

Starks Field Primary School

167 Church Street, Edmonton, N9 9SJ

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 requires improvement.

- Too few pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly in mathematics, as they do not develop their skills systematically and practically through the school.
- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough.
- When teachers mark pupils' work they do not always make clear how to make it better, or ensure that pupils respond to their comments.
- Teachers do not always use information about pupils' progress to plan lessons that are the right level of difficulty for their different abilities.
- Pupils do not always get on with tasks as quickly as they should and sometimes need to be reminded about what is expected in class.
- Leaders, including governors, have not maintained the school's good level of effectiveness since the previous inspection. They do not check regularly enough that key initiatives are leading to better achievement for pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Attendance rates are consistently below national averages.

The school has the following strengths:

- Improvements to the way reading and writing are taught are helping pupils to make better progress and raise pupils' attainment in English.
- Greater rigour in the way leaders check the progress pupils make helps them to be better informed about the achievement of those pupils who need additional support.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm and are confident staff will sort out any problems quickly if they occur.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Older pupils are keen to contribute to the school, for example as lunchtime playground helpers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and undertook some joint observations. They visited 26 lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, staff, a representative of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading. They looked at work in pupils’ books and the school’s information showing pupils’ progress.
- The school website, development plans and records relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- The inspection took account of 23 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), the school’s own analysis of a recent survey of parental views and 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne Longfield	Additional Inspector
Stephen Palmer	Additional Inspector
David Gutmann	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Starks Field is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school opened in 2004 in a new building funded through a private finance initiative and has grown in size year-on-year reaching full capacity in 2011. More pupils join and leave the school than the national average. There have also been a number of recent staff changes.
- More pupils than the national average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is also above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus is average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of service families) is above the national average. There are currently no children of service families at the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two part-time Nursery classes and two Reception classes.
- Breakfast and after-school clubs are managed by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good or better teaching to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - making sure teachers set work closely matched to pupils' individual learning needs
 - limiting the time pupils spend listening to teachers so that they are set to do independent tasks as soon as possible
 - making sure teachers plan engaging activities that capture pupils' interest and motivate them to work hard
 - ensuring marking and feedback make clear to pupils in all classes how they can improve further, and planning regular opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' feedback on their work.
- Raise pupils' levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - making sure pupils practise their mathematics skills to solve problems through a wide range of different activities where they can apply their skills practically
 - planning the work pupils do in mathematics so they build up their skills systematically as they progress through the years.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors, by:
 - increasing the frequency of lesson monitoring to check that priorities for development are addressed quickly and identify where further improvements can be made
 - making sure improvement plans identify precisely the actions and tight deadlines needed to secure improvements, and checking very regularly the success of these actions on raising standards
 - working with parents and carers more effectively to reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of

leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because their progress across the school is inconsistent. Too few pupils reach the standards expected of them. Their attainment at the end of Year 6 shows improvement, but is below national averages overall. This reflects the uneven quality of teaching.
- The rates of progress made by pupils in different subjects are uneven. Pupils do less well in mathematics than in English. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to write at length on a wide range of topics and improvements to the way reading is taught are helping to raise pupils' attainment in English.
- Mathematics results have not improved as quickly because pupils often practise very similar calculations and have too few opportunities to use these skills in a wide variety of engaging ways. They do not improve their problem solving skills steadily as they progress through the school.
- Despite working in small groups with additional adults within lessons, the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. Additional support for selected pupils boosts their self-confidence and their basic English and mathematics skills.
- Overall, the achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including pupils speaking English as an additional language, requires improvement. However, extra sessions with well-trained staff are starting to help develop their English skills and within other subjects.
- Pupils who join the school during the year settle well because pupils at the school are friendly. Although the school ensures that discrimination is tackled and every pupil has an equal chance to learn and access all the school has to offer, the achievement of these pupils also requires improvement.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding shows variability, and overall these pupils do not make good progress. In national tests last year, the gap between Year 6 pupils who benefited from the pupil premium and other Year 6 pupils narrowed in mathematics, but widened in reading and writing. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium were about two terms behind the others in English and mathematics. These gaps are similar to those found nationally.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school with skills and capabilities that are below the levels expected for their age. Their attainment is still below that expected by the time they leave the Reception classes, particularly in reading, writing and calculating. They make better progress in their personal skills and physical development.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is too variable across the school and requires improvement to become consistently good. In too many lessons, teachers do not set challenging enough work and too few pupils reach the highest levels.
- Improvements to the checks made on pupils' learning are helping leaders and teachers to track the progress pupils make in English and mathematics. This tracking identifies pupils who need additional help, but teachers are not using the information as systematically to set work that is the right level of difficulty for the range of abilities in each class.
- Teachers often spend too long giving explanations before setting pupils tasks to complete on their own. This was observed in a literacy lesson when the time spent listening to the teacher reading a story left limited time for pupils to complete their own writing. In a mathematics lesson, pupils did not work quickly and their learning slowed when the teacher gave them too much time to complete tasks. Often the whole class waits while the teacher repeats explanations for selected pupils. Pupils become restless waiting on the carpet, when only one pupil has the chance to answer.

- Adult-led sessions for small groups of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage often help them develop their interests and build on what they know already. Children in the Nursery working with an adult enjoyed making models of snails using bread and herbs. They concentrated hard and followed the instructions carefully. Activities for children to select for themselves are not as effectively well planned to extend their learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Pupils in Year 6 often respond to teachers' comments and suggestions, as higher quality feedback and guidance make clear to these pupils how to move up to the next level in their work. This is not as well established however in other classes.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils' social skills were observed to be fostered well when teachers planned opportunities to discuss new learning in pairs and small groups.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement because over time their attendance remains below average. The range of initiatives to ensure good attendance has not yet been fully effective. Some staff say that pupils' behaviour over time is not as good as it should be.
- Pupils do not always get on with independent tasks as quickly as they should or concentrate hard enough as activities do not always motivate them to learn. As a result their behaviour dips.
- Pupils who struggle to behave as the school expects are given good support to manage their actions. Arrangements at lunchtime are well managed to help them to enjoy a calm and sociable break time. Pupils are generally polite and courteous and get on well with others from differing backgrounds and faiths.
- Pupils feel safe in school and express confidence that incidents of bullying are rare and that the staff will help them should any concerns arise. They say there are some unkind comments made by fellow pupils, but that staff deal effectively with these. Older pupils are keen to help organise activities in the playground at lunchtime and take their roles seriously.
- Anti-bullying events, guidance on safe practices when using computers and how to keep safe outside school, including road safety and cycling proficiency, help pupils to develop an awareness of keeping themselves safe from harm.
- The breakfast and after-school provision ensures that those pupils who attend enjoy a sociable start and end to the school day.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders, including governors, have not ensured the school's good effectiveness since the previous inspection. There have been some improvements in the teaching of reading and writing and in eradicating inadequate teaching. This demonstrates their capacity to secure further improvements.
- The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate. Development planning identifies the most important priorities for development, although actions to achieve these priorities are not specific or given deadlines to secure rapid improvement.
- The performance of teachers is managed in line with nationally recognised standards. However, leaders do not always monitor frequently enough to identify those actions needed to ensure good teaching in all year groups.
- Members of staff are benefiting from professional guidance that is linked to whole-school priorities, such as improving standards in pupils' reading, and has helped to raise achievement. Enhancements to the curriculum for mathematics have not been as consistently introduced. In particular, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their skills and solve mathematics problems using a wide variety of approaches.
- Pupils have a good range of opportunities to take part in outings, including a residential visit for

pupils in Year 6 and visits to the local area for children in Nursery and Reception.

- The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that relationships are promoted well and pupils from a wide variety of different backgrounds get on well together.
 - The local authority works closely with the school to provide additional support and guidance to help it to improve further.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses, although evaluations of how well the school is performing compared to similar schools are not always rigorously made. They receive information from the school's leaders about the pupil premium funding and how it is spent, but they are unsure of the impact of the funding in closing gaps in performance for eligible pupils. Governors support the school in ensuring that where teaching is inadequate, the ensuing problems are tackled. However, members of the governing body do not hold the school fully to account by making sure that targets are set and checked very regularly to drive up the quality of teaching further. Governors are involved in the process of self-evaluation, but they have not ensured that plans for improvement are having the impact that is needed to drive up achievement and attendance rates, rapidly.
 - Governors attend appropriate professional training and ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities in safeguarding 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	134307
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	411902

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	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Del Goddard
Headteacher	Davindar Bhalla
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2009
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