

Akiva School

80 East End Road, London, N3 2SY

Inspection dates 1–2 October 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievements are good. Pupils start school meeting, or exceeding, expected levels and make good progress to reach high standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher's firm resolve to improve teaching is becoming increasingly successful because of the focus on teaching skills and the commitment of the governing body. This is leading to faster progress for all pupils.
- Teaching is good, with examples of outstanding practice especially in Year 6 where activities inspire pupils to gain new knowledge and learn well.
- Provision for children in the Reception classes is good. Teachers manage the move into Year 1 carefully so that pupils are well prepared for learning in the main school.
- Pupils behave very well around the school and play thoughtfully together in the playground. They feel safe and secure in school. Attendance and punctuality are good.
- The provision for physical education and sport has improved tremendously. Consequently, some pupils have achieved outstanding results in their chosen sport.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, underpinned by a strong set of guiding principles. This creates a positive climate for learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently high enough to ensure that all pupils make outstanding progress.
- Sometimes, tasks are not matched precisely enough to pupils' different abilities. As a result, some the most able are not stretched enough and progress slows.
- Marking does not consistently give pupils enough specific information about how to improve their work or the next steps they need to take to develop their learning further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons or part lessons. Six lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons, observed guided reading, listened to pupils read and attended assemblies.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the English, mathematics and science subject leaders, pupils and governors. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school improvement plan, data on pupils, current progress, the school's view of itself, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' work and looked at their exercise books.
- The inspectors took account of the 124 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and analysed 11 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Penny Spencer	Additional Inspector
Jill Thewlis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Only a very small proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional government funding allocated to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A lower than average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- Pupils are mainly classified as White British and all are from Jewish backgrounds.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has grown over the past five years so that there are now two classes in each year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils, especially the most able, make rapid and sustained progress, by making sure that:
 - teachers plan work that matches the needs of all pupils so that all are challenged consistently
 - marking and feedback give pupils explicit information about how to improve their work and the steps they need to learn more.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start school in Reception with skills that are similar to those expected for their age. They reach standards that are well above average by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do particularly well in mathematics, partly because this has been a priority in recent years. Year 6 test results rose in 2013 in all areas, maintaining the high standards reached over the past five years. Nearly all pupils reach levels expected for their age and many exceed these, ensuring they are ready for secondary school. An increasing number of pupils are working at the higher levels of attainment, but progress from their starting points is not always consistent.
- Children in the Reception classes develop their confidence and skills quickly. As a result, they all reach the levels expected of them and many exceed these.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress, as do those speaking English as an additional language. This is because the school provides good support through the careful use of additional funds.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning as they mature and this means they gain new knowledge and skills effectively and consolidate their understanding. They mostly listen carefully, work with others effectively and many have a thirst for learning. Sometimes, the most-able pupils are not stretched enough because they are not given demanding enough work.
- Pupils develop their key skills well. The school's introduction of guided reading means that they read often and widely. Pupils learn quickly how to apply their phonic skills (linking letters with sounds) to new words. Their writing is good and they have plenty of opportunities to explore different kinds of writing such as poetry, factual accounts, keeping a diary and creative stories. There is less opportunity for pupils to write at length. Pupils make especially good gains in their mathematical skills because they enjoy investigating and solving problems.
- Physical education lessons are now a strong feature of the school and the many lunchtime and after-school activities are very well attended. The primary school sport funding is being used well to support further development and the school has effective plans for improving sport still further. As a result, there is a number of increasingly successful competitive sports teams and pupils have gained places on national teams. This work contributes very well to developing pupils' healthy lifestyles and their physical well-being.
- In this school, the pupil premium funding is used well to support individual pupils. They achieve equally as well as their peers. Additional funding allocated by the governing body is also used well and has a strong impact on pupils' achievements.
- Results in the new grammar, punctuation and spelling test for Year 6 pupils were similar to those in reading and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- A significant feature of nearly all lessons is the emphasis on pupils reflecting upon their learning. This was used confidently in many classrooms to encourage pupils to think creatively, often by asking questions that required more than a right or wrong answer. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, for example, questions asking pupils how or why they arrived at a particular answer were very challenging and made pupils think hard.
- In the Reception classes, adults have very good relationships and there is a strong emphasis on teaching good manners. Secure subject knowledge ensures that there is a good range of inside and outdoor activities. As a result, children's skills and abilities are developed effectively especially in working by themselves and collaborating with others.
- In most cases, lessons engage pupils effectively in learning and they are interested and

motivated by the activities. Pupils are keen to gain new knowledge and develop their understanding, and this is demonstrated by the good progress they make during lessons and over time.

- Relationships between adults and pupils are often very good. In most cases, behaviour is managed effectively and pupils' personal development is fostered well. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, enjoy their work and achieve well.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. The teaching of mathematics has improved considerably in recent years and pupils are challenged by the problem-solving activities and the emphasis on learning mathematical facts. The school's introduction of guided reading has also had a strong impact and is leading to pupils' love of books.
- A greater focus on assessment means that teachers know how well pupils are progressing. Termly progress meetings are used to identify those who need additional support. This is effective and those given extra support often make very good progress.
- Marking and feedback to pupils on how well they are doing are frequent and comments helpful. However, sometimes comments are not specific enough about how pupils can improve their work and thus the opportunity to get them to reflect on their learning and correct any misconceptions is missed.
- A small number of lessons are not as good as seen in most classes. This is because work is not matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils or all pupils are given the same work. In both cases it means that some pupils, especially the most able, are not challenged sufficiently and thus make slower progress than their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is typically good. Pupils are very polite and courteous. They show respect for others, for example in the way they play together in the playground. In most lessons, pupils concentrate and stay involved in the activities they are given.
- Pupils are keen to achieve well and often work purposefully and do not give up easily if the work is difficult. They mostly listen carefully to their teachers, but when work is not demanding enough their attention wavers.
- Pupils' enjoyment of Akiva School is reflected in attendance that is above average. The pupils have many opportunities for sport and physical activity which they value highly. They develop a strong sense of responsibility by participating as school council representatives and acting as buddies for younger pupils, a role that demands significant commitment.
- Pupils say that bullying and disruptive behaviour are rare and that behaviour is good. They know about the different types of bullying because the curriculum is planned well to promote awareness and understanding of the issues. Pupils feel very safe at school.
- Overall, parents agree that behaviour is good. There is a minority who is not satisfied with behaviour or the way bullying is dealt with. Inspectors found that on the very few occasions when bullying does happen the school deals with it effectively. Individual instances of poor behaviour are dealt with well but, because they are recorded on separate sheets, patterns are missed.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's very strong resolve to improve the quality of pupils' experiences is demonstrated through the commitment of all teachers to encourage pupils to reflect upon their learning. Improvements to the way behaviour is managed, and the provision of a wide range of very well attended lunchtime and after-school clubs, are further evidence of the positive changes over recent years. Maintaining high standards is also an important achievement and, more recently, there is evidence that all pupils are making stronger progress.

- The judgements of senior leaders about the quality of teaching are accurate. A programme of coaching and support is tailored to individual teachers' needs and underpinned by a strong commitment from the headteacher to providing relevant professional development. This is effective in supporting improvement and developing potential. Procedures to manage the performance of teachers are applied thoroughly.
- Senior leaders know their school very well and identify accurately the priorities for improvement. They are supported most effectively by subject leaders who are increasingly taking responsibility for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in their subjects and year groups. This has a significant impact on the maintenance of high standards.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity successfully. This is demonstrated by the way all pupils make good progress. The curriculum tackles successfully the different forms of discrimination including homophobic bullying. There is a strong partnership with parents and the great majority are very supportive of the school. There is a strong parents' association that has, for example, raised money for playground equipment. Yearly surveys of parents' views show that parents' confidence in the school is improving.
- There are many opportunities to broaden pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many of these are through the Jewish festivals and High Holy Days, but the school also respects other cultural and religious traditions such as Diwali, and there are links with the local Catholic primary school. The varied programme of visits and trips, and the links with outside organisations, extend pupils' cultural awareness well.
- The headteacher is keenly involved with the local authority's support service and the school is involved in a number of initiatives to improve teaching and learning. The local authority offers light touch support as a result of its confidence in the school's performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to the school and its success and have a thorough knowledge of its strengths and areas for development. This is achieved through their regular visits to the school and the good information they receive about its performance. They support and challenge the school in equal measure so that there is a sharp focus on pupils' achievement. Governors are very supportive of the school's developments and were involved fully in the work to improve the provision for physical education and sport following concerns from parents. The governing body undertakes training, for example in data analysis, and this means the governors are able to question school leaders knowledgeably about teaching quality. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well, carefully assess the headteacher's performance annually and increasingly link salary progression to teachers' performance. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.

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	135086
Local authority	London Borough of Barnet
Inspection number	425626

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Epstein
Headteacher	Susy Stone
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 September 2008
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