

Gordon Primary School

Grangehill Road, Eltham, London, SE9 1QG

Inspection dates 11– 12 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good leadership and management at all levels have raised attainment in Year 6 and improved the quality of education in the early years. Pupils' cultural development has strengthened, particularly in art and music.
- Pupils make good progress. Their attainment in Year 6 is high. Pupils who speak English as an additional language or who have a disability or special educational needs do well.
- Provision for pupils in the early years is good. Good teaching and imaginative activities motivate children to achieve highly. Most are very well prepared for their work in Year 1.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Inspirational teaching in Years 5 and 6 enables some pupils to gain exceptional knowledge and skills in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well. They understand the rewards they can achieve and the consequences of their actions. The school is working successfully with a national charity to eradicate inappropriate name calling.
- Senior leaders and governors use information well from national assessments to identify areas for improvement. They target funds to help pupils to catch up or overcome their difficulties.
- A rich curriculum engages pupils and makes them want to be the 'best I can be'. The strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means there is an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for differing faiths and cultures.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use their expertise well to challenge and support senior leaders, and to ensure that pupils feel safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers in the early years and Key Stage 1 do not always use information from assessment well enough to help the more able pupils, boys and those supported by additional funding achieve as well as they can.
- Reading skills are not always challenged or extended effectively. Pupils are not consistently expected to use joined handwriting or shown what correct handwriting should look like.
- Explanations, especially in mathematics in some classes, lack clarity. This makes it difficult for the pupils concerned to understand what they are learning and what they have to do.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 parts of lessons that differed in length. The headteacher and deputy headteacher accompanied them during some of the observations.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were observed in lessons, assemblies, playtimes, when they moved around the school and during lunchtime.
- Pupils from different age groups spoke about their perceptions of the school. Some from Years 1 to 6 read to inspectors. Pupils' previous work in literacy and mathematics was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with staff with leadership and management responsibilities, with representatives of the local authority and the governing body.
- The responses of 40 parents who completed the online survey Parent View, the school's own parental survey with 89 responses, and 21 questionnaires completed by staff were taken into account. Inspectors also met with parents when they brought their children to school.
- Documents reviewed include the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan, arrangements for safeguarding, and records of observations of teaching, pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. In addition, notes of governors' meetings and the school's policies for behaviour management, support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were considered.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Sue Cox	Additional inspector
Gary Rawlings	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly similar to that in other schools.
- One third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group is from Any Other White background. Almost one quarter speak English as an additional language. This is much higher than in most schools.
- A private company runs breakfast, after school and holiday clubs on the school's site.
- Four staff were new to the school at the time of the inspection.
- The school is part of the New Eltham Cluster. This is a group of six primary and two secondary schools that work together to improve the quality of education, and transition arrangements for their pupils.
- The local authority uses the early years as an exemplar to other schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - assessments are more effective in the younger classes to enable the most able, boys and pupils supported by additional funding to achieve as well as they can
 - pupils understand what they are learning and the tasks they are to undertake, especially in mathematics
 - reading is taught effectively
 - pupils write with a fluent, joined and legible script and are shown examples of neat handwriting.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are united in their ambition to make the school outstanding. They pursue excellence in all aspects of their work. High levels of academic achievement are recognised as vitally important. Pupils, especially in Year 6 and at the end of the early years, are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher, together with senior and middle leaders and managers at all levels, has brought about several important improvements. These are in the early years, boys' writing in Years 3 to 6, pupils' cultural development and teachers' marking. They have all helped pupils to make better progress. The high levels of attainment in Year 6 sustained since the previous inspection, and rising achievement in Years 1 and 2, are the result of leaders at all levels holding all staff fully to account
- Senior leaders analyse a wide range of numerical information to identify where improvements are needed in teaching and achievement. They look at how well the different groups of pupils are performing and if any are falling behind. They ensure the most able in Key Stage 2 are stretched, and the least able make good progress. The impact of this has been to narrow the gap in the achievement of pupils supported by additional funding in Years 3 to 6 over the past year.
- Teachers welcome the advice they receive following the observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. This enables them to improve their practice. Further training enhances their skills, especially for those who are new to teaching. Additional sports funding is used appropriately to raise the quality of teaching in physical education and to increase pupils' participation in competitive sport and their take-up of healthy lifestyles.
- A rich, broad and balanced curriculum promotes high standards, especially in Year 6. It enthuses and engages many pupils, preparing them well for their future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the work of the school. It is integrated into the curriculum well. Philosophy and religious education lessons give pupils the ability to understand democracy and reflect on their own beliefs, and those of others, and to show mutual respect. Music and art work are high quality, and the content of their writing shows that pupils are imaginative and creative.
- Assessment systems linked to the new curriculum are at an early stage of development. Senior leaders are working with other schools and a university to research different methods and decide on their preferred approach to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress in some classes does not always give sufficient attention to the needs of the most able, boys and those supported by additional funding.
- The school's systems for safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements. To keep pupils safe and to raise achievement, the school works closely with parents. Parents participate in workshops and school events that help them to know the best way to help their children at home. Reports to parents give clear information about how well their children are doing at school.
- The local authority has provided a low level of support for this school, often advising other teachers to visit and learn from the way children in the early years are taught.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carry out their statutory duties well. They fully support senior leaders in promoting tolerance and respect for all faiths, or no faith, cultures and lifestyles. They use their expertise extremely well to assist the school in preparing pupils positively for life in modern Britain, and to keep them safe.
 - Through their sharply focused visits, governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the performance of the school in comparison to other schools nationally. Together with the headteacher, governors use this information and data about pupils' progress in each year group, to identify key priorities for improvement in the short and longer term. They use the budget, including the additional funds for sports and pupil premium, effectively to raise achievement in physical education, reading, writing and mathematics.
 - From their detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, governors offer high levels of support and challenge. They check that the policy for linking teachers' pay to pupils' progress is implemented correctly and underperformance is not tolerated. Governors are aware of the current systems for pupils' assessment and are also involved in the school's work to integrate effective assessment systems into the new National Curriculum.
 - To keep themselves fully informed, and improve their impact on the work of the school, governors attend training, seek the views of parents, staff and pupils, and receive detailed reports from senior leaders. They check the progress of developments and the influence of their spending decisions on pupils' achievements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's motto, 'Be the best you can be', and its promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development influence strongly this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are polite, well mannered and considerate to each other and to adults. They conduct themselves well throughout the day and most respond quickly to adults' requests and instructions. Lunchtime is a happy social occasion.
- There are no well-founded concerns among parents, staff, governors and pupils about behaviour. Pupils understand its importance and how it makes the school a happy place to be. They are fully aware of the rewards they can achieve and of the consequences if they do not behave as well as they should.
- Pupils are proud of their school, and of their appearance. Those who hold responsibilities take them seriously. The 'Eco Champions', particularly, ensure that the school is kept tidy and that different materials are recycled correctly.
- Most pupils are enthusiastic about learning, but occasionally some take too long to settle to work. This holds back their progress. Not all pupils take sufficient care in the presentation of their work, which leads to difficulties in calculating accurately in mathematics.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about different kinds of bullying and how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Following an incident of name calling, the school took determined action and is working with a national charity to prevent and tackle pupils' use of homophobic language. Pupils say that there is now very little name calling, and speak positively about the faiths and cultures of others. No child has been permanently prevented from coming to school because of poor behaviour for several years.
- Rigorous checks on pupils' attendance and close working partnerships with other professionals help to keep pupils safe. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching is particularly strong in communication, reading, writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6, where pupils achieve highly. In Years 1 to 4 the challenge for the most able pupils is patchy. They sometimes complete their work too quickly and wait for additional tasks, or work through the same activities as others, which are too easy for them.
- Writing is taught well. As a result of inspirational teaching, pupils say they 'love to write'. The content of their written work is often creative, imaginative and sophisticated. They have a good grasp of spelling, grammar and punctuation. That said, not all pupils have a good style of handwriting. Teachers do not always insist that pupils apply skills learned in formal handwriting lessons to their day-to-day work or show pupils how to present their work well.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read widely, confidently and with a clear understanding of the text. Some other pupils do not always extend their reading skills quickly enough because reading lessons are not so well matched to their needs and interests.
- Mathematical ideas are mostly taught well. By Year 6, pupils draw on a wide range of methods to calculate and solve problems quickly and accurately. Staff are confident to teach the curriculum found in secondary schools to those who are talented in mathematics. In some other classes, explanations are sometimes over complex. This makes pupils unsure about what they are learning and how to carry out the tasks they are set.
- Frequent robust assessments in Key Stage 2 enable teachers to plan work that builds quickly on pupils' previous learning. Careful marking and conversations in class give them clear pointers about the next steps in their learning. Information from assessments of what boys and those supported by pupil premium know and can do occasionally lack accuracy in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- Teaching assistants provide good, targeted support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. These pupils play a full part in lessons and work at tasks relevant to their age and precise needs.
- Homework is used effectively to enable pupils to have a good grasp of multiplication tables and spelling, and to enhance their skills in reading according to their abilities.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make rapid progress, especially in writing and mathematics, from Year 3 to Year 6. Often they reach standards that are much higher than those found in most schools.
- In Years 3 to 6 the most able pupils are challenged well. In 2013, more than half of the pupils taking the tests exceeded the national expectation. Those who are exceptionally able in writing and mathematics reached levels of attainment that are typical of those in secondary schools. The challenge for the most able pupils in Key Stage 1 is inconsistent and they do not achieve so highly.
- Pupils enter Year 1 from the early years with above-average starting points. They make good progress in their knowledge of the sounds that letters make and use this well in their writing.
- At times teachers do not always use information from assessments well enough to help boys and pupils supported by additional funding achieve as well as their classmates.
- In national assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils supported by additional funding reached standards in line with or above those of others of their age in schools nationally. In school there was a wide gap between their attainment and that of their classmates. They were over four terms behind in writing and mathematics, and three terms behind in reading. That said, a few of these pupils were successful in matching the above-average and exceptionally high attainment of their classmates. Their progress is good, and the gap in achievement narrowed in 2014.
- The school is committed to enabling all pupils to succeed. By the time they leave, there is little difference in the attainment of boys, girls and different minority ethnic groups. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Staff who work with them know their precise needs and challenge them to work at the correct level for their age. Their attainment is higher than that of pupils in a similar group nationally.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter Nursery with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress across all the areas of learning. When they transfer from Reception to Year 1 their attainment is high compared to the national picture. That said some boys and children who are supported by additional funding do not always achieve as well as their classmates.
- The overall good pace of learning results from skilled teaching where lively and challenging activities engage pupils' creativity, imagination and curiosity.
- The most able count forwards and backwards to 20 confidently, know the sounds letters make, read enthusiastically and write simple sentences. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are supported very effectively. Staff provide good models of spoken English that evoke good levels of spoken language from the children, especially those who speak English as an additional language.
- Children behave very well because they become absorbed in activities that motivate them to want to learn. They play happily together, share resources and make friends with classmates from all backgrounds. Whether they are playing indoors and outdoors they behave in ways that keep them safe.
- Good leadership and management have brought about significant improvements in the early years since the previous inspection. The classrooms and outside area are vibrant and organised to promote many exciting opportunities for children to think of their own ideas.
- All staff work in close partnership with parents to involve them in their child's learning. There are good procedures to ease children's transfer from home to school. Information from parents gives staff a clear idea of children's knowledge, skills and interests. They use this information to provide a rich curriculum that promotes pupils' emotional health, safety and well-being.

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	100127
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	448185

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	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny DiFabio
Headteacher	Jason Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	4– 5 March 2010
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