

Yorke Mead Primary School

Dulwich Way, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, WD3 3PX

Inspection dates 1–2 July 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has a clear view of how she wants the school to be. She is passionate in her desire to provide the very best education for all pupils at the school and has ensured that both teaching and achievement are consistently good.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning and are very keen to develop their skills. They know and use a range of strategies to help them be more effective learners.
- Parents are very happy with the school. They feel that their children are safe and that they behave well. Parents say that their children make good progress at the school and that staff are kind and helpful.
- Teaching assistants are very well-managed and play a significant role in making sure that all pupils are able to learn well and take a full part in the life of the school.
- Governors are energetic and committed to the school. Their very good mix of skills, knowledge and experience means that they are able to provide necessary support whilst holding the headteacher fully to account.
- Pupils, including those who are more able, achieve well and make good progress.
- The improvement points from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Teaching is now consistently good and the way in which the school promotes community cohesion is a strength.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and well-mannered and show maturity in the way they respond to adults and to their peers. Pupils are safe in school. They are taught to take personal responsibility for their own behaviour and are given plentiful opportunities to do so.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing is not yet outstanding. Pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to apply and extend their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Marking and feedback have improved but the school's agreed practice is not followed consistently by all teachers and some pupils do not know or use their personal targets as well as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. They observed parts of 21 lessons throughout the school taught by class teachers or specialist teachers. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors looked at pupils' exercise books, listened to them read and talked to them about their work. Inspectors examined the school's documents on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching carefully.
- The views of parents were taken into account including the 85 who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and those that inspectors spoke to during the inspection. Inspectors also listened to the views of staff and looked carefully at the 25 staff questionnaires that were received.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, parents, governors and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, plans for future development, attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Marianick Ellender-Gele

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Gray

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school with an increasing number of pupils on roll. It is in the process of growing from one to two classes per year group and building work is underway to increase the physical size of the school.
- A small minority of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and the rest are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The school has a stable population with a very large majority remaining at the school throughout their primary years.
- The number of children who are eligible for pupil premium is below average but has risen significantly during this academic year. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and other groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement is below average.
- The school meets current floor standards; these are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a Children's Centre on the same site but this is not led or managed by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the school's curriculum to increase opportunities for pupil to practise their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Improve teachers' use of feedback and marking so that all pupils know their targets and understand what steps they should take to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Some children attend the school's nursery class before entering Reception, whilst others join the school from a range of other settings. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and a much higher than average number achieved a good level of development this year.
- Achievement in phonics (the sounds that letters make) has risen steadily as a result of the school's efforts to improve teaching and learning in this area. A higher than average number of children reached the required standard at the end of Year 1 this year.
- Standards in reading and mathematics have been consistently above average in Key Stage 1 for several years. Writing standards dipped last year but are now above average as a result of the school's actions to address this issue. Standards in English and mathematics are above average in Key Stage 2, significantly so for higher ability pupils.
- Across the school, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with or above national averages. Pupils make good progress from their relative starting points. The school has good tracking systems in place and its termly pupil progress meetings are now more focused, ensuring that the needs of all pupils are addressed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special needs make good progress because the support they receive is good quality. Teaching assistants are well-trained and well-informed and their focused input enables pupils to achieve well.
- The progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who speak English as an additional language, is closely monitored by the school, and these groups make the same good progress as the others. The deputy headteacher has visited an outstanding school, where a very high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, to broaden her understanding of how best to support pupils. This has been fed back to staff and strategies put in place to help these pupils progress.
- There were too few pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium leaving Year 6 in 2013 to make a valid judgement of their attainment. In general, across the school, these pupils make good progress. The school uses pupil premium well to narrow the gap in achievement between those pupils entitled to the extra funding and other pupils, for example, employing an additional teacher to work with small groups. Few pupils reach the higher levels, however, and the school is aware that this is something that they need to address.
- The new primary school sports funding is being used well to encourage participation in physical activities and to promote healthy lifestyles. The proportion of pupils who take part in sports clubs has increased and there is a strong focus on developing adventurous play.
- Pupils in Year 3 make rapid progress in playing stringed instruments as part of the 'Wider Opportunities' scheme. They play music to a high standard because of the effective, specialist teaching they receive.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has worked hard to address the issues identified in the last inspection and teaching is now good. Good relationships between teachers and pupils are consistently evident in all classes and there is a strong 'can do' feeling in the school.
- Teachers plan work carefully to ensure the level of challenge is always appropriate for all pupils, irrespective of differences in their abilities. Consequently, all pupils, including the least- and most- able pupils, achieve well and make good progress. They are taught well and are usually given work that challenges them sufficiently.
- Teachers insist pupils communicate clearly and speak confidently to each other and to adults. Staff skilfully extend pupils' vocabulary and encourage them to use correct grammar.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan and teach interesting lessons. The school is well-resourced and the outdoor environment is used well.
- The school's assessments are rigorous and reliable. Teachers' judgements at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have recently been checked by the local authority and teachers across the school work together to make sure that their assessments are accurate.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Teachers accurately identify these pupils' needs and ensure that the resources they are given are appropriate. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and are deployed effectively.
- A consistent marking system has been introduced and pupils throughout the school know what 'pink and green' means. A pupil in Year 6 said that the system has helped him to improve his work because 'It doesn't give you the answer but it makes you think'. Some teachers use the system very well but in other classes it is less developed. Similarly, target cards are in place in pupils' exercise books but not all children know which target they are currently working towards.
- Teaching helps to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. All members of staff model appropriate behaviour and this encourages a culture of mutual respect. The school has forged links with schools in Wembley and in St Kitts and Nevis in order to broaden pupils' understanding and appreciation of other communities and cultures.
- Teachers give good attention to developing pupils' writing skills, including their punctuation and spelling. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to practise these skills or write extensively in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Parents value the school's work highly and feel that their children are happy and make good progress. One parent said 'I walk two miles here and two miles back every day, but it's worth it'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding because staff expectations are consistently high and pupils know what the rules are. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying or racist language, is very rare and dealt with quickly, firmly and thoroughly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents feel that their children are safe and that behaviour is very good. A group of parents said that there is no bullying at Yorke Mead and one added 'Anyway, even if there was, they'd deal with it'. Pupils say that they

have been taught how to keep themselves safe and have a good knowledge of all issues relating to their safety, including their e-safety.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. A wide range of initiatives have been introduced, for example, 'The 5 Bs' and 'Philosophy for Children', and these practices are very firmly embedded across the school. Pupils are very keen and eager to do well and they readily take responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils are very polite and well-mannered because these qualities are modelled for them constantly by staff. One grandparent, who regularly comes into school to help with reading, said 'I love working with the children because they are so polite and they really want to improve'.
- There have been no exclusions this year and the school has used outreach provision very well to help them to manage the specific needs of a small number of pupils. Highly-skilled teaching assistants provide very strong individual support to enable all pupils to do well.
- Pupils are expected to work well together, and to cooperate with each, and they do so calmly and without fuss. They are given a range of opportunities to take responsibility for specific areas, for example, as play leaders and assembly helpers.
- Attendance overall is consistently above average and is improving. Absence is rigorously monitored and prompt action is taken to address concerns.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is extremely passionate in wanting the very best for all her pupils. She knows all the children by name and knows the parents too. She is ambitious for all the pupils and is tireless in her efforts to move the school forward.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very strong team and lead the school very well. The school has focused on developing the skills of its middle leaders, who lead their subjects and areas well, and teachers have attended a range of appropriate training and other opportunities.
- The school's performance management systems are used well to help the school move forward. Teachers' individual performance targets are clearly linked to the developmental needs of the school. A good range of courses and other opportunities are provided for staff, and teachers feel that their personal professional development needs are taken seriously.
- The school is currently undergoing significant expansion and is rapidly growing from one to two classes per year group. The headteacher's strong management skills mean that the large amount of building work on the school site has not adversely affected pupils' education and disruption is kept to an absolute minimum.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. The school has identified the right priorities, put suitable actions in place to address them, and monitored progress towards its goals well.
- Parents say that teachers listen to their concerns. They feel that the headteacher is accessible them and one parent said that the school 'Could not have done more for my family'.
- The number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority has risen considerably this

year. The school has managed this change very effectively and ensures that the needs of all children are met.

- The leader responsible for provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is highly effective. She manages a team of teaching assistants very well and ensures that they are fully involved in helping pupils to move forward, that they attend pupil progress meetings and that they have regular opportunities to discuss planning with class teachers.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and developing. The school offers a range of themed days and weeks to broaden further the experiences offered to pupils. The school is working towards the introduction of the new national curriculum in September 2014. This will provide an opportunity to further develop pupils' writing skills and exploit links between and across subjects.
- The local authority has indicated that it has full confidence in the headteacher and recognises the strengths of the school. To this end, they have provided appropriate levels of support that reflect the school's known quality and success.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective. It has a good mixture of knowledge, skills and experience amongst its members. Governors know the school and its priorities very well, they understand data and hold the headteacher to account well. Governors know the importance of external validation of leaders' judgements and employ a school improvement partner to tell them whether their own judgements of the school, and in particular its teaching, are accurate. Governors monitor the spending of pupil premium and sports funding effectively. They ensure that there is a clear link between the quality of teaching in the school and pay progression and check that all safeguarding requirements are met. The governing body provides a very good balance between support and challenge and is a significant asset to the school.

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	117130
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	444126

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	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Will Connolly
Headteacher	Lucille Pollard
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2011
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