shown no sign of improvement.
- Many pupils lack the skills in reading, writing and mathematics to help them prepare for secondary school.
- Pupils have made far less progress than required to reach the expected standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Weak teaching in the past has been a major contributor to inadequate achievement. The management of teachers' performance has been inadequate and did not secure good teaching for all pupils.
- Children do not get the start they need in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their attainment at the end of Reception is well below that expected. Poor quality outdoor areas limit what children can do.
- Although classrooms are mostly quiet and orderly, behaviour has been a concern until recently. Pupils now feel safe but tend to rely on adults rather than taking a lead in managing their own behaviour.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has a clear plan for improvement that has already led to improvements in teaching, behaviour and attendance.
- The governing body has shown itself ready and able to take decisive action to improve the school.
- The school has halted the decline in standards and started to improve rates of progress.
- The staff overwhelmingly support the school's leadership and fully understand what is expected of them.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons, observing all teachers. Several lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from across the school and analysed a sample of pupils' past and present work.
- They looked at school performance data and discussed this with senior staff.
- They held discussions with two groups of pupils, key staff, two representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority
- Inspectors took account of the views of 14 responses to the online parents' questionnaire (Parent View), a recent school survey of parents' views that received 60 responses, and the views of staff in 23 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Barnard Payne, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Barbara Firth	Additional inspector
John Mason	Additional inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with 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 it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school and includes provision for Early Years Foundation Stage children in a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly Turkish, Caribbean and Black African.
- A large majority speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs is above average overall; 16% are supported through school action. There are 16.5% supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs. Their needs mostly relate to moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school is currently below the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares its site with a children's centre, which has a separate inspection.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2012. Most teaching staff are new to the school having joined in September 2012.

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

- Improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics through ensuring that teaching is of consistently good or better quality by:
  - matching work in lessons to individual pupils' abilities and making sure that more able pupils have work that extends them
  - varying the activities in lessons so learning is more lively and engaging for pupils
  - giving more time in lessons for pupils to take charge of their own learning
  - ensuring that the teaching of sounds and letters, and reading is of consistently high quality.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure children make rapid progress through:
  - increasing the quality of activities to improve early literacy and personal and social skills
  - improving the outdoor area to provide better opportunities for children to learn through play
  - improving the use of classroom resources to stimulate children's' learning and develop their confidence as learners.
- Take the next steps in developing the school's leadership and management through:
  - using the staff appraisal system to continue improving teaching and learning
  - establishing a robust system to assess the impact of pupil premium on the achievement of those pupils eligible for it
  - developing the role of middle managers so they have greater impact on improving achievement and teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because for several years the school has been unable to reduce the gap in attainment between its pupils and pupils nationally. Only very recently has progress started to improve and close this gap. More effective teaching is now leading to much better progress and higher attainment in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils have a great deal of catching up to do to reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and those learning English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to other groups of pupils.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills at very low levels compared to those found in most schools. Children do not make the progress expected in their learning and development and attainment at the end of Reception is still well below expectations. Children's opportunity to develop greater confidence in their own abilities is restricted by inadequate resourcing, particularly of the outdoor area.
- Low attainment in Key Stage 1 means that pupils also begin Key Stage 2 lacking the level of skills expected. Poor progress in the past has led to low attainment in English and mathematics at the end of the key stage. A comparison of pupils' books from last year and the current year shows improved progress in writing, with a much greater focus on punctuation, spelling and grammar and longer and more fluent pieces of writing.
- Pupils' reading skills still require improvement. Weaker readers in Key Stage 2 still find difficulty in using their understanding of sounds and letters (phonics) to read unfamiliar texts. This reflects weaknesses in acquiring these skills earlier in their time at the school and is made more difficult because many are learning English as an additional language.
- Grouping pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy is helping the teachers set work at the right level particularly for the lower attainers and those learning English as an additional language. These pupils are now developing confidence in using basic sounds and letters to improve their reading and writing.
- Some lively mathematics teaching involves pupils well in learning skills, so that both the higher and lower attainers are now often making better progress in lessons.
- Past provision for pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs has been inadequate. Some have made good progress, but this has depended on the skills of individual staff rather than effective management overall. While achievement overall is inadequate, the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is being addressed and, along with other groups, they are now starting to make much better progress.
- The progress of most groups of pupils and their equality of opportunity are improving due to the school targeting support more effectively. More able pupils are not always given the right work to help them reach higher levels.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Poor teaching in the past has led to low achievement. There is now more effective teaching and, while teaching still requires improvement, there are significant improvements in its quality and in pupils' progress even in a short time. Pupils confirm this, saying that the headteacher has improved both the quality of teaching and behaviour.
- Planning of lessons typically takes too little account of the range of abilities in the class and does not provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Pupils sometimes have to wait too long for help and support. Pupils also spend too long sitting on the carpet listening rather than being actively involved in learning and showing initiative. Resources are too often lacking, both in range and quality. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the classrooms are neither vibrant nor stimulating for young children.
- Despite improvements in pupils' reading and writing, there are still inconsistencies in how well teachers teach reading.

- In the best lessons, enthusiastic teaching engages the pupils by using a variety of activities. Teaching assistants often play a key role in leading activities, either in class or working with small groups to teach specific skills, such as understanding sounds and letters.
- Marking has improved significantly, with good feedback given to pupils that includes short-term targets to help them improve their work.
- Pupils' social skills are often weak when they start school but are improving because teachers encourage pupils to work well together. The best teaching encourages collaboration and reflection. Pupils' autobiographies in Year 6 show them reflecting on what they used to be like, what they believe in and what they value.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Poor behaviour has concerned parents, staff and pupils in the past. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and teachers manage behaviour effectively. Behaviour is now getting better but still requires further improvement.
- While there are still instances of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying in the recent past, pupils now feel safe and say that they are much better supported. Behaviour has improved both in classrooms and in the playground. Parents are now satisfied with behaviour. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and know how to report any instances, having confidence that adults will address them effectively.
- While pupils are orderly and ready to learn, they too often sit back, relying on adults to take the lead. In the best lessons, pupils show a willingness to take the lead themselves, for example, by standing in front of the class to demonstrate how to solve a mathematical problem or working together to find as many right angles as they can in the classroom.
- Attendance has also improved from a low baseline. It is now in line with the national average and pupils are punctual.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- The headteacher's clear vision for the school is strongly supported by governors and staff and she has gained the confidence of parents. She has used rigorous self-evaluation, including a very effective system to check on pupils' progress, to provide an accurate picture of the school's performance and identify the right priorities.
- The school's leaders and managers demonstrate the skills, commitment and clarity of vision to bring about the rapid improvement required. Weaknesses in attendance and behaviour have been addressed and an effective team of staff established.
- These early successes are due to effective senior leadership. Currently, middle leaders play only a limited role in raising standards within their areas of responsibility.
- The management of the staff's performance was weak in the past, but there are now clear lines of responsibility for improving teaching. A formal system of staff appraisal has been established; staff who were in the school previously have personal objectives and the school is on track to set targets for new staff.
- The school's curriculum now meets statutory requirements, which it previously did not. The school's leaders are continuing to improve what the school offers, including a good range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum requires further improvement in order to be good. In particular, the needs of the more able pupils are not identified well enough in curriculum planning.
- A legacy of weak financial management means that the school has not accurately tracked or assessed the impact on achievement of financial resources intended to be targeted at pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. This is now being addressed.
- The school has made effective use of external support from the local authority and consultants, including working with a consultant to audit and develop work in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is improving. Pupils are not given enough responsibilities in the school and the wider community to

extend their understanding of the wider world.

- The school meets all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body have the skills and show a willingness to confront problems and take effective action.
  - The governing body holds school leaders responsible for the school's effectiveness, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132253
<b>Local authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	402553

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>	430
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Zena Brabazon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Nicholson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8802 6670
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8880 1158
<b>Email address</b>	ssps@sevensisters.haringey.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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).



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 and as part of the inspection.

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

