

Gearies Primary School

Waremead Road, Gants Hill, Ilford, IG2 6TD

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children get off to a very strong start in the early years. Outstanding provision leads to rapid pupil progress.
- Progress is sustained for all groups of pupils because any gaps in achievement between individuals or groups are quickly noticed and acted upon.
- Teachers create an extremely positive climate for learning. They equip pupils with skills to help them stay safe and take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Teachers plan very interesting and thought-provoking lessons which inspire pupils and help them see connections between subjects.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have created a powerful team spirit in the short period since amalgamation. They have secured a common understanding of the school's aims and high expectations among staff and governors which is driving rapid school improvement.
- The rich and exciting curriculum prepares pupils exceptionally well for their future lives. It helps them make sense of the moral issues they encounter.
- Well-informed governors hold school leaders rigorously to account.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. They appreciate the opportunities the school provides for them to participate and express their views.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 23 lessons to observe teaching and learning, three jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- During observations in lessons, inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at work in their books. They considered the role of additional adults where they were present.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of the school's documents. These included records related to behaviour and safety, achievement, and performance management as well as minutes of governing body meetings.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the school's parent support adviser, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by speaking to them at the start of the day and through 32 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took into account results of the school's own questionnaire for parents and fifty responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gaynor Roberts	Her Majesty's Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Sibani Raychaudhuri	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Gearies Primary School opened in 2013 following the amalgamation of a former infant and junior school. It was awarded National Teaching School status in April 2014 and works with other local schools as part of the Gants Hill Partnership Teaching Alliance.
- The school is much larger than the average primary school, with three classes in each year group. It is expected that pupil numbers will continue to grow.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups make up nearly the whole school roll. The majority of these pupils are from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other Asian heritages. The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional support through pupil premium funding is broadly average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching even further by:
 - making sure that marking and feedback in books follow a consistent approach which is helpful to all pupils and sustains their progress in learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and his senior leadership team communicate their high expectations extremely effectively. They have secured a mutual understanding of what success looks like for the school. This is underpinned by a strong commitment to staff training. Their self-evaluation and plans for further improvement are clear and comprehensive. Leaders, including some middle leaders, extend their support and influence to help other local schools.
- Leaders at all levels are highly skilled at using information about pupils' progress to adapt plans for teaching. Any pupil whose progress slows is quickly identified and plans are changed to make sure that they quickly get back on track.
- Middle leaders produce effective plans for improvement based on detailed analysis of pupils' achievement. Their leadership skills are developing rapidly because of the excellent support and training provided by senior leaders.
- Leaders use a range of methods to check on the quality of teaching. Teachers are provided with the skills to reflect on, and improve, their work. Newly qualified teachers benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills further. They are given time to observe and learn from one another's teaching. Performance management objectives ensure improvements in achievement are directly linked to progression in teachers' pay.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Policies related to safeguarding make procedures, roles and responsibilities clear. Staff are well informed about steps to take if they are concerned about a child's safety or welfare. They know who to get support from if they need it.
- The curriculum enables pupils to develop necessary skills and knowledge using contexts which engage their curiosity and enthusiasm. Carefully chosen topics and projects allow them to appreciate the connections between subjects.
- Pupils receive an outstanding spiritual, social, moral and cultural education. Teachers waste no opportunity to help pupils develop their understanding of rights and responsibilities. For example, pupils have recently worked alongside a group of adults with learning difficulties to realise their right of access to the arts. Such opportunities are preparing pupils exceptionally well for their future lives in modern Britain.
- The school sport funding has been used well to make sure that more pupils participate in the additional activities on offer. Pupils are developing sporting skills rapidly. This is leading to much greater success in competitive sports such as rugby.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's leadership. Their confidence is expressed through increasing participation in the many events and activities the school invites them to attend.
- The local authority provides advice and support when the school requires this. It provides training which subject leaders have used to further their skills, particularly in relation to the teaching of English and mathematics.
- The governance of the school:
 - The governing body is highly skilled and focused on success. Governors have held school leaders to account during the first year following amalgamation by asking very searching questions of them. They keep their structure and plans for future development under regular review so all governors retain an accurate picture of the school's work. Governors have a thorough knowledge of pupils' progress and use this to contribute to the school's self-evaluation. They also use this well to review staff performance and pay progression.
 - Governors take effective steps to ensure their statutory duties for safeguarding are met. They carefully consider the use to which the school puts additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They contribute extensively to the wider life of the school and the teaching school partnership of which it is a part. Governors are successful in making sure that parents understand their roles and responsibilities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are crystal clear about the high standards that all adults expect of them and which they have helped to create. They nearly always live up to these standards because they understand their purpose.
- In lessons, pupils demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They value the time given to think about their work. They have been taught well how to work together to deepen their learning.
- Pupils have roles which enable them to take responsibility for some aspects of behaviour and safety. They understand what they have done to earn them.
- Pupils maintain this outstanding behaviour at play and as they move around the school, even when they are less closely supervised. This is because they have been taught how important good behaviour is in keeping them safe. They have also been taught a simple, but effective, three-step strategy to help them sort out minor problems.
- There have been no exclusions since the primary school opened. On occasion, a small number of pupils make mistakes and behave in ways which do not live up to the high standards of behaviour expected. Records of how these incidents have been dealt with demonstrate that they are thoroughly and effectively followed up.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and have been taught well how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils in Year 4 can explain the importance of keeping information about their identity safe when using the internet. Adults have a shared understanding of safeguarding procedures. Communication between adults about matters regarding safety are strong and robust.
- Attendance has improved rapidly in the past year. It is now above the national average. This is because children want to come to school so they can enjoy the exciting lessons the school provides. Children arrive on time for school. The headteacher is quick to talk with parents if a problem with punctuality is brought to his attention.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is always good, and often outstanding. As a result, pupils sustain excellent progress over time and achieve exceptionally well. Leaders, teachers and support staff understand how well each child is progressing and act swiftly to change plans if any child is at risk of falling behind.
- Generally, pupils are helped by the comments that teachers make in their books. However, some comments leave them unclear about how to improve their work. Teachers make sure that pupils know how to check their own work and that of their classmates.
- Teachers adapt lessons to the emerging needs of pupils. They ask effective questions to check understanding and make sure appropriate help or further challenge is provided.
- Teachers plan exciting lessons which enable pupils to understand why they need to learn. Activities often help pupils to see how different subjects relate to one another. For example, as part of a whole school project to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War, pupils have investigated the reasons why so many troops suffered from 'trench foot'. Consequently, they appreciate how learning in history and science can be linked.
- The teaching of reading and writing involves plenty of opportunity for pupils to discuss and share their ideas. Teachers insist on pupils using precise vocabulary when answering questions. As a result, pupils learn quickly how to express their knowledge and explain their thinking.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These expectations are maintained when pupils are taught by adults other than their usual teacher.
- More-able pupils, in particular, benefit from teachers' strong subject knowledge. This helps them extend their skills and enables them to enjoy thinking deeply about their work. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, pupils were considering the link between an object's mass and its size prior to carrying out an investigation.
- Support staff provide expert and precise guidance for individuals and groups of pupils. Their encouraging words help lower attaining pupils to develop perseverance and identify their successes. They also have the necessary skills to probe pupils' understanding through effective questioning.

The achievement of pupils**is outstanding**

- Children start in the nursery with skills below what is typical for their age. Some children join the Reception year not having attended the school's nursery.
- Children make outstanding progress, so that by the end of the Reception year nearly every child has achieved a good level of development. In addition, the proportion of children exceeding expected levels of development is much higher than national figures.
- Checks on their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) indicate that nearly all pupils meet the expected standard by the end of Year 1. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels of achievement exceeds national averages.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 increased in 2014. This is due to the rapid progress made by pupils in Year 6 since the new primary school opened. The proportion of more-able pupils exceeding expected progress to reach Level 6 has also increased.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils in the school in reading and writing. They exceed the expected level of achievement for all pupils nationally. In mathematics they are just three months behind other pupils in the school, but still ahead of national averages for all pupils.
- Pupils are avid readers and teachers inspire them to continue enjoying reading at home. More-able pupils are skilfully taught to develop more sophisticated reading skills. For example, Year 6 pupils can debate moral issues encountered by fictional characters they have read about.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as all other pupils. Skilful teaching and rigorous tracking of progress ensure that all pupils get the same opportunities to achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive support which matches their needs accurately. They have equal access to the opportunities for learning which the school provides for all pupils. This results in progress which, given their starting points, is the same as that for other pupils.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- Children make outstanding progress because of precise, responsive planning for their individual needs. This is coupled with the provision of imaginative resources and creative use of spaces. By the end of the Reception year nearly all children have reached a good level of development.
- Staff place a strong emphasis on helping children learn how to get along with one another. They take the necessary steps to keep children safe and understand procedures which promote safeguarding.
- Adults use talk very skilfully to promote rapid learning of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Children benefit from a very effective balance of working directly with an adult and time to explore on their own or with their classmates.
- The early years leader has an extensive knowledge of every child in the setting. He uses this to ensure all staff plan learning opportunities which meet children's individual needs.

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	133934
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	447774

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	696
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Petiffer
Headteacher	Mr R Drew
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 85501803
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