

Canonbury Primary School

Canonbury Road, London N1 2UT

Inspection dates 17–18 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders have consolidated and built upon the progress made when the school came out of special measures in the last report. Pupils' behaviour has improved to outstanding levels and the school's effectiveness remains good.
- The headteacher's and governors' very strong focus on teaching and pupils' achievement, has meant that systems to improve these are highly secure and reflect their determination to make the school outstanding as quickly as possible.
- Pupils enjoy school very much. They are very keen to learn and extremely enthusiastic about all the activities that the school offers.
- Art, music and sport are all very strong features of the school. Each of these, along with a wide range of visits and visitors, contributes to high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They successfully develop independence, confidence and extremely positive attitudes to learning.
- Typically effective teaching and interesting, engaging lessons help nearly all groups of pupils achieve well
- The school community is highly cohesive, inclusive and positive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite rapid improvements on a number of broader fronts, there has not been enough time to ensure that teaching and pupils' achievement are outstanding throughout the school.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding occasionally lags slightly behind others.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient time for practical independent work as teachers sometimes take too long explaining what pupils have to do.
- Teachers do not always identify and address pupils' misconceptions in lessons or work, and therefore do not guide pupils sufficiently to ensure outstanding achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 28 lessons and part lessons, taught by 15 teachers. Twenty of these observations were done jointly with the headteacher, director of standards, deputy headteacher or an assistant headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, two representatives from the local authority, leaders, teachers and other staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents from the 49 on-line responses to the Parent View questionnaire and informal discussions with some others.
- They considered 27 responses to the staff questionnaire and the views of pupils, through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, pupils' work, leaders' reports on lesson observations, the school's development plan, other planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Carr

Additional Inspector

Sibani Raychaudhuri

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Canonbury Primary School is much bigger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for specific groups of pupils, in this case those known to be eligible for free school meals) is much higher than in most schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The senior leadership team is made up of the headteacher, a deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers who oversee different year groups and a director of standards whose role it is to oversee standards and hold all staff to account for their improvement.
- The headteacher also works three days a week as executive headteacher at a nearby school. In his absence the director of standards takes the role of acting headteacher.
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' levels of achievement through the school to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all pupils have sufficient time to apply their learning in practical tasks and independent investigations
 - ensure that those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding continue to make up ground to minimise the gaps in their learning with other groups of pupils
 - ensure that teachers carefully identify and address misconceptions in lessons and pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well. Achievement of all groups is rising rapidly. In 2012 the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding was better than counterparts elsewhere even though this is still slightly slower than other pupils in the school.
- Pupils start school with a wide range of knowledge, skills and experiences. Overall, these are typical for their age. Children progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in all classes throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment overall is much higher than the national average. Occasionally, tasks are not always open ended enough or practically based for some pupils to really stretch their learning.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is because teachers are now more confident in teaching, providing many engaging and different reasons to write. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children of all groups, including those known to be eligible for pupil premium, show a great interest in letters and words and concentrate on writing independently for considerable periods of time.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. This is because pupils have lots of practice with their families or staff at school. Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium read aloud daily to help them become more confident.
- Achievement in mathematics has risen considerably over the past three years. This is because teachers have received additional training and leaders have developed new guidelines and policies for teaching basic skills.
- The proportion of six-year-old pupils who did well in the national phonics (the sounds which letters make) check was slightly lower than the national average last year, because they were not confident in sounding out words. The proportion of pupils doing well in the test this year has risen.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because, where necessary, intense, individual programmes and additional support by experienced and well-trained staff help them achieve well.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is good and, largely due to excellent leadership, continues to improve. However, their progress still lags slightly behind other groups of pupils. The gap between the attainment of these groups has narrowed, however, to them being two terms behind other pupils in both English and mathematics. This was a significant improvement from last year when the gap in mathematics was five terms.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work in books and the school's own monitoring, combined with those lessons seen during the inspection, show that, over time, the quality of teaching is good. A growing proportion of teaching is outstanding. Teaching helps all groups achieve well in their learning and very well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.
- Lessons are well planned, interesting and relevant. A group of children in the Nursery were absorbed as they attempted words about, and drew pictures of, their teddies on very large pieces of paper fastened across the floor of the Nursery. Pupils in Year 2 were captivated as they researched the internet and books to find out how an imaginary snail could travel the world.
- There is a very positive climate for learning. Pupils have excellent attitudes, they respond immediately to teachers' requests and there are few disruptions. Pupils are confident to ask for help and to 'have a go' themselves. From a young age, children learn to get the resources they need, share, take turns and help each other.
- Occasionally, pupils' progress is slightly slowed because pupils have too little time for independent practical and investigative work as teachers' explanations are too long. Pupils in a Key Stage 2 class were eager to prepare and present performance poetry, but they wanted more

time to complete their work.

- Marking and guidance are usually accurate and helpful, reshaping explanations, praising pupils' efforts and showing pupils how to improve in future. Occasionally, a very few teachers do not notice or correct small misconceptions or errors in lessons or books, which consequently slows the progress pupils make.
- Provision for pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium has improved greatly, especially through additional lessons in the 'Easter University' held in the Easter holidays. Achievement of these pupils has improved, even though their progress is still slightly behind.
- Given their starting points and needs, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs progress well because they are supported effectively and, where necessary, have special individualised programmes including using the school's new sensory room.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils develop extremely positive attitudes to learning because relationships are excellent and activities are usually very interesting and engaging. The mix and cohesion of pupils across the school are very strong because leaders encourage and enable pupils from all groups to participate in all the school offers.
- Pupils have high levels of self-esteem, care and respect for others. They celebrate their own and others' successes and are pleased when they and others do well. They put staff forward for certificates of praise at celebration assemblies and cheer loudly for the house who gains the most points each term.
- All groups of pupils greatly enjoy an extremely interesting range of lessons, clubs and special events. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy learning and performing on woodwind and brass instruments.
- The vast majority of pupils behave extremely well. The very small number of pupils who have challenging behaviour is managed extremely well so these pupils meet the school's high expectations.
- Pupils know that inappropriate behaviour or language is not tolerated and will be addressed appropriately. Pupils say they feel extremely safe. They have a good understanding of various types of bullying including cyber bullying, name calling and physical bullying. They say that there is no bullying at the school; if it did occur that it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are fully aware of e-safety and know which internet sites they should and should not use. Parents are very confident that their children are safe. An extremely small minority expressed concerns that behaviour issues are not always dealt with effectively. The inspection team found that incidents were logged and addressed quickly, which was also confirmed by pupils.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has developed broader aspects of the school greatly over the past three years. There are more activities for all pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, which have made a difference to pupils' well-being and achievement. All staff are now fully involved and fully accountable for improvement. Systems are so robust and effective that the local authority use them as models for other schools.
- Detailed frequent monitoring gives leaders a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This helps form their well-planned vision for the future. Improving teaching and achievement still further are central to the school's vision to be an outstanding school in all aspects.
- Parents are very positive about the school and feel that they and their children are supported well. They particularly like the friendly positive community and the very broad opportunities which the school offers. One, expressing the views of most said, 'There's something very special about this school.'
- Leadership and management are increasingly and effectively delegated. All leaders have a very

good understanding of the school and a very clear well-focused vision for the future. Achievement and teaching are central to their work and improving rapidly.

- Teachers are held very strongly to account for the achievement of all their pupils. Each term they present leaders with a detailed breakdown of how well individuals in their class achieve and detailed plans of how they propose to increase this for any pupils needing to make up ground.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on the basic skills of English, mathematics and communication and also include the full range of other subjects in a highly creative way. The provision of art, music and sport is exemplary. For example, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 have lessons in brass and woodwind instruments and are able to join the school's choirs and orchestra.
- Officers from the local authority visit each half term, know the school extremely well, provide effective training and set up links with other schools to extend pupils' learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. Governors are very experienced and well trained. All their statutory duties, including those for safeguarding, are securely met. They know the school well, including the quality of teaching and how well pupils are achieving compared with other schools locally and nationally, through regular visits, discussions and reports. They are well aware that provision and outcomes are rapidly moving towards outstanding and are focused to ensure these are achieved. They strongly support and challenge leaders and are fully involved in school improvement, building on strengths and diligently tackling any underperformance. They manage school finances diligently and effectively. They know how pupil premium funding is used and the impact this has on achievement, attitudes and well-being. They have secure structures for rewarding staff, managing the performance and salary of the headteacher and other staff and are managing these new responsibilities well. The governing body ensures that equal opportunities are securely promoted and that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

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	131773
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	400141

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	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Siobhan O'Connell
Headteacher	Matt Britt
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 May 2011
Telephone number	0207 226 5020
Fax number	0207 359 8189
Email address	admin@canonbury.islington.sch.uk

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