

Hermitage Primary School

Vaughan Way, Tower Hamlets, London, E1W 2PT

Inspection dates 13–14 March 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.

- From very low starting points pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the time they leave in Year 6 they attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress as their specific needs are quickly identified and met.
- Teaching is good across the school. Pupils say that lessons are interesting and fun.
- Additional staff are well trained and highly experienced, and help pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils are well behaved and feel safe. They have very positive relationships with each other and school staff. They are proud of their school.
- The school is well led by the headteacher and her senior leaders. Since the previous inspection the school has made significant improvements to the quality of teaching and to pupils' achievement. Leaders check pupils' progress very rigorously.
- Governors have a comprehensive understanding of how the school is performing when compared to other schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There are still gaps between the attainment of those who are eligible for additional funding and that of their classmates, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- The attendance of all pupils is not consistently good, particularly of those who are eligible for additional funding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons and part-lessons including 11 joint observations with the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors heard pupils reading in Years 2 and 6.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and school staff. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as holding informal discussions with parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a large range of documents and policies, including the school's own data on pupils' progress and its planning and monitoring documents. They also examined records relating to behaviour, and safeguarding documents.
- The views of staff were considered by inspectors through their analysis of 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors visited the school's breakfast and after-school clubs, both of which are run by the governing body.
- Since its last inspection the school has received an Eco Schools silver award.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Richmond

Additional Inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hermitage Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is much higher than the national average. Pupil premium is extra funding provided by the government for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below the national average.
- Pupils come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. The largest ethnic group is Bangladeshi. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the beginning of the school year.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that gaps between the attainment of pupils who are eligible for additional funding and that of their classmates close more rapidly, particularly for those in Years 5 and 6, by making sure that teachers always provide these pupils with activities which enable them to make rapid and sustained progress.
- Make sure that the attendance of all pupils is consistently good, particularly of those pupils who are eligible for additional funding, by following up absences more thoroughly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities which are below the levels expected for their age. Some children enter the school with a very limited understanding of English and most have limited communication skills.
- Due to exciting teaching and the interesting indoor and outdoor activities provided, children make rapid progress and acquire good language, reading, writing and number skills.
- The results in the most recent Year 1 check on how well pupils know the sounds that letters make were above average. This is because the school encourages all pupils to sound out letters and develop a love of reading from an early stage. Every year group is encouraged to learn about great writers. For example, during the Shakespeare event, each class chose a play and then performed it in front of the other classes.
- The school ensures that pupils in all year groups make good progress. This includes those pupils who join the school at times other than the beginning of the school year. Over the years the end of Key Stage 1 results are consistently above average and many pupils achieve the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils increasingly reach standards that are well above the national average in the Year 6 tests in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The attainment of those pupils who are from a Bangladeshi background is good. Those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because they receive effective support that helps their language development. They attain above average results at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Those who are more able achieve well. Far more pupils than average attain the highest Level 6 in both writing and mathematics. This is because of the school's relentless focus on challenging all pupils to achieve the best they can.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported in lessons by adults who give effective help to make sure that they become successful learners.
- The progress of those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is good and there is almost no gap in their attainment when compared to all pupils nationally. However, the results of the 2013 tests show that there were wide gaps in the attainment of eligible pupils and their peers'. In writing these pupils were six terms behind their classmates. They were four terms behind their classmates in reading and mathematics. While smaller, there are still gaps in the attainment of eligible pupils and their classmates' in both Years 5 and 6.
- Leaders, however, are very much aware of this issue and are using the additional funding well by giving these pupils one-to-one tuition and extra classes. As a result, gaps between the attainment of eligible pupils and that of their classmates are beginning to narrow.
- Additional funding for sport enables all pupils to make good progress in physical education.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good. Teachers check pupils' progress regularly so they can plan work that moves pupils on quickly in their learning. Teachers also quickly identify and help those who may need a little more support.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children really enjoy the intriguing activities which teachers give them to do. For example, in the Nursery many were entranced as they practised milking a model cow.
- Throughout the school adults create a happy atmosphere for learning and pupils are very appreciative of this. As one said, 'Our teachers make learning relevant to real life; we love things like the "Writing X Factor"'.
■ Work in pupils' books indicates that they are given interesting and stimulating work. Pupils' work

improves quickly as they are given the time to act on teachers' written comments. Pupils also enjoy looking at the work of their classmates and giving comments on how it could be better. As one pupil said, 'I get out my green pen and mark my friend's work but I am also getting ideas on how I can improve my own work as well.'

- Other adults are very experienced and consequently ensure that all pupils whom they help make the maximum progress.
- Around the school many well-presented displays celebrate pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics. Displays, for example, of poems that highlight the need to conserve water in some countries, also contribute very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or who talked to inspectors in the playground believe that their children are well taught at the school. Most also like the amount and type of homework provided and say that it prepares their child well for secondary school.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. This is because teachers do not always provide those pupils who are eligible for the additional pupil premium funding with challenging enough work to enable them to catch up with their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils and the majority of parents and carers consider that the school makes sure that the behaviour of all pupils is good. Records of behaviour show that there have been very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour, both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are self-confident. They are polite to each other and at ease with adults. In lessons they listen attentively to teachers and respond well to the tasks that are set.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and they are well aware of the need to keep themselves safe, for example when travelling to school or when using the internet.
- Pupils are very aware about bullying and the different forms that it can take, including cyber bullying. They report that bullying of any kind is rare and are confident that teachers deal with it well if it occurs.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities. For example, those in Years 5 and 6 look after the younger children in the playground. This contributes well to their social development.
- Attendance in 2012 was very low and the school worked hard in 2013 to increase the overall figure up to around the national average. However, there are still some groups of pupils, including those who receive additional funding, who have lower attendance than their classmates. This is one reason why their attainment when compared to that of others in the school is not so strong.

The leadership and management are good

- In recent years the dedication and hard work of the headteacher, senior leadership team, staff and governors have been rewarded with a year-by-year improving trend in attainment. As a result, this is now consistently above average. Leaders have achieved this by carefully checking the progress of pupils and ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Middle leaders are very knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They collect a wide range of information about pupils' progress, which enables them to assess the quality of teaching and learning accurately.
- Teachers are set ambitious targets based on the progress of pupils. Their progress towards achieving these targets is used by the headteacher and governing body to decide whether a pay rise or promotion is justified.
- The school has a realistic view of its strengths and areas for development. It is very much aware

of the need to ensure that those who are eligible for additional funding attain at the same level as their classmates. As a result, it has already put in place strategies to ensure that the gaps will continue to close in Years 5 and 6.

- The school's rigour in following up absence has not yet had sufficient impact on ensuring that those who are eligible for additional funding attend as well as their classmates.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through the interesting range of subjects that they study. Pupils are taught to consider those less fortunate than themselves and are actively involved in fund-raising for a local charity that helps homeless people.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are challenged to read books about real-life issues, such as the refugee crisis. The school's extensive range of trips enables pupils to make their learning meaningful. For example, those who are in Years 3 and 4 learn French and have the opportunity to visit Boulogne for the day, where they use the French they have learnt and pay for items in euros.
- Cultural development is enhanced through music and many sing in the choir or learn musical instruments, such as the steel pans. Pupils enjoy participating in the 'Hermitage has got Talent' competition where they demonstrate their creative talents.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good and rapidly improving school.
- The school has used the primary school sports funding well to increase the number of sports available to pupils. The school works with coaches from the Tower Hamlets schools' partnership to teach exciting and varied physical education lessons that pupils really enjoy.
- Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. All groups of pupils feel respected and valued. The school promotes equality of opportunity to make sure that pupils from different backgrounds achieve well. High aspirations are fostered through a range of effective links with outside institutions, including both Oxford and Cambridge universities. Pupils have visited Clare College in Cambridge where they have taken part in fun activities such as launching mini rockets.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school and are kept well informed about regular events. They like the breakfast and after-school clubs which make a positive contribution to pupils' well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. They ask challenging questions and understand clearly the school's strengths and priorities for improvements. They are well trained and have an accurate view of how the school judges itself. They know about the quality of teaching because they visit classes regularly. Governors are fully aware of the progress that pupils make and how their achievement compares with that of pupils in other schools. They help to ensure that teachers' pay rises are linked to the progress of pupils.
 - Finances are carefully controlled and governors are aware of how the school uses additional funding such as the sports and pupil premium. They regularly monitor the impact that the funding is having on the progress of pupils. They have been involved in ensuring that funds are targeted to where there are the greatest gaps. Governors have made sure that statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection are fully met.

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	100936
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	430838

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	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Forhad Ahmed
Headteacher	Zoe Howe
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 March 2012
Telephone number	020 7702 1037
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