

# Downsell Primary School

Downsell Road, Waltham Forest, E15 2BS

**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires Improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires Improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires Improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This school requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Teaching across the school is not yet consistently good with the result that pupils' achievement is not yet good.
- The more-able pupils are not always challenged enough and they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to set work that will enable all pupils to work hard.
- The school self-evaluation is not accurate in its judgements.
- Leaders at all levels do not ensure teachers use what they know about pupils to provide work that will make children think.
- The governing body is not well informed about pupil achievement because it relies on evidence provided. Governors do not check on teachers' performance; therefore, senior leaders are not sufficiently challenged.
- Although there is evidence of improvements in some areas of the school's work, this is only recently and has not been sustained over a period of time.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from very low starting points and achieve expected standards.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) across the school has improved and children taking the phonics check in 2013 achieved the expected standards.
- Pupils behave well, are keen to learn and say they feel safe.
- Actions to improve reading are beginning to have a positive impact and standards are improving.
- Pupils understand how important it is to keep healthy and enjoy the good opportunities provided for them to participate in sports and competitions.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons and/or parts of lessons, of which some were joint observations with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed an assembly.
- Inspectors had discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors noted that there were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) to provide information. They considered a letter given to inspectors during the inspection. Discussions were held with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to 41 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- The inspection team examined a range of documentary evidence including the governing body minutes, the school’s development plan, and information about pupils’ current progress, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. A range of pupils’ work from across the school was also looked at.

## Inspection team

Monica Raphael, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Byrne	Additional Inspector
Stephen Mellor	Additional Inspector
Narinder Dohel	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-size primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportions who speak English as an additional language are well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided to schools for children in care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the arms forces, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and better and improve pupils' achievement by:
  - teachers consistently using assessment information to set work that is at the right level to ensure all groups of pupils, and especially the most able, make accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics
  - providing pupils with opportunities to improve their work by giving them time to respond to teachers' comments
  - ensuring less time is spent listening to the teacher, and that pupils have enough time to try out what they have learnt and to think for themselves.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management to good by ensuring:
  - leaders have a good understanding of assessment and play a greater role in enabling pupils to make accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics
  - governors rigorously monitor the performance of teachers so that teaching improves and all pupils, especially the more able, achieve their potential
  - self-evaluation of the school's work is accurate and based on sound evaluative evidence.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, across the school do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics, and attainment in these subjects is too low at the end of Year 6. This is because the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is inconsistent.
- The progress of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 is inconsistent. In most lessons, the more-able pupils are not challenged enough. Achievement in lessons is inconsistent.
- The pace of learning in lessons across the school is not consistently fast enough. This is because children spend too much time listening to the teacher and too little time is spent on using and applying the skills they have learnt.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage, developing skills in reading and writing. Children leave the Reception class with expected levels of development and ready to start Year 1.
- Phonics is being consistently taught across Key Stage 1. This is helping children to use their skills when reading. As a result, children are well prepared for the phonics reading check. The provisional school results for 2013 show that children taking the phonics screening check in 2013 achieved at expected levels.
- As a result of improved progress in reading throughout the school, the proportion making expected progress in reading in 2013 is above that found nationally. At the end of Year 6, pupils are reaching levels above that found nationally in reading.
- In other subjects, pupils make expected progress where activities allow them to solve problems and use their understanding of number. In 2013, for the first time, a small proportion achieved the higher Level 6 in mathematics.
- The pupil premium funding is used appropriately to support pupils through a number of one-to-one activities and small-group work. This provides more opportunities for pupils to practise English and mathematics. In 2012, these pupils were three months behind their classmates in English and two months behind them in mathematics. School data show that in 2013 the gap is closing.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education because regular checks are made of what they have to do to improve and the wide range of sporting and competition activities offered by the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress that is expected of them from their starting points. In 2013, they made expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing. This is because of the effective teaching and support they receive.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement as it is not yet consistently good across all classes and for all groups. As a result, pupils do not make good progress across the school.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations and work is not always set at the right level, so sometimes, pupils, especially the more able, are not challenged well enough.
- The school leaders monitor teaching and the work in books is checked. However, this is not carried out with enough urgency to enable rapid improvement over time.
- Teachers mark pupils' work and comment on what has been achieved. However, it is not always clear enough and does not give specific guidance on how they can improve their work. Pupils are not given the opportunity to respond to comments made by teachers. This slows the pace of learning.
- Teachers do not consistently use what they know about pupils' abilities and, as a result, activities in lessons are not always carefully matched to individual needs of pupils and especially for the more able.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good. Teachers help children and, as a result,

they make rapid progress from their starting points and achieve well.

- In lessons where teaching is better, there are opportunities for pupils to talk to each other about their learning and the work provides the right amount of challenge. This helps pupils to learn well.
- Pupils with special educational needs as well as those eligible for the pupil premium are well supported in their learning by teaching assistants who ensure they are able to access activities.

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

- This is a caring school where the pupils and adults get on well together.
- Pupils are keen to learn and get on with their work. They follow instructions and explanations given by all adults well.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons. However, when activities lack challenge, it does not allow pupils to show their independence. Therefore, attitudes to learning cannot be outstanding.
- A positive feature of the school is the way in which pupils from different backgrounds work and play together.
- Pupils say they know who to speak to if they need help and that they feel safe at school. Pupils who might not have a friend or are feeling lonely are supported well by other pupils who will go and play with them at playtimes.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good. They are aware of different types of bullying but say that this is dealt with well by the school. They understand the potential dangers associated with the use of the internet. Discussions with parents and carers confirm their views as accurate.
- The school has taken action to improve attendance. This has resulted in levels of attendance which are now above the national averages. The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- School leaders have a clear vision of what they want to achieve, but their self-evaluation is not accurate, and achievement is not rising quickly enough and is not yet good.
- Leaders are not ensuring that appropriate action is taken quickly enough to ensure pupils make rapid progress across the school. This is due to leaders not being fully aware of the national picture and how the school compares with it.
- While systems are in place to monitor the attainment and progress of pupils, these are not used effectively by leaders to monitor the progress of all groups of pupils. As a result, pupils do not always make rapid progress in their learning.
- The role of middle leaders is developing but their impact on raising achievement is not yet evident.
- The school monitors the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders know what teachers need to do to improve their teaching. Support is provided where teaching is weak. However, improvements are not quick enough to ensure pupils make good progress from their starting points and attain well.
- The headteacher has introduced many strategies to secure improvements. Since taking up post, he has taken action to deal with weak teaching and is developing leadership across the school. He is being supported by leaders of an outstanding school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, information of what children can do is used well to provide the right support. Children make good progress from their starting points and achieve outcomes which are at expected levels for their age.
- The school works in partnership with other schools locally to look at pupils' work. Teachers now have a better understanding of how to identify the next steps for pupils in their work.
- In 2013, through the school's focus on phonics, pupils made expected progress in the phonics

screen check in Year 1 and a high proportion of pupils made expected progress in reading at Key Stage 1. The gap between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and all pupils is beginning to close and some pupils attained Level 6 for the first time. For these reasons, the school is demonstrating its capacity to improve.

- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to gain experience of the wider world. For example, a poet and writer visited the school and worked with pupils, providing them with interesting topics to enhance their writing skills. The experience of pupils is deepened by trips to China and France and through links with other schools in the UK. After-school clubs provide a wide range of activities for pupils to enjoy. Senior leaders work hard to ensure all pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination.
  - Children learn about other cultures through the multicultural community within the school and curriculum events such as 'Black History' week. Assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to understand right from wrong and this greatly contributes towards pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is not yet well developed as little time is given to allow pupils to reflect on things that arise in lessons or during assembly.
  - Pupils take part in many sporting activities and competitions throughout the school year. These raise their awareness of why it is important to keep healthy. The school plan details how it will spend the sports fund to further improve sport across the school and how it intends to check if it has been successful.
  - There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. However, when inspectors spoke with parents and carers they were, on the whole, very positive about their experiences with the school and liked the visible presence of the headteacher on the playground at the start and end of the school day. A few expressed concerns about their children not receiving homework and one letter concerning this issue was handed to inspectors.
  - The school receives appropriate support from the local authority.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors want the school to improve and are providing support through visits and by meeting with school leaders to discuss the work of the school. They work well with pupils, staff, and parents and carers. Governors check the performance of the headteacher but have not checked the performance of teachers and if they are meeting their targets. They are prepared to make difficult decisions about underperformance and support the headteacher well to take relevant action. Governors are familiar with information on pupils' progress. However, they have not been rigorous enough when comparing how well pupils in the school are doing when compared to schools nationally or whether the quality of teaching is good enough to ensure pupils make rapid progress in their learning. They are kept informed through the headteacher's reports. However, they do not check carefully enough that the report they receive provides enough detailed information about the progress of year groups except for pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding.
    - Members of the governing body reflect the school community and have a wide range of skills. They undertake training to further develop their skills, for example attending training on understanding data. Governors ensure the school finances are effectively managed, including the spending of the pupil premium and sports funding. They ensure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103044
<b>Local authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	425555

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	631
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rajinder Dadial
<b>Headteacher</b>	Terrence Nairne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8556 0103
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