

Halley Primary School

Halley Street, London, E14 7SS

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 make good progress from below-average starting points and achieve well across the school to reach average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers are well supported and good training helps to develop their skills. As a result, teaching is mostly good, with a little that is outstanding.
- Pupils from different groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress. Their needs are well understood and they receive good support.
- Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and, as a result, children make good progress.
- Strong leadership has made sure that leaders, staff and governors are united as a team that is focused sharply on improving the school further.
- Members of the governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide good support and also ask demanding questions to make sure the school keeps on improving.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and effectively promotes pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils are very polite, well mannered and enjoy their lessons. They feel safe and are well looked after.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make the same fast progress in mathematics as they do in English.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding, especially in mathematics, and a small proportion requires improvement.
- The part additional adults play, particularly during whole-class teaching, is not always focused sharply on supporting pupils' learning.
- In a few lessons, pupils are given work that is not at the right level of difficulty for them, or the teacher talks for too long and pupils are not given the opportunity to work independently. Consequently, not all pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, visiting 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Three of these were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined 18 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and talked to parents and carers during the inspection. They also took account of the outcomes of the staff questionnaire.
- A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority's advisory service, two members of the governing body and members of the school staff.
- Inspectors examined progress data and other school documentation, including safeguarding information.
- A formal discussion was held with a group of pupils, and inspectors also talked to pupils at break and lunchtimes as well as in lessons.

Inspection team

Barbara Firth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Olson Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Almost all pupils are of Asian or Asian British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- Almost two thirds of pupils, a much higher proportion than average, are eligible for the pupil premium funding (extra money provided to schools by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, and those children that are looked after).
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs including those with a physical disability and/or complex needs is higher than that found nationally.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has experienced staffing turbulence during the current academic year with four teachers being on long-term absence, including members of the leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - always give pupils an appropriate balance of opportunity to learn independently as well as listen to their teacher
 - plan that work is more closely linked to pupils' ability and that the more able are consistently challenged
 - organise support staff so that they contribute to pupils' learning throughout the entire lesson.
- Raise standards in mathematics so that attainment is in line with English by:
 - improving teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching mathematics
 - providing enough opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills and solve problems both on their own and cooperatively with other pupils
 - ensuring that written feedback in mathematics is always linked to the learning target and is of the same high quality as that found in English, so that pupils know how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children joining the school in the Nursery class have skills that are generally below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers and adults place a strong emphasis on developing their reading and writing skills and encourage their interest and independence as learners.
- Pupils continue to make good progress through the school and, by the end of Year 6, are reaching standards which are average overall. However, although pupils' progress in mathematics is improving, it is not as good as it is in English.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also achieve well. Their average point scores are in line with others nationally for English and mathematics, and their achievement in reading is particularly good. Overall, pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve higher point scores than their peers in both subjects because the extra funding is used effectively to provide targeted support for both mathematics and literacy. They also benefit from a range of after-school clubs and have the opportunity to take part in educational visits including a residential journey.
- As a result of a whole-school focus on improving reading skills and promoting its enjoyment, pupils' standards in reading have risen over recent years and are now average at the end of both key stages. Year 1 pupils who took the national phonics reading check (letters and sounds) in 2012, however, did not do as well as other pupils nationally. Effective support has been provided during Year 2 for those pupils who did not reach the expected standard, the majority of whom have now caught up with their peers and are able to demonstrate a secure grasp of the principles of reading.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive carefully planned extra help. This additional support and guidance from well-trained staff help them develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills, and promote their social and emotional development.
- Most pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, make similar good progress. This shows the school successfully promotes equality and tackles discrimination.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some of it is outstanding.
- Relationships throughout the school are characterised by respect and trust. Pupils respond well to instruction and the school is a very positive place to learn.
- Most lesson planning is detailed and learning targets are clearly identified for both individuals and groups of pupils.
- Most teachers maintain a careful check on pupils' progress as the lessons proceed, using skilful questioning to judge levels of understanding and to encourage deeper thinking.
- Teachers and bilingual staff throughout the school make sure that all pupils speaking English as an additional language increase their proficiency in spoken English, and succeed in other subjects.
- When pupils are actively involved in their learning from the beginning of the lesson, the pace of learning increases. For example, in a literacy lesson focused on writing a detailed account of what they had heard, Year 4 pupils were quickly engaged in paired and group discussions to develop questions to ask the pupil in the 'hot seat' who had taken on the role of the detective from the story. These pupils were not only fully engaged in their learning but made rapid progress with the task. However, some teachers talk for too long. This hinders some pupils, especially the more able, from developing independent learning skills and making the rapid

progress of which they are capable.

- In a high proportion of lessons, teachers prepare different activities that are well suited to the learning needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In some instances, however, the work is not difficult enough, especially for the more able, so they do not make the outstanding progress of which they are capable.
- Most marking and feedback is good and pupils say it helps them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Marking in mathematics is not as detailed or as closely matched to learning targets as it is in English. As a result, pupils are not always sure of their next steps, limiting their achievement in the subject.
- The teaching of reading is good throughout the school and this is leading to better rates of progress. Children begin quickly to develop their reading and writing skills across subjects from the time they enter the school in the Nursery and Reception classes. The quality of teaching mathematics is not quite so effective. However, the school is reviewing how mathematics is taught and exploring ways in which teachers can create more-challenging opportunities for pupils to solve problems for themselves and become secure in their mathematical skills.
- Helpful guidance and additional sessions from specialist teachers, other adults and therapists help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to develop literacy, numeracy, and speaking and listening skills.
- Sometimes, additional adults are not organised in a helpful way, particularly during whole-class teaching. As a result, their contribution to pupils' learning is uneven because they are not always fully involved in supporting pupils to make faster progress in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- This is a warm and welcoming school in which pupils behave well. They play and learn together in a very positive and happy atmosphere.
- Behaviour is good; it is not outstanding in the school because, in a few lessons, pupils get fidgety or go off task. This is usually when they are not expected to do enough or the work is undemanding.
- Pupils, staff, and most parents and carers agree that behaviour is typically good. They learn from a young age to share and take turns through the range of activities provided for them. Pupils move around the school well, and in lessons, pupils collaborate very well and help each other with their learning.
- Pupils are clear about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. They have a strong awareness of cyber-bullying and also know that racist, homophobic and other name-calling is wrong. Pupils say that bullying is rare but, when it does happen, they know who to tell and are confident that it will be dealt with promptly.
- Attendance is above average and almost all pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils say they like coming to school. They also say that they feel safe, and parents and carers agree that the school is a safe place to be.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility, and Year 5 and 6 pupils were seen during the inspection being 'playground friends' to younger pupils.
- The school fosters good relationships and ensures that there is no discrimination.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels know the school well and have carried out actions that have brought about increased rates of progress for pupils. Leaders are rightly ambitious for the school to maintain its good performance and improve further. Self-evaluation has resulted in a clear set of actions that have led to improvements in the quality of teaching. All staff that completed the questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed.
- Teachers' performance targets are linked to pupils' achievement and then to salary progression. The current national standards expected of teachers and training opportunities are also used to help teachers improve. For example, they have received training in mathematics teaching.
- Leaders work well together in order to bring about improvements. For example, information on pupils' progress and on the quality of teaching is used to plan improvements and training opportunities for all staff. Recent focused monitoring of classroom practice has identified the need to rethink the way that the large number of support staff are used within lessons to ensure that the most effective use is made of their time and they have a full impact on pupils' learning.
- Partnerships have also helped to improve the school. For example, the school works closely with a small group of local schools, sharing ideas and training. The local authority has a good relationship with the school and has provided light-touch support in recent years.
- The school works well with parents and carers but is not complacent. It is constantly looking for ways to increase parental involvement in their child's learning. For example, on the second day of the inspection, Year 2 pupils and their parents and carers were involved in a problem-solving mathematics trail in the local park.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils' personal development is enhanced because of it. For example, all pupils have an opportunity to play a musical instrument and engage in an extensive range of educational trips and visits including a residential journey in Year 6.
- Safeguarding requirements are effectively met, such as checks on adults working with pupils and site security. This includes training for key staff and members of the governing body on the safer recruitment of new staff and child protection procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is committed to the school and ambitious for it to make further improvements. It knows the school's strengths and has a clear and appropriate view of what the school needs to do to improve. Governors are increasingly active and visible around the school. They provide strong challenge and appropriate support. They hold the headteacher and staff to account through regular meetings and setting performance targets that link to pupils' progress and pay progression. They ensure that the headteacher's performance management is managed robustly. They have a good understanding of the school's information about learning and how the school compares with primary schools nationally. Governors know how much the pupil premium is. They know how and why it is spent on actions such as employing additional staff to provide one-to-one support for mathematics and English, and support for the social and emotional development of targeted pupils including providing accredited parenting classes. The governing body monitors the use and impact of the pupil premium through its committees. It ensures that statutory duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding, and that the school's finances and resources are managed well.

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	100938
Local authority	Tower Hamlets

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	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Flockhart
Headteacher	Wendy Otterburn-Hall
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 June 2009
Telephone number	020 7265 8061
Fax number	020 7702 7637
Email address	admin@halley.towerhamlets.sch.ukss]

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