

Seven Sisters Primary School

South Grove, Tottenham, London, N15 5QE

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The quality of teaching is too variable and, as a result, the progress made by some groups of pupils is not rapid enough.
- Too few pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work because activities in lessons do not always allow them to be stretched early on, so time and opportunities are missed.
- Teachers' marking does not always offer sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, and pupils are often not given time to make the improvements when these are suggested.
- The involvement of pupils in checking their own and each other's work, to appreciate how well they are doing, is not yet firmly established
- The new leadership team has not yet had sufficient time to have a full impact on improving standards.

The school has the following strengths:

- Achievement is improving across all year groups. Pupils who receive pupil premium funding make good progress.
- The quality of teaching has improved and more lessons are now consistently good.
- Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy learning and feel safe in this positive environment and are keen to do well.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved over the last year, and attendance is now close to the national average.
- The school's support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving well and it includes swift help for new joiners with limited English language skills.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have raised the expectations of staff and pupils and their vision for improving achievement, teaching and behaviour is supported by all staff.
- Governors are actively involved with the school and have increased their level of support and challenge to help the school to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, eight of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of short visits to observe 10 small-group sessions for pupils developing their reading skills and to observe the support for pupils at risk of falling behind and those in need of extra language support.
- Inspectors attended two school assemblies and visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in lessons and met with a group of school councillors. They spoke with three school governors and a representative of the local authority. They also spoke to school staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors noted the four responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to parents and carers who were bringing their children to school.
- The inspection team reviewed the responses to 15 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning documents, checks carried out by leaders on the school's effectiveness, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the school's Primary Sports Action plan.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ann Short	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools and has South Grove Children's Centre on its site, which did not form part of this inspection. The majority of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly Turkish, Caribbean and Black African, and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for looked after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed forces, is well above average.
- The breakfast club on site is managed by the governing body.
- 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?

- Improve the achievement of pupils by increasing the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' questioning so that in the majority of lessons it is as good as in the very best, where suitably pitched questions are directed specifically to named pupils, ensuring their full participation and understanding
 - making sure that pupils know how to respond to teachers' marking and feedback and are regularly given sufficient time to do this, so that they clearly know how to improve their work and reach their learning targets
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to review their own and each other's work to appreciate how well they are doing across a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below the levels typically seen for their age, and make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes, they leave with below national average levels in Year 6. Rates of progress are inconsistent as they move through the school. This is largely due to a legacy of weak teaching in the past. Achievement is not yet good because the high proportion of new teachers need more time to have a full impact on achievement.
- Progress in lessons sometimes slows because teachers do not always direct appropriate questions to pupils, to check that they understand the work and make the necessary adjustments in response.
- By the end of Year 2, standards have begun to rise in reading, writing and mathematics; however, all are still below national levels. Teaching in phonics (the sounds letters make) has improved and is now consistently good enough to raise standards and promote good progress in reading from an early age.
- Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are improving and school information and current work inspected indicate that pupils are on track to improve further in both key stages in 2014, moving closer to national averages.
- The majority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making progress similar to their peers in the school, with some making good progress and others less so.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that of other groups in the school as a result of the good support they receive.
- In the best lessons, pupils know their targets and make good use of their teacher's advice and comments to help themselves to improve further. This is not the case in the majority of lessons.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well. Overall, pupils eligible for the pupil premium are ahead of their peers in both English and mathematics. Writing is a particular strength, with a large majority being half a term ahead and more pupils achieving at the higher national levels. This has remained a strength of the school because the extra funding is used effectively to provide targeted support in small groups for reading, writing and mathematics run by specialist teachers.
- Sports funding has been used to develop further the role of the school's sports coach, who already plays an integral part working with pupils in the school. The profile of sport and its importance in healthy lifestyles has been raised throughout the school and a high proportion of pupils attend the vast range of activities on offer to them. The school participates in an increased number of outside fixtures and is rapidly regaining its sporting reputation among local schools.
- Homework is set regularly, throughout the school, and pupils know what is expected of them. They are happy with the amount and the level of their homework and understand how it helps them to continue to achieve their best and consolidate what they have learned.
- Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted. No pupil, regardless of background or need, is denied access to anything the school has to offer.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement overall because it is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points and reach the highest levels of which they are capable.
- Where teaching in lessons is weaker, pupils have fewer opportunities to be actively involved, and in some cases become passive learners. The most able are not challenged sufficiently.

- Where progress is hampered it is because checks on understanding do not always include all pupils and teachers questions are not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs to ensure that all pupils understand their work and next steps for learning.
- Progress is not checked consistently during lessons so tasks are not always suitably adapted, and this results in variations in pupils' understanding and overall success. Teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to check their own and each other's work so that they can learn from their mistakes and examples of good practice.
- Phonics teaching has improved and is now good and better. The phonics check results for Year 1 pupils have risen and Year 2 pupils repeating the test achieved scores above the national average. By the end of Year 2, pupils reading levels have risen and are now closer to those expected for their age
- The quality of teaching has improved as a result of leaders' actions to restructure staffing and more closely link the checks the leaders make on the quality of teaching to the progress pupils are making. Paired teaching, mentoring and coaching have all contributed to recent improvements.
- A positive climate for learning has been established throughout the school and there are mutually caring, respectful relationships between staff and the pupils. This contributes to the pupils' positive attitudes to learning which are evident even when the work is not always matched well to their abilities.
- Teaching assistants are generally both skilful and supportive. They effectively promote learning in lessons and lead additional support for individuals and small groups of pupils outside the classroom. This is contributing to the improvement in pupils' achievement.
- Marking is more consistent across the school and pupils are encouraged to write their own response to show how well they understand the teachers' comments. Nevertheless, teachers do not always give detailed enough comments or check that pupils' work improves as a result.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. Parents, carers, staff and the pupils themselves say that this has improved since the 'new' headteacher joined the school. When work fails to challenge or engage them sufficiently, pupils retain their positive attitudes and try hard to complete it.
- The headteacher and her team have successfully established high expectations of behaviour and continue to discourage unauthorised absences. Staff management of pupils' behaviour is consistently good. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils do not manage their own behaviour to a high enough standard without the need for adults' help.
- Pupils from different year groups act as school councillors, peer mentors and playground buddies and are very proud of their roles in the school. They say that they enjoy listening to the views of others and being involved in making decisions about the running of their school.
- Pupils are polite, get on well with each other and show respect and kindness to others regardless of age, race or disability. They enjoy all aspects of school life and speak about the school community with a sense of personal pride. This is a result of the school's good promotion of social skills and creation of roles to enhance pupils' responsibilities.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and value the care they receive from the staff. They understand that some situations are potentially unsafe and have good strategies to keep themselves safe. Pupils' knowledge of safety outside school has been heightened through visits and several were talking about different types of fire prevention after a visit from fire safety officers.
- Incidents of bullying and disruptive behaviour are rare. When they do occur, staff deal with them effectively. In a discussion with pupils during the inspection, one pupil, typical of others, commented, 'We know that some people find it hard to control their tempers, but here, teachers know how to help them and most of us get on really well.'

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and school leaders have successfully changed the climate in school to one where pupils are keen to succeed. Changes to the staffing structure have enabled leadership roles to be strengthened. Staff are positive and praising of the leadership team's work.
- The school reviews all aspects of its work regularly and has developed good systems to track and monitor pupils' progress. Leaders act quickly to address any gaps and make sure that the pace of progress is not hampered. Plans to raise standards are now linked directly to the checking of teaching and learning and pupils' progress.
- Leaders make sure that the way they check on teachers' performance links directly to whole-school priorities, the impact on pupils' progress and, in turn, to staff salary progression. This has raised the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because they have not secured enough teaching that is consistently good in order to drive up standards of achievement across the school.
- Pupils are taught a broad and interesting range of subjects and topics and they value the extra trips and special events which provide inspiring and memorable experiences. These help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Art and music specialists visit the school and provide expert tuition, encouraging the choir and involvement in the annual concert. Pupil premium funding enables those who are eligible to participate in a wide range of activities and also provides free access for them. This has helped pupils to feel more settled and fully included in the life of the school and has secured their improved progress.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning over time and has helped to raise the quality of the provision, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors work well in close partnership with school leaders and the local authority. They have a thorough understanding of information on pupils' progress and use it to make comparisons with other schools. Governors are committed to enhancing and refreshing their own skills through additional training and use this to improve aspects of the school. They make regular visits to check on key areas of the school's work, such as achievement, the quality of teaching and leadership and management. This helps them to have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and what still needs to improve. Governors ensure that the pupil premium and sports funding are managed well. The sports funding has been used to provide training for staff to enable sports teams to participate in more fixtures with other schools. Governors see that targets to improve the performance of staff are checked carefully and that teachers' pay is linked to how well pupils are doing. Governors also ensure that the breakfast club is well run and that safeguarding meets requirements.

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	132253
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	425452

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Zena Brabazon
Headteacher	Sharon Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 October 2012
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