

# Unicorn Primary School

Creswell Drive, Beckenham, BR3 3AL

**Inspection dates** 16–17 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Standards are above average at Year 2 and at Year 6. Standards in mathematics are rising rapidly.
- Children make good progress in Reception because the teaching is good.
- Teaching is good for most pupils. Assessment systems are thorough.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding make good progress in line with the others. The gap between their attainment and that of the others is negligible.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe.
- Senior leaders, managers and governors have made sure that good teaching and achievement have been sustained since the previous inspection. They set a clear direction for the school's future development.
- Governors are realistic about the school's areas for improvement and knowledgeable about the management of staff performance.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing, particularly for boys, is not quite as rapid as in mathematics, with too few opportunities for extended writing in subjects across the curriculum.
- There is not enough planned focus on the development of pupils' speaking skills.
- Teaching for younger pupils in Key Stage 2 is not as consistently effective as elsewhere.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to respond to teachers' marking of their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which four were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the school’s subject and senior leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 118 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documentation, including: records of school checks on the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, and the tracking of pupils’ progress. They also looked closely at pupils’ written work and listened to pupils reading.

## Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional Inspector
Jeanie Underwood	Additional Inspector
Gail Robertson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Unicorn Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent or carer in the armed services) is well below the national average. Currently, there are no pupils from forces' families on roll.
- The school opened in September 2003 and continues to grow, from an initial intake of 30 pupils per year, to the current 60 pupils. There are two classes in each year group up to and including Year 2, and single classes thereafter.
- The school provides breakfast club and after-school care facilities. These are registered, managed and inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

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

- Build upon current initiatives to improve pupils' achievement in English, and particularly for boys in writing, by making sure that teachers:
  - provide more planned opportunities for pupils to develop their independent writing skills in subjects across the curriculum
  - give greater priority to the development of pupils' speaking and communication skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching for younger pupils in Key Stage 2 so that a greater proportion is consistently good or better.
- Make sure that pupils have the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking of their work, to indicate that they understand what improvements are expected of them and to act upon them.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment is above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. In all year groups, pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. Standards in mathematics in 2013 have overtaken those in reading and writing, mainly because more pupils have attained the very challenging Level 6.
- Achievement across the school is good. There is clear and sustained progress across all subjects up to the end of Year 2. However, while progress is good, particularly in mathematics, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 in writing and, to some extent, in reading is more uneven, particularly for boys. This was also the case in 2012. In general, progress is more rapid in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4, with Year 5 pupils in particular making progress significantly in excess of what is expected.
- The range and quality of pupils' written work indicate that teaching has been effective over a sustained period. The school has identified that its previous strategy for teaching writing could be improved even more and so it is implementing a new approach, with more opportunities for writing across different subjects. Not enough priority is given to the planned development of pupils' speaking skills.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and represents good progress from starting points which are broadly as expected.
- Progress in reading is good. Effective implementation of the programme which makes sure that pupils understand the links between letters and sounds (phonics) secured above average standards in the Year 1 reading check in 2012 and well-above average results in 2013.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Effectively targeted support has meant that progress has accelerated this year and is very close to that of the other pupils. The coordinator checks the effectiveness of all the different types of support.
- In 2012, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 was almost in line with that of other pupils in both English and mathematics. There are no eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2013, but the progress of eligible pupils in other year groups is at least in line with that of the other pupils. The gap in attainment is narrow in all year groups. The school has used the additional funding to provide individual tuition and access to counselling and support where necessary, so enabling these pupils to catch up.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The good teaching identified at the previous inspection has been largely sustained, in step with the steady growth of the school. There is a high level of cooperative working between staff and consistent approaches to classroom practice, around, for example, the organisation and presentation of pupils' written work. Although some lessons in Years 3 and 4 are less effective, leading to some loss of pace and motivation, there are many good lessons across the school, with some outstanding practice.
- The specialist teaching of art is a strength. Excellent subject knowledge and a secure understanding of the key skills mean that learning is mostly outstanding and pupils' work is impressive. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 5, pupils were writing an incident report based on the poem, 'The Highwayman'. The teacher had a thorough knowledge of her material. Pupils were enthused and motivated, eager to get on with their writing. Their engagement and behaviour were outstanding, with activities very precisely matched to their skill levels.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress. There is a good balance between direct adult input and sessions where children choose activities for themselves. Outdoor learning is promoted well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn at at least a similar good

pace to others. Support staff are effective, recognising their role in making sure that all pupils make at least good progress.

- There are good procedures for checking and assessing pupils' progress. Many strategies, such as the use of individual writing targets to move learning on, are common across classes. There is a well-established practice whereby pupils check their own work and that of others. The school continues to develop its marking policy. Pupils mostly receive guidance on the next steps in their learning, particularly in writing. However, they are not always given enough time to respond to teachers' marking.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good. There are effective procedures to address poor behaviour. There has been one recent exclusion. Recorded racist incidents are rare. Behaviour logs show a low level of recorded incidents. Pupils are polite. No parents and carers who gave their views indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils speak highly of behaviour. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good; low-level disruption only occurs when the teaching does not hold pupils' interest sufficiently. They feel safe in school at all times and are confident that the adults in school will sort out any difficulties.
- Pupils feel that bullying is not an issue, while realising that bullying may take different forms. They are aware of the risks related to social networking sites. The school encourages pupils to undertake responsibilities which allow them to contribute to the community.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of risk. They know how to stay safe in various circumstances, for example in relation to personal safety, road traffic and the internet. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary school.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Most pupils are rarely absent and they arrive at school punctually.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- This is a successful school with a strong ethos of team working and shared commitment.
- Senior leaders set a clear direction for school development, sustaining good teaching and achievement in line with steadily increasing numbers. The organisation of staff into curriculum teams, with responsibility for specific subjects or areas of learning, means that all have a good understanding of learning across the school.
- The school's view of itself is accurate. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities and is promoting sustained good achievement by pupils.
- The monitoring of teaching by senior leaders is rigorous and effective. Identified weaknesses are followed up through the robust performance management system. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and pay progression. The school now holds support staff, as well as teaching staff, accountable for pupils' progress. In consequence, every adult is focused upon, and responsible for, learning and progress.
- The curriculum is managed well. Clear policies and procedures support the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum engages pupils well, with a focus on practical activities that build upon pupils' enthusiasm. This is not always reflected in recorded work in science. Most subjects are incorporated within annual topics. The quality of art work is high. Pupils experience a wide range of workshops, visits and visitors, and enjoy 'forest school' activities in the nature area. There are many extra-curricular clubs.
- The school has recently had limited involvement with its local authority. Some development work is supported through the local cluster of schools. However, the school does not currently have a source of advice and challenge to drive accelerated improvement.
- School leaders closely monitor the impact of pupil-premium funding. This funding is currently contributing to good gains in learning for eligible pupils.

- Pupils' social and moral development is rigorously promoted by school leaders and permeates every aspect of the school's work. The school is very aware of its responsibility to the community it serves. Displays celebrate pupils' appreciation of other cultures and religions. Community links and those with places of worship and with parents and carers are well established. Pupils' social development is promoted well through, for example, several residential opportunities, part-subsidised by the parents' association.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are skilled, experienced and enthusiastic. They undertake training and confidently check information relating to pupils' performance and the school's effectiveness. Governors know the school very well and check the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, comparing how they perform with national performance data. They hold school leaders rigorously to account in relation to pupils' performance. They ensure equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and promote good relationships. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and of the way performance is managed. They rigorously make sure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness and support the headteacher in tackling underperformance. They manage the budget well and are rigorous in evaluating the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding, although a relatively modest amount, to close gaps in pupils' achievement. Governors make sure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. All other statutory duties are met. Health and safety procedures are particularly thorough.

## 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>	134061
<b>Local authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	412089

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	313
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Antony Sheppard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Robertson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8658 0282
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