

Carlton Vale Infant School

Malvern Place, Kilburn, London, NW6 5PX

Inspection dates

28–29 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, well supported by highly committed senior and middle leaders, governors and staff, is working effectively to raise standards.
- Pupils achieve well from low starting points to reach average standards at the end of Key Stage 1.
- High quality teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables many children to reach a good level of development by the time they leave Reception.
- Support staff, who work with pupils in need of extra help, make a strong contribution to pupils' successful learning.
- The school encourages pupils and their families to learn together, which supports pupils' rising attainment.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. All pupils behave in a respectful way to each other and other adults, both in class and around school.
- Provision for the development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate the diversity of different cultures and faiths, and time is made for reflection. There are many opportunities for children to experience the theatre and the creative arts.
- Information and communication technology resources underpin many areas of learning, with notable impact on boys' achievement.
- The governing body effectively holds the school to account for its performance and the management of its finances.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Some children do not have secure reading skills and lack the confidence to read across a wide range of subjects.
- In some lessons, the tasks teachers set do not accelerate pupils' progress because children are not clear about what they are meant to learn from the task or how each activity links to the theme of the lesson.
- Teachers do not always explain to children how they can improve their work and do not give them enough time to make the necessary improvements.
- Pupils, especially the most able, are not always given more demanding work when they are ready for the next challenge.
- Attendance, although improving, is still below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, four of which were joint observations carried out with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also carried out a series of short visits to other lessons across the school, and listened to children read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority by phone.
- Inspectors took account of 35 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, as well as the views of parents they met. Inspectors also considered 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including national test results and the school's own information about pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies and records and documents relating to performance management.

Inspection team

Lesley Leak, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized infant school.
- A significant number of pupils join and leave the school part way through their primary education.
- The proportion of children who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces, is exceptionally high.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is exceptionally high. A large number of ethnic groups are represented.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well above the national average; almost half of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress by:
 - developing pupils' confidence with reading, especially those who join the school late or who are lower attainers, so that they achieve well in all curriculum areas
 - always making explicit the links between what children need to learn and the themed activities
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are routinely given work which extends their skills further as soon as they are ready for the next challenge
 - making sure that all pupils are given guidance about how to improve their work and opportunities to revisit it and make it better.
- Further improve attendance so that it becomes closer to the national average.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils provide the foundation for good learning and progress throughout the school.
- Children enter Nursery with skills which are below those expected for their age. The nurturing environment helps them to settle in very quickly. High quality teaching ensures that children make good progress to reach expected levels by the time they leave Reception.
- Over the course of Years 1 and 2, many pupils continue to make good progress in English and mathematics, securing attainment which is almost in line with that seen nationally.
- The strong focus on promoting good speaking and listening, from the start of Nursery, helps pupils, especially those who are learning English as an additional language or who join late. They become confident learners who respond readily to questions and show positive attitudes to the challenges they are set.
- The phonics screening checks (sounds and letters) for Year 1 pupils in 2013 demonstrate below average reading skills for the lower attaining pupils. They make slightly less progress in reading than other pupils throughout the school. Evidence from this inspection also shows that some children, particularly children who join the school later during key Stage 1, are slower to develop confidence with reading.
- Writing standards are improving and pupils enjoy presenting their ideas in various ways and for different audiences, in a range of subjects. Sometimes opportunities are missed for pupils, especially the most able, to extend their ideas or to revisit their work to make it better.
- Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection because pupils have been well taught to use mathematical language proficiently. They are given more problem-solving activities to extend their thinking.
- Regular checks on pupils' progress mean that anyone who needs extra help, especially with basic numeracy skills, is identified and provided with additional specific support. This has led to a particularly positive impact on pupils' achievement in mathematics. However, the approach has been less successful in accelerating the progress of the lower attaining pupils in reading.
- Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding initiative are making more progress in English and mathematics than similar pupils nationally. The available evidence confirms that any gaps in the achievement of this group of pupils are very small, when compared with those who are not eligible for the pupil premium funding. Gaps are closing rapidly where pupils have remained at the school since the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because funding for pupils supported through the pupil premium has been well spent on meeting the needs of identified pupils. For example, there is very well targeted one-to-one support and small group teaching within lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and other adults create a calm, welcoming and extremely positive environment which fosters good relationships and promotes high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff provide a stimulating and caring environment, indoors and outside. Children's learning and development are extended through high quality interactions and well-planned experiences. All adults are trained to use Makaton, a form of sign language. This means that the many pupils who are in the early stages of speaking English are well supported and learn to communicate successfully. Adults challenge children well, enabling them to make good progress in their early reading, writing, numeracy, physical and social skills.
- Most work is set at the right level for each pupil and learning moves at a fast pace when teaching is challenging and inspiring. In one particularly successful Year 2 science activity, the use of the interactive whiteboard was especially innovative as pupils watched an animation illustrating how ice is formed. They were asked what would happen to ice in different conditions.

The teacher's skilful questioning challenged the pupils to use scientific vocabulary accurately in their answers.

- Adults who support pupils in need of extra help, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making a strong contribution to improving standards, especially in writing and mathematics. This is because their work is skilfully planned, they have access to good resources and are well trained.
- Good teaching is enabling successful learning in English and mathematics. However, not enough is outstanding to maximise all pupils' achievement, especially the most able pupils and those pupils who join the school part way through Years 1 and 2.
- Sometimes, the pace of learning slows when the links between different activities are not made explicit to pupils. Consequently, they do not understand what they are meant to be learning for their assigned task. In such situations, where the work is not accurately pitched, pupils are not always clear about their next steps for success. For example, when some Year 2 pupils were building square shapes, they were not clear how this linked to the main learning point which was about right angles.
- Occasionally, activities fail to extend pupils' skills or do not allow the pupils to take on more demanding work when they are ready. This particularly affects the most able pupils who are not always given enough opportunities to practise the higher order skills which will enable them to reach the higher levels in the end of Key Stage 1 assessments.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is regular and accurate; pupils are not always shown where they need to improve or given opportunities to revisit their work to make it better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors and are almost always very kind and courteous to one another.
- There is an inclusive community feel to the school, fostered through the many opportunities for pupils and their parents to celebrate a range of cultures. At the time of the inspection, pupils were preparing for an assembly about the Chinese New Year.
- Pupils are eager to learn. They have good social skills, working well together in pairs or small groups.
- All staff are skilled and highly consistent in their implementation of the school's behaviour policy. Time is made for rewarding pupils' effort and good work in praise assemblies.
- Pupils value the many opportunities to take on important roles and responsibilities. They can become a school council member, a 'Rights Respecting' ambassador, a school dinner server or undertaking a sports leader role.
- The playground is well organised with a good range of equipment, where pupils are fully aware of potential risks. A sports coach organises sports activities during lunchtime, aided by Year 2 sports leaders, and the playground is well supervised at all times.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are fully aware about different forms of bullying; they learn about internet safety. The school gates are closely monitored and the school's premises staff undertake regular risk assessments to check that the pupils are kept safe. Pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils' attendance has not been good enough in recent years, with above average numbers of pupils persistently absent from school. Since last September the situation has improved slightly because the school's systems to rectify the situation have started to have a positive impact.

The leadership and management are good

- In the words of a member of the school's support staff, 'Good leadership helps to promote a

good ethos and environment for learning.’ All staff say they are proud to be a member of staff at this school. This reflects the headteacher’s strong leadership.

- Central to the picture of improvement is the accuracy of the school’s view of its own strengths and weaknesses. This is combined with an investment in high quality training and professional development for staff at all levels. The school’s training sessions have included: whole school approaches to teaching strategies to help bilingual learners; the incorporation of talk partners in lessons; and the promotion of mathematical vocabulary and practical problem solving in numeracy activities. These are all having a strong impact on raising attainment in English and mathematics. Teaching assistants have also benefited from additional training through accredited courses and, as a result, are well qualified to support pupils with a range of needs.
 - Middle leaders provide valuable guidance to teachers about how best to teach different subjects, which has led to positive developments in the quality of teaching. For example, they undertake key roles in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality; this has generated a unified approach to some aspects of themed lesson planning.
 - Provision for the development of pupils’ social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate the diversity of different cultures and faiths and time is made for reflection. There are many opportunities for children to experience the theatre and the creative arts. For example, having read the book, *The Gruffalo*, together, pupils enjoyed seeing the play on stage.
 - The curriculum usually meets the needs, abilities and interests of most pupils. Sometimes there are missed opportunities to make children appreciate how their learning links with themed topics. The curriculum is successfully broadened by a variety of enrichment activities, trips and music, science and sports clubs. New approaches in mathematics are assisting pupils to learn more effectively than previously.
 - The school engages well with parents. Parents from a wide range of cultural backgrounds take full advantage of the family learning support provided by the school to help their children at home. The school has provided parents with home learning packs, but is aware that more needs to be done in this area. This is especially so with making sure that parents support their children’s reading at home.
 - The school makes good use of the additional funding it receives for sport by employing a sports coach. They have broadened the range of sports available and are training staff to ensure this provision will remain ongoing. The school has recruited sports leaders in Year 2 to help with lunchtime activities, a time when many children like to be involved.
 - The school works in a positive way with the local authority and has always welcomed the useful advice and support it receives.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has made an effective contribution to the quality of education the school provides. Governors know how the school performs against national standards and pays close attention to the school’s assessment and pupil performance information.
 - Governors understand how the pupil premium funding is being used to improve the progress of those pupils entitled to it and check it is having a positive impact. They receive relevant training about their roles and are clear about what the school does well and where it could do better.
 - Governors hold the headteacher to account for the school’s performance and the management of its finances. They take account of the school’s monitoring of the quality of teaching information, ensuring that that pay progression is linked to staff’s performance.
 - Governors also encourage parents and carers to engage with the school. They make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and that equal opportunities are promoted well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
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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

Unique reference number	101498
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	431274

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Knight
Headteacher	Helen Mooney
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2009
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