

Claremont Primary School

Claremont Road, Cricklewood, London, NW2 1AB

Inspection dates

18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement is inconsistent across the school. Standards are too low at the end of Key Stage 1, especially in writing.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment because the most-able pupils are not always given sufficiently demanding work.
- Some pupils lack a wide vocabulary and a sophisticated understanding of language to enable them to write well.
- The quality of teaching varies between classes and year groups and is not yet consistently good.
- Reception year staff do not take every opportunity to ensure that all children experience high-quality learning.
- The quality of marking is uneven so that it does not always explain to pupils how they can improve their work.
- When teachers give helpful explanations, they do not always expect pupils to act on this advice, which means they can end up making the same mistakes again.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not fully tackled some of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
- Some governors are new to their roles and do not yet have a detailed understanding of how well the school is meeting its goals for improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn, friendly and polite. They feel safe in school.
- Standards have been rising at Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught systematically so that pupils can read unfamiliar words.
- Measures to improve writing are having a positive impact in Year 2 and Year 5.
- Art is taught to a high standard and pupils produce an excellent range of work.
- Pupils regularly discuss their progress with their teachers and understand how well they are doing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 40 lessons or parts of lessons, some jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, two governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors considered 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents bringing their children to school.
- The inspectors considered the 47 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Naureen Kausar	Additional Inspector
Valerie Palmer	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school has taken on additional 'bulge' classes in Reception and Year 2 to meet the demand for places.
- Almost all pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a very high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is very high.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also above average.
- A high proportion of pupils joins and leaves the school part way through the year.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2011 and the deputy headteacher joined in September 2012, after the previous inspection.
- During the inspection one of the days was devoted to science activities.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- In 2013 the school narrowly missed meeting current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - teachers set work at the right level for all pupils in all subjects and, in particular, that it is sufficiently demanding for the most-able pupils
 - Reception staff spend enough time working with different groups of pupils to extend their learning
 - all marking shows pupils how to improve their work and that teachers expect them to act on their advice.
- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - extending pupils' vocabulary and increasing their confidence in using more sophisticated language
 - making sure that all teachers have consistently high expectations of the amount and quality of writing that pupils can produce.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - removing any inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' achievement
 - developing governors' knowledge of how well the school is achieving its key priorities for improvement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress is not consistently good between classes or across year groups. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve vary and this affects the quality of pupils' work and the levels pupils attain. In particular, some of the most-able pupils do not reach the higher levels of attainment they could.
- Children join the Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age. About half have very limited English and many lack social skills. Only half of the Reception children have attended the school's nursery, and so their skills when they join Reception vary considerably.
- While most pupils make sound progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, too few make more rapid progress. In Reception, opportunities to develop children's learning are sometimes missed when staff focus too much on one group and do not see what other children are achieving, or encourage them in their endeavours.
- Pupils achieve well in Year 1 because the quality of teaching is more consistent. Their performance in the phonics check in 2013 compared favourably with the national figures. Progress is patchy in Year 2 because teachers' expectations of pupils vary.
- Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 were well below average in reading, mathematics and especially in writing in 2013. The school has commissioned support from the local authority to help increase the number of Year 2 pupils gaining the higher levels in writing, and this work has been having a positive impact this year.
- Year 6 pupils made good progress in mathematics in 2013 and standards were average. A close focus on gaps in pupils' knowledge in mathematics has enabled pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils know what they need to do to reach the next level of attainment.
- Pupils did not achieve so well in writing because some lack a wide enough vocabulary and do not use sufficiently sophisticated language, such as figures of speech. Year 5 pupils have taken part in an innovative project to tackle this that centres on using high-quality literature to inspire pupils in their writing. This has proved successful, and Year 5 pupils produced some very good stories based on, for example, *Gulliver's Travels*.
- Pupils become confident readers and older pupils record their reflections in reading journals. Reading is celebrated through Book Week. A recent competition to find the best 'book corner', run by the school council, has also raised the profile of reading across the school.
- Current attainment is below expectations in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, especially in writing. Progress is more rapid in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is stronger and standards are rising more quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make sound progress and some do better than this, such as in Year 6 last year. Support is well organised and teaching assistants are trained well. The impact of support programmes is checked carefully and adjustments are made where necessary.
- Over time, the gap in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in the school is getting smaller. In 2013, Year 6 pupils were over two terms behind the others in reading and nearly two terms behind in mathematics. There was no gap between the groups in writing. One-to-one teaching has had a positive impact and counselling support has helped potentially vulnerable pupils to settle better into learning.
- As almost all pupils speak English as an additional language, their progress mirrors that of all pupils and varies. Pupils who join the school part way through their education are well supported and soon feel at home. Their progress does not differ from that of other pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too uneven between classes and across year groups, and so not all the pupils are doing as well as they can. The most-able pupils, in particular, do not all go on to

reach the higher National Curriculum level.

- In subjects other than English, pupils are often given the same work to do, which is too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others. For example, pupils were all asked to fill in gaps in sentences on a history sheet using the same missing words. This did not challenge the most-able pupils, and was too taxing for the least able.
- The quality of marking is uneven across the school. Some books show a productive dialogue between teachers and pupils about how to improve work, while in others pupils are not given clear guidance about what to do next. Even when teachers give helpful advice, they do not always expect pupils to act on it, and so they sometimes repeat the same errors.
- Children in the Nursery make good progress because they enjoy stimulating activities, often linked to a central theme, which makes learning purposeful for them. In Reception some of the activities do not have a clear purpose. Staff miss opportunities to make learning more meaningful because they do not spend enough time working with different groups of pupils to extend their learning.
- A day devoted to scientific discovery was successful because pupils enjoyed an inspirational opening assembly by a visiting science specialist and then, in mixed-age groups, took part in their own experiments. These had a 'wow' factor, such as plastic gloves being inflated with bicarbonate of soda and vinegar and 'balloon kebabs' being skewered.
- Art is a particular strength and is evident in the attractive displays of high-quality pupils' work in a wide range of media. These include glazed pottery statues based on book characters, block prints, chalk and charcoal drawings of scenes from the Second World War, and roses magnified in the style of the artist Georgia O'Keefe.
- All pupils have regular productive discussions with their teachers about how well they are doing in reading, writing and mathematics and agree ways forward to reach the next level of attainment, as well as about their attitudes to learning and behaviour. In this way, pupils have a clear understanding of their progress and what will help them to do better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to learn and respond well to staff. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are friendly and polite and support one another well.
- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and conscientiously. For example, 'playground ambassadors' look after younger pupils and help to resolve any disagreements. The school council has been involved in improving play equipment and rejuvenating book corners.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school provides a haven of safety for the pupils. Excellent pastoral support ensures that potentially vulnerable pupils and their families are given every opportunity to benefit from all that the school offers. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that it is not an issue for them. They know about cyber bullying and how to keep safe on the internet. They also know about keeping safe in everyday situations, such as when crossing the road or cycling.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils can become distracted if learning does not fully engage them, for example when work is not set at the right level for them.
- Attendance has been improving. The school has worked hard to keep absence levels down and to increase pupils' punctuality. Attendance is now close to national levels.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not secured consistently good teaching or good progress over time. Some of the areas to improve from the previous inspection relating to English and the Reception classes have not been fully tackled.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are ambitious to see all pupils achieve well and communicate this clearly to staff. The school has been successful in providing very good levels of care to pupils and their families. Leaders have developed a harmonious and calm atmosphere, bringing together pupils from many different backgrounds.
 - Teaching has been improving because senior leaders have clearly and accurately identified areas to develop and provide good quality training for staff. In recent years, standards have been rising at Key Stage 2 and are now average in mathematics. The school is showing that it can continue to improve under its present leadership team and is looking to expand it by appointing an assistant headteacher.
 - Regular checks on the quality of teaching lead to an accurate view of how well the school is doing. Strategic plans have highlighted the key areas to improve. The management of staff performance is robust, based around national standards of best practice, and links pay progression firmly to pupils' success.
 - The school generates a large amount of useful information about how well pupils are doing, but this is used better by some teachers than others to plan work that is at the right level of ability for all the pupils in their class.
 - The leadership of inclusion and special educational needs is strong, as pupils are well supported. Other leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, although this does not always lead to effective planning for improvement.
 - Partnerships are very strong with parents and the local community. Most parents are happy with the school and feel their children are doing well. In fact, pupils' performance is more uneven than this view would suggest. The school does much to give all groups of pupils an equal chance to succeed, but variations in the quality of teaching mean that not all pupils do as well as they could.
 - Much of the focus is on English and mathematics, but pupils excel in art and have plenty of opportunities to participate in sport. The primary school sport funding is spent on improving gymnastics, clubs such as street dance, and closer links with Barnet schools to promote competitive sports. Pupils appreciate the wider range of sports they can take part in, and this is benefiting their health and well-being. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a variety of ways, including special days such as the science day.
 - The local authority takes a keen interest in the school's progress and offers good support, especially in improving pupils' writing.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been many changes to governors, including the Chair, so they are developing their expertise. The governors receive comprehensive information from the headteacher and ask searching questions. They have not established secure ways of finding out for themselves how well the school is achieving its goals for improvement. They understand about pupils' performance and the quality of teaching, and how staff are managed and developed. They know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and have some understanding of its impact. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
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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	131750
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	431923

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Cox (Acting Chair)
Headteacher	Alison Anscomb
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 July 2011
Telephone number	020 8455 4013
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