

Rotherfield Primary School

Rotherfield Street, Islington, London, N1 3EE

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 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 is ambitious for the school and has secured sustainable improvements over the last two years. He has ensured that all staff share his commitment to the vision for the school.
- Pupils make good progress in all key stages, often from very low starting points, and leave the school well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Detailed systems to measure the achievement of different groups of pupils are in place. This information is used by teachers to inform their planning.
- Teaching is consistently good and ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Meticulous tracking of support programmes for certain groups of pupils ensures that this work has a positive impact on their progress and attendance.
- Support for families and pupils who are potentially vulnerable or underachieving is managed rigorously and tailored to individual need.
- Strong governance ensures that all leaders are held to account and challenged. Governors are actively involved in the setting and sharing of the school's future plans.
- Pupils behave well, their attendance is improving and they say they feel safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching over time is not consistently outstanding.
- Not enough pupils attain higher levels, particularly in writing.
- In some classes, marking and feedback to pupils do not have enough impact on their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons. A significant proportion of these were joint observations with the headteacher and senior leaders. All classes and teachers were observed.
- During observations in lessons, inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and discussed the work in their books, looked at teachers' planning and considered the role of additional adults.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, a representative from the local authority and an external consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to some of them about their experiences in school. Playtimes and lunchtimes were observed. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils around the school and during break times.
- A wide range of school documents and records were scrutinised, including information about pupils' behaviour and attendance, pupils' progress, school improvement planning and minutes from governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through looking at the school's analysis of questionnaires and through 17 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. They also considered 40 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Gaynor Roberts, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philip Mann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rotherfield Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come primarily from White British, other White, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Black African and mixed backgrounds. The school has identified a small, but growing, group of pupils of Turkish origin.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language is also much higher than the national average.
- Two thirds of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils from service families and those in local authority care). This proportion is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is slightly above the national average. A significantly higher proportion is supported at school action plus or has a statement of educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection, and there have been a number of staff changes, including a review of the leadership structure.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in writing so that a higher proportion of pupils makes accelerated progress by:
 - reviewing the organisation of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) so that all pupils are challenged
 - ensuring that school policies for marking and feedback to pupils are fully embedded and have an impact on pupil progress.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise standards further across the school by:
 - ensuring that more able pupils are consistently challenged to extend their learning so that their rate of progress increases
 - reviewing the environment within the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that it promotes learning and entices children to participate
 - taking into account all activities undertaken by leaders to monitor the quality of teaching when making overall judgements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter Nursery with skills typically well below those expected for their age. In the current cohort very few children joined the school with skills typical for their age, particularly in communication and language, literacy and mathematics.
- Children make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. This is because routines are up and running quickly, relationships are very positive and activities promote children's basic skills. This means that children settle quickly and can concentrate well on their tasks. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2013, at least half of the cohort had reached a good level of development.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and results from the Year 1 screening check for phonics in 2013 were above average. In the 2013 national tests of reading, writing and mathematics, most pupils attained expected levels but very few attained higher levels in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Attainment of pupils at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics prior to 2012 was consistently significantly below average. In the last two years this has improved and is now above average in mathematics, and slightly below average in reading and writing.
- Results from national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013 show that a high proportion of pupils make expected progress, or exceed expected progress in mathematics. In reading the proportion is broadly in line with national figures, whilst in writing it is below national figures.
- Pupils make rapid progress over time in mathematics because skills are taught systematically from year to year, building up a good body of knowledge for pupils which they apply well to solve problems.
- The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to that of their classmates. This is as a result of targeted additional funding for extra teaching and support to help pupils make the most of their time in school. The gap in attainment between eligible pupils and others in the school was just over two terms in reading and mathematics, and over two terms in writing. This reflects the national picture in reading and mathematics.
- The school has robust systems for tracking the progress of pupils on a regular basis. These systems enable the school to identify any individuals or groups of pupils who are falling behind so that staff can intervene swiftly to ensure that good progress is maintained. The school's tracking systems show that, in the current year, all classes and groups within classes are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school ensures that literacy and numeracy skills are promoted across the curriculum by insisting that all pupil work is recorded in either a literacy or a numeracy book. This means that pupils are focused on their targets in literacy and numeracy when working on tasks from other curriculum areas and progress more rapidly.
- The school has undertaken a wide ranging promotion of reading. Books are available to pupils in all classrooms, transition areas, small group and meeting rooms, and the headteacher's office. Book displays are made inviting through the use of cards displaying ideas or questions to catch the interest of pupils as they pass by. Pupils say they read regularly at school and are given the right advice by teachers in choosing books they take home. As a result, pupils develop accuracy and fluency in their reading.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good because the school identifies barriers to achievement early and intervenes effectively. There are extensive systems to track the progress of these pupils and measure the impact of the additional support they receive.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding teaching. Work in pupils' books,

particularly their mathematics books, displays clear progress showing that teaching has been good over time.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching activities are well planned and ensure that different groups of children make good progress from their starting points. The learning environment, however, whilst organised and tidy, is not sufficiently vibrant and stimulating to entice children to fully engage in learning.
- Teachers have high expectations. They plan carefully, ensuring that pupils remain focused throughout the lesson. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, for example, pupils analysed a text describing how a fox moves and what it looks like, developing their understanding of descriptive language. The teacher then showed a well-selected video clip of a fox moving in on prey and suddenly pouncing. There was an audible gasp from pupils as the fox pounced. The pupils' learning about descriptive language became embedded as the pupils saw the movements in action.
- Teachers' plans show how pupils of different abilities will be challenged. Where teaching is outstanding the most able pupils are challenged from the start of the lesson to think more deeply. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were creating numbers from a reduced set of digits and mathematical operations. From the start of the lesson, the most able pupils were encouraged to use algebraic expressions and then later to extend learning further to include negative numbers. Where teaching is less strong, more challenging activities are only presented when pupils have completed easier work.
- The teaching of phonics is good. School assessment information indicates the number of pupils predicted to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 1 will be above average. The organisation of these sessions, however, has resulted in some large groups of pupils receiving identical input. More able pupils are therefore not moved on to the next stage when they are ready to do so, and their progress is slowed.
- Progress tracking information shows that most cohorts and groups of pupils are making good progress. School leaders and teachers identify pupils who need additional support and intervene swiftly and appropriately to ensure they do not fall further behind. Regular meetings ensure that the impact of this support is maintained.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and in a consistent format that pupils understand. Where this is used most effectively, pupils have frequent opportunities to respond to teachers' comments, and books show related improvements in following pieces of work. In other cases, however, pupils do not respond to comments, and improvements, particularly in writing, do not occur as rapidly.
- Additional adults provide effective support for pupils. They work closely with teachers and leaders in planning lessons and evaluating the impact of their work to ensure that pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good within lessons and around school. The calm, orderly atmosphere promotes a high level of respect and courtesy towards adults and peers.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning in lessons are good. Pupils are keen to participate in discussion or to answer questions. When working in small groups without adult support, they remain on task. This means that they make good progress as they are learning for a high proportion of the lesson time.
- The school has developed a variety of environments and activities to support and engage pupils during breaks and lunchtimes. The playground has zoned areas for active play, seated areas, quiet areas, and an 'edible playground' where pupils grow vegetables and herbs to be used in cookery sessions. Break times occur at different times so that pupils have more space to play in. This means that younger, smaller pupils can access physically active games safely and with confidence.
- Play leaders organise games and clubs, such as a dance club, during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils act as peer buddies to support pupils who find it difficult to join in. These systems help to ensure that behaviour is good and pupils do not feel left out.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and know who to go to if they need help. Pupils say there is no bullying in school, and are aware of the different types of bullying that can occur.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe online is effective. Pupils are taught about e-safety in information and communication technology lessons and can demonstrate what they have learnt. Pupils say, for example, that it is not safe to put personal information online.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection but remains below average for primary schools. The school's work to support persistent absentees is very effective, however, and the proportion of pupils absent for 15% or more of sessions has reduced considerably. This is as a result of staff working closely with individual families to remove the barriers to attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are committed to providing high quality education. This strong partnership has secured significant improvements over the last two years.
- The headteacher has developed close and productive working partnerships with all staff, and team spirit within the school is tangible. The senior team of headteacher, deputy headteacher and special needs co-ordinator works especially well together, and has the skills and attributes which complement each other.
- At the start of the current year, the school recruited a team of phase leaders each having responsibility for two year groups within the school. The majority of these leaders are starting to have an impact on the progress of pupils as they become settled into their roles and secure in their use of information about pupil achievement.
- Leadership of English and mathematics is good. In both subjects a range of booster groups has had a positive impact and, as a result, pupils are making good progress, particularly in mathematics. Thorough analysis of information on progress enables these leaders to ensure that support programmes are focused on key areas and therefore pupils overcome barriers to learning.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching through a variety of activities including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books, discussions with pupils and visits to classrooms. They ensure their judgements are accurate by working alongside external partners such as the local authority. They do not, however, bring all this information together in one place and, therefore, some evidence may not be included when making a judgement on the quality of teaching over time.
- The school ensures pupils experience a broad and varied curriculum. In addition to a weekly timetable which includes structured lessons from a range of subjects, the school designates themes to weeks throughout the year. These range from Book Week and Art Week to science workshops, which include parents.
- An emphasis on the key skills of literacy and numeracy underpins the wider curriculum and is threaded throughout the school day. Leaders ensure that the curriculum gives pupils opportunities to extend their knowledge and experience through residential trips and performances, both in school and in public at arenas such as the O2.
- Primary sport funding has been used to extend the number of physical activities on offer to pupils before and after school and at breaks and lunchtimes. This is resulting in increased participation by pupils, high levels of performance and a positive impact on their health and well-being.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning are many and varied. The school works with a Kitchen Garden Project and the Better Food Foundation to grow and cook their own food. Pupils show respect for different faiths and cultures and the local church leader visits school to lead assemblies focusing on global issues. Pupils participate actively in the school community, acting as peer buddies and volunteering to sit on the school council.
- School leaders listen carefully to the views of pupils, parents and carers, and record their actions in response to pupil and parent suggestions in their school improvement planning.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Systems to record concerns and actions taken are robust and followed up regularly by the relevant members of staff.
- The local authority's high level of support for the school was reduced appropriately in 2012 when the rise in standards was considered to be in place. Its support more recently has been to complete a review of teaching and learning at the request of the school, and to moderate the judgements of school leaders.
- The school also receives effective support from an external consultant, who works primarily to support the governors and leadership team in setting a vision for the future and advising on specific issues, such as the recruitment and development of the new phase leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and which groups and cohorts of pupils or subject areas are priorities for school improvement. They ask probing questions of the headteacher and other leaders, and require leaders at all levels to present reports to governing body meetings. This ensures that leaders can be held accountable for their areas of responsibility.
 - Governors visit the school regularly, particularly in termly 'governor open mornings'. They use these opportunities to visit classrooms, meet with pupils and staff and look at books, in order to see the school's work for themselves. They are then able to ask more informed questions of leaders in meetings. Before the start of each academic year they work with senior leaders to set priorities for the year ahead, and governors then present these to staff, ensuring that they maintain a high profile in the wider school staff team.
 - Governors ensure that pupil premium funding and additional funds to raise achievement in sports are spent appropriately. They then check that their spending has had a positive impact on pupils.
 - Governors are well informed about the management of teachers' performance and the way this links pay rises to how well pupils are doing. They ensure that the headteacher's appraisal is managed robustly.

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	131740
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	444253

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

Type of school	Community School
School category	Primary
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carolyn Wagstaff
Headteacher	Richard Hunter
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2010
Telephone number	020 72266620
Fax number	020 73591083
Email address	admin@rotherfield.islington.sch.uk

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