

Seven Mills Primary School

Malabar Street, London, E14 8LY

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, governors and staff have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching so that it is good. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic to learn. They are interested by the work teachers give them and are motivated to listen carefully and concentrate.
- Older pupils are keen readers. Teachers provide reading activities and books to read that encourage them to work hard.
- Well-trained and dedicated additional staff work closely with the teachers and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are well mannered and friendly. Behaviour has improved and is good. The school staff consistently model caring attitudes and positive relationships.
- Pupils develop a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe because the school places a strong emphasis on helping pupils understand what to do to keep safe from harm.
- Governors are well informed and take their roles seriously. They work closely with senior leaders and provide an effective combination of support and challenge, and check carefully how well pupils are achieving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Occasionally, the most able pupils are set work that is too easy for them.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers do not always make sure that children build up their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. They visited 22 teaching sessions including four joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading. They looked at work in pupils’ books and the school’s information showing pupils’ progress.
- They looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school action plans, the self-evaluation report, records of the monitoring of lessons and information relating to teachers’ performance management and professional development. The school website, and records relating to safeguarding, were also checked.
- The inspection took account of 25 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View). Inspectors also considered 38 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Olson Davis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Seven Mills Primary is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. A larger proportion than the national average speaks English as an additional language. Few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is above the national average. A below average proportion is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of service families) is well above the national average. There are currently no looked after children or children of service families at the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class and one full-time Nursery class.
- There have been a number of recent staff changes.
- The school organises and manages a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are always high in lessons.
- Ensure children in the Early Years Foundation Stage build up their knowledge of letters and sounds swiftly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is good. Rates of progress have accelerated so that pupils make good progress to reach average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This represents good progress from starting points that are generally lower than those expected. Previously low attainment at the end of Year 2 has risen steadily and pupils reached national average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in last summer's teacher assessments.
- The proportions of pupils attaining particularly highly in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to the national average. Achievement is good and not outstanding because the most able pupils are not always challenged in their learning to attain the highest levels in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. They benefit from support and guidance from teachers and additional adults in lessons and outside the classroom to help them build up their skills and make good gains in their learning.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is good. The school uses the additional funding for a wide range of additional sessions to boost the skills of pupils known to be eligible and to help them to catch up. This is effectively closing the gap between eligible pupils and others.
- In last summer's national tests, provisional results show pupils eligible for the pupil premium did as well as their peers in writing and mathematics and were just over a term ahead of the others in reading, which is better than that found nationally. The school's information on the progress of eligible pupils currently at the school shows that they make similar good progress to the others.
- Pupils at the early stages of learning English are helped to develop their spoken English quickly through support from specialist staff. The careful use of images in lessons helps pupils speaking English as an additional language to understand new words quickly and develop their knowledge of English vocabulary so that they achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make good progress from their starting points to reach average attainment in many areas of learning but their progress in phonics and early reading skills is not as brisk.
- The additional sports funding is being used to improve participation in sports and foster positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy through a wide variety of sporting clubs that the school organises including fencing, cricket and Taekwondo.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers set work that engages pupils' interest. Pupils in Year 6 were particularly proud of an assembly they organised during which they presented to the whole school the work they had been doing on the Second World War.
- Pupils enjoy their learning when teachers plan activities that involve them actively. For example, in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were engrossed in their learning when they were playing a game together that helped them to practise their multiplication tables.
- Pupils' work is well presented and their writing is neat because teachers from Nursery to Year 6 follow a consistent approach to helping pupils develop fluent handwriting. Children in the Nursery class were observed carefully practising writing their name using joined-up letters.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not make as swift progress in reading because teaching does not make sure they learn and practise new letters and sounds quickly.
- Recently introduced sessions in English and mathematics for the most able pupils in Year 6 help them to do suitably difficult tasks. The most able pupils in other classes are not always given

activities that are difficult enough to enable them to move up quickly to higher levels in their work.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers identify what pupils do well and recommend what they might do next in order to improve further. Older pupils use success criteria that the teachers set to judge one another's work and suggest how to make it better. This helps them to edit and improve the quality of their own work.
- The contribution additional adults make to pupils' learning is carefully planned and organised. They support individual pupils as well as teaching reading, writing and mathematics to selected groups. They play a strong part in the good learning and progress pupils make through the school, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Staff consistently model respect and courtesy, promoting good relationships. Pupils' social skills are fostered well when teachers set them to work together. Pupils were often observed collaborating successfully and listening carefully to one another's ideas. Older pupils enjoy discussing books they have read and recommend to one another books they have particularly enjoyed.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the outings and visits that the school organises, including a residential trip to France for pupils in Year 6.
- The breakfast club is popular and well attended. It provides a safe and sociable start to the school day. Staff make sure pupils have a healthy breakfast and a good variety of activities to choose from.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they are keen to learn. They listen attentively to the adults in lessons, settle quickly and are eager to get on with their work. This helps to make sure that time is not wasted when pupils move from one activity to another.
- An example of this was seen in an English lesson when pupils got on with reading an article about the weather as soon as the teacher displayed it on the interactive whiteboard. They were quickly ready to answer questions about what they had read. Sometimes when work is not tailored as well to pupils' interests, their attention wanders, but rarely results in disruption to learning.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is orderly and calm. Pupils occasionally need to be reminded of the behaviour that is expected at break time.
- Children in Nursery and Reception classes also conduct themselves well. They take turns, share resources readily and follow well-established routines sensibly.
- Pupils are sure that bullying of any form is rare and dealt with effectively by the school as the school's records show. They are confident that any member of staff will help them should any problems occur.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They demonstrate caring attitudes to other pupils. For example, children in Reception praised one another when they answered the teacher's questions correctly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe from harm. Discussions in assembly, advice on how to keep safe when using computers and information technology as well as learning how to cross the road, ride bicycles safely and travel on public transport all help pupils develop a good awareness of risks.
- Attendance rates have improved steadily because the school makes the importance of attending school every day very clear to the whole school community.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has worked with determination to make sure that the improvements noted at the time of the previous inspection have been sustained. Strong teamwork between senior

leaders, governors and teaching staff together with a shared ambition to raise pupils' achievement have helped the school to drive improvements to teaching quality and the curriculum. As a result, the school provides a good standard of education and demonstrates capacity to improve.

- Through accurate self-evaluation, the most important priorities for development have been identified. Checks on teaching, and additional coaching and support for staff have been effective in tackling issues in teaching quality. Staff have received well-selected training to ensure consistency of approach in key aspects of the school's work, which has improved pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Subject leaders have brought improvements to the curriculum, such as the introduction of whole-school topic themes and the use of well-selected books to inspire high-quality written work. These are effective in capturing pupils' interest and motivating them to work hard.
- Leaders and managers have not made sure that the curriculum for teaching phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage is as consistently well planned to move children on quickly in building up their knowledge of letters and the sounds.
- Activities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well organised to make sure these aspects of pupils' development are fostered strongly. The school consistently promotes caring attitudes across the school community. Together with developing pupils' understanding of differences, the school successfully promotes equality and tackles discrimination.
- Leaders and governors work hard to involve parents and carers and to help them to support their children's learning at home. The school organises workshops and courses, including English language classes, sewing and keep-fit, in addition to sessions on how reading and mathematics are taught at the school.
- Through well-established business links the school receives generous funding to provide reading books as well as volunteers who regularly listen to pupils reading aloud.
- The local authority has worked effectively with the school giving support in checking teaching quality and securing lasting improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes a keen interest in all the school's work. Governors carefully examine the information the school provides on pupils' achievement to see how it compares with other schools nationally. They know the quality of teaching, and are well informed about how any underperformance has been addressed. Through performance management they make sure there is a strong link between teaching quality, pupils' learning and salary.

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	100931
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	430839

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Smith
Headteacher	Mike Hirst
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 May 2012
Telephone number	020 7987 2350
Fax number	020 7538 3118
Email address	admin@sevenmills.towerhamlets.sch.uk

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