

Highlands Primary School

Highlands Gardens, Ilford, London, IG1 3LE

Inspection dates 16–17 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.

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has raised the profile of teaching and learning since the last inspection so that pupils' achievement is now good.
- Middle leaders rigorously plan and deliver lessons that involve pupils in their progress of learning and which develop their confidence.
- Teaching is good and encourages pupils to work by themselves and with others to deepen their knowledge.
- Pupils make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills with some that make outstanding progress, because teachers and their assistants work well together to organise fun and engaging activities.
- Pupils from different groups, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make good progress because their experiences are positive.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and say that they enjoy coming to school.
- Parents and carers speak highly of the school and are pleased with the way the school keeps their children safe and improves their learning.
- Governors ensure resources are allocated efficiently so that pupil premium funding has a positive impact on the achievement of the eligible pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching over time ensures pupils make good rather than outstanding progress overall.
- Occasionally, the most able are not sufficiently challenged in their class work and through teachers' comments in the marking of their books.
- Children in Early Years and Foundation Stage are not always challenged to achieve their full potential in developing their language, literacy and communication skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, 13 of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made 16 shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and attended assemblies.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments from parent surveys carried out by the school. Members of the inspection team also spoke to parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including school improvement plans, data on pupils’ current progress, pupils’ written work, the governing body minutes and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janev Mehmet, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephan Fletcher

Additional Inspector

Gill Walley

Additional Inspector

Jane Richmond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below the national average. There are currently no pupils from service families in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above the national average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of them speak English as an additional language.
- 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?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide all children in the Early Years and Foundation Stage with more challenge when teaching language, literacy and communication skills
 - ensuring that teachers consistently challenge all pupils, especially the most able, through suitably demanding activities and comments made in the marking of their books.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

Good

- Most pupils across the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and some are making outstanding progress. However, achievement overall is not yet outstanding because some groups of higher attaining pupils do not always achieve their full potential.
- Children join the school with skills and knowledge that are below the levels expected for their age. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, their attainment is at the expected level for their age, indicating that they have made good progress.
- Children in the early years setting learn to recognise their letters and sounds because teachers encourage the use of play and imagination to develop and practise speaking. However, the teaching of language, literacy and communication skills does not always ensure that they achieve their full potential, because there are not always enough activities that can stretch the more able learners. Consequently, the phonics (the sounds that letters make) screening check at the end of Year 1 shows that pupils' reading skills are below the national average.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils achieve expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. By end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain above-average standards in these subjects. Consequently, achievement is good.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because specialist teachers and their assistants design activities for addressing their individual needs.
- The most able pupils make good progress with some that make outstanding progress because they are generally provided with opportunities to excel. However, in some classes, teachers do not always provide activities or comments in their marking which make demands on them and can push pupils onto the next stage.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills develop extremely well because they enjoy reading and are very enthusiastic about taking part in weekly activities in the library. Celebration of pupils' literacy and numeracy achievement in lessons and assemblies builds pupils' confidence and enthusiasm to learn more. For example, the creative story-writing skills of a pupil in Year 2 were shared in assembly. Everyone listened attentively to what she had written and the suspense she had created was praised and commended.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding attain standards that are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2, in both mathematics and English and close to those of their peers. Within school, the progress made by these pupils is good and improving year on year, and the gap between those eligible and their peers is small and closing.

The quality of teaching

Good

- The quality of teaching is good because teachers provide engaging activities that encourage pupils to think and discuss their learning. Teachers empower pupils to make choices and work by themselves and in teams.
- Vibrant corridors with pupils' photographs and classrooms with thought-provoking displays contribute to a very stimulating atmosphere for learning across the whole school. 'Working walls' support pupils in their skills in checking their work. For example, some pupils in Year 5 were writing riddles about a chosen animal using similes. Pupils who were 'simile leads' were able to guide their team to refer to strategies that had been shared previously.
- The school's focus on developing pupils' understanding of their 'rights and responsibilities' is a fundamental driver for the good progress that takes place in the classroom. Activities are planned with a theme based on particular 'rights and responsibilities', and topics develop and deepen pupils' knowledge and attitudes to their learning. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils were reading a story about a boy and were asked to make guesses about aspects of the

boy's life. Teachers were linking this to the idea that 'Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously', which is the 12th Article in the United Nations Conventions' Rights for the Child.

- Pupils usually learn and develop their skills rapidly because teachers challenge them through motivating tasks. In some lessons however, a few pupils are less engaged for short periods of time when the teacher is busy with other pupils.
- Pupils sometimes check each other's work and have opportunities to reflect on their learning. Teachers check pupils' books consistently and provide mostly appropriate feedback and guidance on how to improve. However, not all teachers consistently provide further challenge to enable pupils, especially the most able, to make even better progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils behave well and maturely in lessons and around the school. They attend school regularly and are polite to each other and the adults around them. They celebrate each other's successes and play well together.
- Attitudes to learning are positive in all areas of the school. Pupils enjoy debating and can empathise well with others. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils debated the statement, 'Does money bring happiness?' They listened to each other and respected differing views.
- Some pupils, particularly the most able, are sometimes less willing to carry on working by themselves if their teacher is focused on another group.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are proactive in ensuring that their school is a friendly, welcoming place where everyone's rights are respected. Monitors, buddies and 'champions' support younger pupils at playtime, in the lunch hall and in lessons. Bullying is minimal and pupils feel confident in speaking to staff about what they feel is not acceptable behaviour.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their lives and take part in projects within school and locally. They carry out video conferencing with other schools and have a good understanding of careers and business. For example, pupils enjoyed the challenge of writing a project plan and putting a business initiative together.
- Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and how it keeps their children safe and happy. They are encouraged to work closely with the school to ensure their children's learning is developed. An example of this is when pupils' books go home with a task for parents and carers to feed back on their children's work, the topics and the marking that is evident their books. Views from parents and carers are built into plans for further improvement.

The leadership and management

Good

- The inspirational work of the headteacher has developed the leadership team to work collaboratively, with a deepened focus on high-quality learning for both staff and pupils. The progress made by the school since its last inspection is as a direct result of school leaders at all levels providing excellent role models for all staff. There are positive attitudes towards developing an ethos where thinking and risk taking is seen as part of exciting learning.
- Middle leaders are extremely effective in leading their teams and securing the best opportunities for all pupils. They monitor and develop team members consistently well, encouraging reflection and good practice in order to develop their skills in teaching and in leading learning.
- The meticulous analysis of how well pupils are doing in their subjects provides clear, focused next steps in order to improve areas that need to be worked on. Staff use data well to inform their teaching, which enables most groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and pupils who speak English as an

additional language, to achieve well.

- Teaching and achievement are not yet outstanding overall because some of the most able pupils do not always reach their full potential. However, leaders are very aware of this issue and can demonstrate that improvement is developing at a rapid rate.
- The pupil premium is allocated effectively to focus on intensive interventions for pupils in English and mathematics. The funding ensures that teachers' expertise is developed across the school. Funding is also used to provide nurturing, enrichment and personalised support for pupils at different levels of development.
- The curriculum is well organised by all teachers. Pupils enjoy and achieve in learning opportunities that are creative and develop academic, artistic and sports skills. Pupils deepen their knowledge through activities that develop teamwork, imagination and an understanding of the world. For example, the cross-curricular learning in the 'Carnival project', held in a local park, empowers all pupils to understand local, national and international contexts.
- Artistic talent is a strength. Discrete and integrated art lessons support progress across the curriculum which strengthens pupils' understanding of space, measure, history and artistic culture.
- Learning about other cultures, religions and countries is extremely well integrated into the school's curriculum. The school successfully ensures that all elements of spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning are embedded across the curriculum. Pupils choose to learn a language from French, Urdu or Bengali.
- The school makes good use of the additional sports funding by promoting physical education and pupils' health and well-being through clubs, competitions and a thorough input of sports skills. They provide pupils with sports like boccia (a precision ball sport, related to bowls), swimming, gymnastics and cricket. The girls' cricket team has been successful in national games. There is an emphasis on pupils celebrating the Paralympics and being aware of sports that require different skills. For example, pupils practise playing some sports while being blindfolded to enable them to empathise with blind sportsmen/women.
- All groups of pupils achieve well and all staff are supported to perform at their best. Staff model aspiration to pupils in assemblies and conversations and pupils develop skills of empathy, respect and consideration. Consequently, the school is inclusive and enables all staff and pupils to excel because it maintains high expectations for equal opportunities.
- Safeguarding practices meet the statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides appropriate challenge and support for the school. It has been a 'critical friend' in moving the school on since its last inspection, taking part in reviews and lesson observations.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the headteacher to ensure that senior and middle leaders improve teaching and achievement. Governors hold the school to account by working closely with the headteacher, and meeting with senior leaders regularly. They are also linked to particular areas of the school and visit their link person regularly to keep up to date with developments. Governors take part in regular training either at school or on specific courses held by the local authority, and have a good understanding of the school's data and how they are being used to maximise the impact of teaching. They ensure that teachers are suitably rewarded for good performance related to the quality of their teaching and pupils' achievement. Pupil premium funding is allocated in the best interests of the pupils concerned. Consequently, these pupils make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics skills and attain higher levels than their peers nationally.

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	131013
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	430834

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	704
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Runeckles
Headteacher	Kulvarn Atwal
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 June 2012
Telephone number	020 8554 0044
Fax number	020 8518 2322
Email address	Head.Highlands@redbridge.gov.uk

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