

Dalmain Primary School

Grove Close, Brockley Rise, Lewisham, SE23 1AS

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2014

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage in developing the skills that enable them to become successful learners.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils' achievement is good, particularly in writing, where standards are markedly above the national average for their age.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve well from their individual starting points. Pupils make particularly good progress in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers effectively engage pupils in their learning and are especially skilled in using questioning to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, as shown by their high attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. There is a positive climate for learning and pupils eagerly apply themselves to their work. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the tailored support delivered by other adults in the classroom.
- The innovative leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by her senior leaders, has ensured the quality of teaching has been sustained, and all staff are committed to raising standards.
- Governors have a clear understanding of how the school is performing and are fully involved in improving its performance. They are equally effective in both supporting leaders and holding them to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' written comments do not consistently guide pupils on how they can improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities in Key Stage 2 to apply their numeracy skills in solving real-life problems.
- Teachers do not always adjust tasks so that pupils of average ability are consistently challenged to achieve the higher levels in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, of which nine were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, short visits were made to lessons and school assemblies were observed. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their books.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked with them about their work. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Documentation covering safeguarding, the management of performance of staff, behaviour and safety, attendance and checks on pupils' attainment and progress were reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 109 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 50 questionnaires from staff. An inspector also talked to parents and carers informally during the inspection.

Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Robert Eyre-Brook	Additional inspector
John Hicks	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dalmain Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high compared to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium funding, which is the extra government support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and those from service families, is above average. In this school it relates to pupils entitled to free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action is high. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average when compared to national figures.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to improve further the achievement of all pupils by:
 - teachers consistently providing written guidance for pupils on how they can improve their work and move to the next level in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to apply their numeracy skills to solve real-life problems
 - regularly adjusting tasks for pupils of average ability, so they are consistently challenged to achieve the higher levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid progress. The large majority of children enter the Nursery or join the Reception class with communication and language skills below those expected for their age. Because of the strong focus on developing children's early literacy skills through a range of activities, children enter Year 1 well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is good. In the Year 1 phonics screening check (linking letters and sounds) pupils have achieved above the national average for the last two years. By the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average, especially in writing.
- The vast majority of pupils reach national expectations by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making more than the expected progress for their age in national tests in reading and writing is high.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers and additional adults are effective in identifying their needs and use a range of approaches, for example developing their reading skills, so they can become as successful in their learning as their peers.
- The achievement of pupils of different ethnic groups or those who speak English as an additional language compares well with other pupils'. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils attain the expected standards, especially in mathematics and writing.
- More-able pupils achieve well and are successful. They attain and make progress as well as similar pupils nationally.
- School evidence shows that the attainment gap of pupils supported through the pupil premium is narrowing across the school. The gap in their attainment in 2013 showed they were behind their peers by 15 months in mathematics and 10 months in English, although they were ahead of similar pupils nationally in reading and writing.
- Achievement in mathematics is not consistently strong. The large majority of pupils achieve the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. However, the proportion of pupils making more progress than expected is smaller. Pupils do not have enough opportunities in Key Stage 2 to apply their numeracy skills in solving real-life problems. The school has identified this as a priority for improvement.

The quality of teaching is good

- The headteacher has ensured the quality of teaching over time has remained consistently good, with some outstanding practice. Consequently, most pupils make good progress across all year groups.
- Children in the Nursery develop their confidence in using basic literacy skills. For example, in one session children were exploring how to use ingredients for cooking, and adults talked effectively with the children to enhance their experience by extending their use of language.
- In Reception, adults are skilled at using children's ideas to develop their activities. Within one session children were exploring a range of resources, including shapes, salt and water, and adults drew on this learning to develop their understanding through writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They read a wide range of texts, including works by authors such as Roald Dahl and Anthony Horowitz. Teachers use drama effectively to help develop pupils' understanding of characters in stories, for example, through writing from the point of view of the two aunts in *James and the Giant Peach*.
- Teachers are especially adept in asking questions to deepen pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson on fractions, the teacher effectively used extended questioning to ensure pupils reflected on their learning and accurately used subject language to explain their reasoning. Consequently the pace of learning was sustained at a high level throughout.

- Teachers ensure there is a clear focus on how pupils can become successful in their learning. For instance, in one Year 2 English lesson, pupils were writing instructions for a game and how to correctly sequence tasks. Because of the timely checks by the teacher on what was required, pupils became increasingly accurate in their use of adverbs.
- Additional adults make a significant contribution in supporting pupils who have particular learning needs. This occurs both within lessons and in extra booster groups. These pupils remain engaged in their learning and enjoy being challenged to become as successful as other pupils.
- In examples of excellent practice in their marking of pupils' work, teachers' written comments recognise success and provide guidance for pupils on how they can improve their work and move to the next level in their learning. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school.
- Planning by teachers ensures activities are appropriately tailored to build on pupils' prior understanding. Where learning is less effective, teachers do not always adjust tasks during lessons so that pupils of average ability are consistently challenged to achieve the higher levels in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary so that their behaviour is outstanding. Children in the Nursery listen well and use the open space in a purposeful way. In Reception, children are eager to learn and enjoy talking with each other. Older pupils are fluent in expressing their ideas and reflecting on their learning. They collaborate well in their work and remain engaged in tasks because they want to be successful.
- The atmosphere in the dining room is calm and movement around the school is orderly. Pupils enjoy assemblies and value the opportunities to use their musical skills, for example, in the school's successful brass band. They are active in raising funds for charities through running stalls in the school fair and perform in productions such as *Bugsy Malone*.
- Pupils talk about the rich and memorable experiences they have outside of lessons, for example, school councillors visiting the Houses of Parliament and sessions involving visits by popular authors. They participate in philosophy activities such as discussing a geometric problem on the height of a pyramid and learning in the wildlife garden and allotment. Pupils appreciate taking on responsibilities such as acting as mentors for younger children and checking the school's eco status.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe wherever they are in the school and that adults always act if they have any concerns. They say that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is not an issue. Pupils have a keen understanding of how to keep themselves safe using the internet. They say they get on well together, that discrimination is not tolerated and that name-calling is rare.
- Attendance over time is high. Pupils and younger children all agree that their teachers make learning 'fun' and they enjoy coming to school.
- Parents and carers are positive about their child's experience, as seen in the online questionnaire, Parent View.

The leadership and management are good

- The commitment and drive of the headteacher and her innovative approach to developing teaching have ensured the quality of pupils' learning experience is rich and that pupils make good progress throughout the school. The deputy and assistant headteachers are effective senior leaders, especially in developing the skills of all staff and checking the progress of pupils.
- Subject leaders have clarity of purpose and ensure their actions are effective and reflect school improvement priorities. The leaders of literacy and numeracy make regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and can demonstrate the actions they have taken are bringing about further improvements in pupils' outcomes.

- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning, and bespoke professional development is linked closely to their findings. Teachers, including newly qualified and graduate staff, value the support they receive in developing their classroom practice. The impact of teaching on pupils' progress informs career and pay progression.
- Equality of opportunity is ensured because of the coherent provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This includes both additional catch-up sessions to develop pupils' reading skills and tailored support within lessons.
- The local authority regards the school as one that can secure improvements without the need of its support. The headteacher is highly regarded for her role in helping other schools.
- Parents and carers are involved in their child's education. They appreciate the efforts the school makes to develop the individual talents of children and parents attend sessions that help them support their child's learning.
- Sport is highly valued within the school. Pupils participate in a range of activities including hockey, basketball, cricket and gymnastics, and they benefit from additional swimming sessions. Sporting professionals develop the capacity of staff to enhance the provision of physical education.
- The subjects taught are planned to engage pupils effectively and include modern foreign languages. Use of new technology, such as electronic tablets helps enhance pupils' literacy skills and drama is used to develop pupils' writing skills. Art is used effectively to extend their creative imagination. The school provides a range of after-school clubs, including Latin and chess.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong. Pupils are reflective and have a developed understanding of fairness and are inclusive in all they do. Music features strongly across the school. There are innovative theatre projects in collaboration with Punchdrunk and educational visits to the English National Ballet and National Theatre. Pupils are inspired by the ideas of Laban and enjoy participating in dance performances at public events.
- Safeguarding procedures are securely in place and risk assessments cover all aspects of school activities, including educational visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are actively involved across all aspects of school life and have ensured this is an inclusive school in which discrimination is not tolerated. Parent governors share in the highly regarded 'Friends of Dalmain' group, which reflects the strong community links the school has developed. Governors draw on the breadth of their expertise and additional training they have undertaken to support leaders, and provide appropriate challenge to the headteacher on key areas for the school's development. Governors are well informed about the progress pupils make across the school and ensure that the quality of teaching is linked to teachers' promotion and pay progression. The school budget is managed very effectively. Governors have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium funding has been allocated, for example, in providing additional targeted support, and they check its impact on pupils' progress. They have overseen the designation of the primary sports funding so that this develops the skills of teachers to enhance the provision for physical education.

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	100677
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	431302

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Lindsay
Headteacher	Elizabeth Booth
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2009
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