

Highbury Quadrant Primary School

Highbury New Park, London, N5 2DP

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 has provided good leadership during a period of staff changes to make sure teaching is good and to support new teachers effectively.
- Pupils' achievement is good because the rate of progress they make is better than expected and attainment is rising in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress because of the effective leadership and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching is good because there is a wide range of training for staff and leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils' attendance is above the national average.
- The curriculum is interesting, varied and promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.
- Leaders and middle managers are using resources effectively to make sure pupils make good progress.
- Governors use their professional expertise to ensure they provide a good balance of support and challenge to leaders.
- Most parents and carers are positive about the school and say they their children achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not always of the highest quality to ensure pupils' achievement is high.
- Standards of pupils' attainment, particularly for the most-able pupils, are not as high as they should be.
- Teaching does not always provide pupils with written feedback to help them improve their learning.
- Pupils rarely respond to teachers' written comments to help them improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons of which five were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation including the school’s performance data, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and an analysis of the school’s strengths and areas for development, the school’s improvement plan, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading with them.
- Pupils’ work was scrutinised to evaluate progress and the quality of marking and feedback provided by teachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The views of parents and carers were sought at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors took account of 22 responses on Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, and from a questionnaire given to parents and carers prior to the beginning of the inspection.
- The inspectors considered 36 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Mirella Lombardo, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria Coles

Additional Inspector

Kewal Goel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the additional funding known as pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils including those eligible for free school meals or in public care) is well above average.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of them speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes, in particular at leadership level. This has not included the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement, in particular for the most able, to outstanding levels by ensuring that:
 - written feedback given to pupils helps them to improve their work because it clearly identifies the next steps in learning
 - all teachers' have the highest expectations for pupils' learning
 - pupils in Years 1 to 6 regularly respond to teachers' written comments so that they can deepen their understanding and use the feedback they are given to improve their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below levels expected for their age. Adults provide a range of interesting activities that develop their communication and mathematics skills well. By the time they leave Reception, they have skills that are above those expected for their age.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is just below that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, but the gap with the national average is closing.
- Pupils enjoy reading and use phonics (the links between letters and sounds) well to read difficult and unfamiliar words. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils used their phonics knowledge to write sentences of a high standard and attempted new words with confidence.
- Last year, pupils in Year 1 did not reach average levels in the national phonics screening check. Nonetheless, Year 1 pupils this year are on track to achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally. This is because there is a strong focus on teaching reading. Pupils who did not do well in Year 1 last year have now caught up with their peers in Year 2.
- In 2013, the progress made by pupils in Year 6 was well above that of others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. These strong rates of progress have been sustained for the last three years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the additional support they receive from adults in lessons is of good quality.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers nationally in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, these pupils attain levels above other pupils' nationally in mathematics and writing and in line with their peers in reading.
- Fewer pupils who are most-able have attained the higher levels in reading than seen nationally. However, scrutiny of pupil's reading during the inspection and discussions with children demonstrate that these pupils are now being challenged more. They say they enjoy reading the many new books the school has purchased to build up its new library provision.
- In 2013, the gap in attainment between Year 6 pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers in the school closed from over a term behind in 2012 to just under a term behind in mathematics. In writing, the gap remained broadly similar to 2012 but in reading, the gap widened to almost two terms behind. However, the school's records indicate that the progress of current eligible pupils is ensuring that these gaps reduce to minimal levels.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity is good because the support provided by adults for individual pupils is effective. Teachers give pupils clear guidance in lessons to make sure they achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and this has contributed to the good progress pupils make in the school. The school uses teachers' good practice to influence the overall quality of teaching across the school. Teaching assistants provide high-quality support to individual pupils who need extra help.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults provide activities that sustain children's learning, and develop their skills in mathematics and literacy well. For example, children in the Nursery played with numbered plastic ducks to help them to recognise numbers and to learn how to count. In a Reception class, children describing different vegetables in a basket developed their confidence in speaking with others.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Teachers plan activities that are interesting and engage pupils well. Years 5 and 6 pupils spoke about how teachers help them to learn well by providing interesting work and homework.
- Teachers use questioning well to check on how well pupils remember what they have learnt in

the past. This helps them to make links with what they are learning in the lesson.

- Pupils are clear about what they need to learn in the lesson. This is because they check their learning against what is expected of them.
- Teachers provide pupils with prompts to enable them to achieve well. For example in a Year 4 class, pupils used a 'story mountain' to build excitement and interest into their stories.
- Marking is consistent throughout the school. However some teachers do not always ensure pupils are clear about the next steps in learning to deepen their understanding about what has been taught. This slows pupil progress, particularly of the most able.
- Pupils do not always use teachers' written feedback effectively to improve their work and this sometimes limits their learning, particularly for the most able pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons and around the school they are polite to each other and adults. Pupils spoken to say the behaviour seen during the inspection is typical
- Pupils are given a range of responsibilities in the school to help them prepare for the next stage of their education. For example, looking after children who are new to the school and helping at the after-school club. Some pupils work as 'digital leaders' helping other children in the school with writing computer programs and designing their own games.
- Pupils are proud of their school and they want to achieve well. Attitudes to learning are good and they work well together in lessons. Pupils say they enjoy the range of activities they take part in at school, for example, in writing. This is evident in their books, where writing is often of a very high standard.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They have a particularly strong understanding of how to use mobile telephones safely and avoid cyber bullying. The school provides regular cycling proficiency courses to help pupils keep safe outside school.
- Attendance is now above the national average. This is because the school has worked effectively to promote pupils' good attendance and punctuality especially for those pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly.
- A few members of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire did not think behaviour was always managed well. However, during the inspection, this was not evident. Furthermore, documentation relating to behaviour demonstrates that incidents are decreasing. A new system called 'going for gold', to develop pupils' good behaviour, is planned to guide new members of staff and ensure a consistent approach between classes continues.
- A very small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour, but this was due to specific incidents in a couple of classes, which have now been resolved.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by the governing body, has led developments to make sure most pupils continue to make good progress by the time they leave the school, from their low starting points.
- The current measures in place to cover vacancies at senior leadership level are highly effective. For example, the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to good improvements in the quality of provision and children's good achievement.
- Staff are positive about the support they receive from leaders to help them improve. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and have strong systems in place. Observations of teaching conducted with senior leaders demonstrate that these checks are accurate. A wide range of training for all staff effectively develops their skills.
- The school works with another school in supporting with improvements to teaching. Some

teachers provide support to other teachers in the local authority in checking the accuracy of assessments of writing. These teachers also provide guidance to teachers in the school.

- The 'woodland garden' is a dedicated area for the study of habitats in the school grounds. It is an example of how the school is making activities more interesting for pupils.. Information and communication technology is also helping to make activities more exciting. For example, pupils learn skills in coding so they can devise simple computer programs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well through all subjects and activities provided by the school. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have free opportunities to learn to play an instrument and the majority of pupils take this up and continue to play up until they leave school. They regularly take part in musical events and drama productions with the local secondary school.
- The primary school sports funding is being used creatively to further develop pupils' interest in sport and increase pupils' participation in sports outside school. For example, pupils have taken part in netball tournaments, gymnastic and athletic events with local schools. The range of activities available helps these pupils improve their physical well being.
- The school works well with its parents and carers, providing regular workshops and a 'strengthening families' course. The majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online survey, said they would recommend the school to another parent or carer.
- The local authority provides light touch support to the school. It has provided support in the recruitment of senior leaders and in training to improve the teaching of reading.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise to their role. They are highly ambitious for their school and recognise the range of challenges the school faces, in particular in terms of recruitment and the maintenance of the building. Despite this, they are seeking to make permanent senior-level appointments soon to address the gaps in staffing.
 - Governors know how the school performs in relation to other schools, using national and local performance information. They have a good understanding of how the school uses pupil premium funding. The use of this funding is evaluated by all of the governing body committees.. Governors have used resources well to make improvements to the school's provision for information and communication technology. In addition, an after-school club has been set up which is highly valued by parents and carers. They keep updated by attending training including regular briefings at the local authority. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and the systems used to improve staff performance, including rewarding good practice both financially and through nominating teachers for local awards. All statutory arrangements with regard to safeguarding are securely in place.

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	10043
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	444333

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Tolson
Headteacher	Terri Higgins
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 July 2011
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