

Phoenix Primary School

Marlborough Grove, London, SE1 5JT

Inspection dates 13–14 June 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.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from starting points that are often very low to achieve broadly average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Staff create opportunities for pupils to develop well as independent learners and lessons proceed at a pace which ensures interest remains high.
- Pupils are extremely courteous to each other and to adults. For example, they hold doors open, offer to tidy up, move around the school sensibly and look out for one another in the playground. Behaviour in lessons is equally respectful and pupils feel safe at school.
- Due to increasingly effective measures taken by senior leaders, attendance has continued to rise since the previous inspection and is now average.
- Leaders, including members of the governing body, take effective steps to ensure the quality of teaching continuously improves. They draw well upon the expertise available across the federation and teachers feel well supported in developing their practice.
- The curriculum provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to experience a rich breadth of experiences which strengthen their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough to ensure all pupils make rapid and sustained progress across all year groups, and so not enough pupils reach the higher levels, particularly in mathematics.
- Although teachers mark books diligently, they do not always ensure pupils have read or acted upon the useful comments written.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support pupils to make progress during whole-class teaching sessions.
- Information about pupils' progress is not analysed as effectively as it could be. This means that some opportunities to accelerate pupils' progress further are missed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, including the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and guided reading. Each class teacher was seen, as were some staff teaching specialist groups. A number of observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked carefully at pupils' work in lessons, as well as work they have completed over time in their books.
- The inspection team took account of the 17 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as the views of parents and carers gleaned during the inspection, both in conversation and through other communications.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading, attended an assembly and held meetings with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding and child protection, behaviour and attendance, checks on the quality of teaching, information related to pupils' academic performance and the school's self-evaluation and development planning.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well below the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is more than double the national average.
- Nearly one in two pupils in the school is entitled to the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families), which is far higher than the national average. There are no children from service families at the school.
- The school serves a diverse community. More than three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic groups; nationally, the figure is just over a quarter. Sixteen different groups are represented in varying proportions.
- Almost half the pupils speak English as an additional language, much higher than the national average. A few of these are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of the Mayflower Federation and works closely with the other school in the group. They are governed by a single governing body. Each school has its own headteacher. The federation has recently appointed a new executive headteacher who also leads a federation of five schools which is designated as a National Support School by the National College for School Leadership.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club on site which is managed by external providers and so was not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make and sustain rapid progress across all year groups by:
 - making sure pupils are given time to read, understand and act upon the useful comments teachers make when marking their books
 - providing opportunities for pupils to reach higher levels, particularly in mathematics, at both key stages
 - ensuring teaching assistants are deployed as effectively as possible during the whole lesson to maximise the impact on pupils' progress.
- Ensure leaders at all levels analyse information about pupils' progress more effectively, in order to use their analysis in whole-school improvement planning and so raise pupils' achievement still further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills far lower than those expected for their age, particularly in communication and language. There are lots of exciting things for pupils to do and adults take great pains to encourage them to talk as they learn, so they make good progress. This means that the numbers of children who enter Key Stage 1 with the skills expected for their age has increased year on year and is now broadly average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 1, and this is reflected in the improvements in English and mathematics results in national tests over the last few years. Pupils now reach average standards, although few reach the higher levels.
- Pupils are now making good progress across Key Stage 2. Overcoming a legacy of past underperformance, pupils are well supported to gain the same success as other pupils nationally in English and mathematics tests at the end of Year 6. Although the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels is rising, it is still too low in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because the school provides a range of highly effective support mechanisms to ensure their needs are well met.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding achieve well. The gap between them and other pupils in school has been eradicated so that this year their performance, as measured by average points scored in national tests in English and mathematics, is over a term above that of their classmates.
- The school places a strong emphasis on using the correct vocabulary at all times from a very early age and this supports pupils who speak English as an additional language to acquire advanced language skills quickly, including those at earlier stages of learning English.
- The school proves its commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating all forms of discrimination by ensuring that all groups, including those from a wide range of diverse ethnic groups, achieve equally well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers use a range of effective strategies to ensure that pupils learn well. They sustain an engaging pace throughout lessons, and ensure a good balance between explaining tasks and teaching new skills and giving pupils opportunities to practise these independently.
- Teachers plan lessons that take into account the varying needs and different starting points of the pupils in the class, thereby ensuring all pupils can learn well. For example, in a mathematics lesson on percentages, some pupils had to work out simple discounts while others were debating the merits of value added tax at 17.5% instead of 20%.
- The school ensures pupils develop sound phonic skills by teaching them in groups which match their individual needs.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils understand the importance of learning to read for later life and see reading as a pleasurable pastime that they will continue to enjoy long into adulthood. They can explain confidently the different strategies they use to approach unfamiliar texts and recognise that regular practice will help them improve their reading skills.
- There is a level of consistency in the marking of pupils' work which further demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. No matter which class a pupil is in, they will get similarly helpful guidance from their teacher. However, there is not always sufficient time for pupils to read and act upon that guidance, and so it is not as effective as it could be.
- Skilled teaching assistants support pupils well during group tasks and provide valuable additional group work sessions for those in need of extra help. However, they are not always used as effectively when the teacher is addressing the whole class.
- The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers now make strong links

across subjects which strengthen pupils' understanding. For example, pupils read *The Diary of Ann Frank* while studying the Second World War, and this enabled them to write with great sensitivity from the perspective of someone affected by those events.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are charming, welcoming and courteous. They display positive attitudes to learning and participate well in lessons. For example, in a lesson on writing a report, pupils made relevant and interesting contributions which added to the bank of good ideas they could draw upon in their subsequent work. They listen to each other and their answers build on what others have said. In this way, their social skills are well developed.
- Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds get on well together because the school works effectively to foster good relations and create an inclusive community that works and plays well together.
- Most parents and carers who completed the online survey agree that the school keeps their child safe, and discussions with pupils confirm that they feel safe and know what steps to take to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are clear about the many guises bullying can take. For example, they are aware that cyber-bullying is a potential threat. Behaviour is not outstanding because there is occasionally some boisterous behaviour in the playground. Pupils understand, however, that this is not bullying. Pupils are confident that adults deal with incidents firmly and fairly, and records, which are meticulously kept, show this to be the case.
- Staff, including the learning mentor, work effectively to support pupils who have particular difficulty behaving well. This means that they are able to interact successfully with others. This and other well-chosen strategies mean that there have been no exclusions for a number of years.
- Attendance is carefully monitored and pupils are proud when they receive awards celebrating good attendance. Punctuality is also good, both when pupils arrive in the morning and when they move to and from class after play or assembly.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have worked effectively to secure a range of improvements since the previous inspection. They are ambitious for the school and its community, and this has ensured pupils have high aspirations for the future. The new executive headteacher has brought with him a wealth of experience and expertise which the school has drawn upon to increase the pace at which improvements are being made.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. There is a comprehensive programme of checks encompassing lesson observations, the scrutiny of work in books, planning and pupils' perspectives on their learning. A range of supportive measures are in place drawing upon the expertise across the two federations and teachers speak highly of the opportunity to share good practice with colleagues.
- The school's self-evaluation is based firmly upon information about pupils' progress. It measures the attainment of pupils in the school against national comparators and clearly identifies what next steps need to be taken to drive ongoing improvement. Development planning picks up these next steps and ensures they become practicable actions which are regularly reviewed. In this way, improvements are sustainable and steady.
- Leaders gather information regularly to check on pupils' progress. Meetings are held where any pupils who are not on track to make expected progress are identified and measures put in place to remedy this swiftly. However, although a range of information is collected, leaders do not collate and analyse it in as much depth as they could to enhance the school's understanding of its development areas. For example, leaders do not look for common areas of misconception in mathematical understanding across the whole school rather than year by year.

- Among the many improvements have been those made to the curriculum. Leaders have introduced a broad range of enrichment activities which are available to all pupils, both during the school day and in the form of clubs after school. The new topics studied, which link different curriculum areas, are enhanced by carefully chosen trips and visitors into school. All this, plus the chance to learn a selection of musical instruments, broadens pupils' cultural horizons.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is well promoted because the school is clear about the values it espouses and opportunities are created to discuss issues around ethics, right and wrong, faith and identity.
- The local authority recognises the progress the school has made and therefore now provides light-touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection and governors now support the school well. For example, they specifically sought out an executive headteacher who had experience of making rapid improvements in a short space of time because they rightly believed it would give them the boost they needed. Governors are clear about how the school compares to other schools nationally and are ambitious to improve its standing. They analyse information about pupils' academic performance and ask sharp questions when they find anything they feel could improve further. Governors access the training they need to fulfil their roles effectively and ensure all safeguarding requirements are met. They meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss the progress of different groups. For example, governors have followed the efforts the school has made to narrow the gap between the attainment of those pupils entitled to the pupil premium and other groups. They know that the funding is spent effectively because results of extra support programmes are reported to them. One such programme has enabled the pupils involved to make over two years' progress in 10 weeks. Governors support senior leaders in implementing a robust and equitable performance management system that drives improvement in the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school, support decisions to reward good teachers and are clear that where targets are not met, pay increments will not be forthcoming.

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	100817
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	404738

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	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Cunningham
Headteacher	Maxine Mallett
Executive Headteacher	Craig Tunstall
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 June 2011
Telephone number	020 7237 3207
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