

Pooles Park Primary School

Lennox Road, Finsbury Park, London, N4 3NW

Inspection dates 21–22 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make the progress that they should in some year groups, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Expectations are not high enough and so pupils do not produce and present high-quality written work in their books.
- Pupils do not have frequent enough opportunities to apply their mathematical and written skills in different subjects.
- Staff do not always give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Sometimes pupils do not manage their behaviour well enough around the school. A few pupils say they do not always feel safe in some of the outside play areas.
- Leaders do not analyse pupils' progress effectively and so do not have a precise picture of the school's performance.
- Governors generally check the quality of pupils' progress, but are not accurate in judging how well the school operates. Senior and middle leaders are new to their roles and have not had sufficient time to ensure that teaching, behaviour and safety have remained consistently good and that pupils achieve well.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils who have particular learning needs and who attend the Rainbow room achieve well from their starting points.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of reading are confident in tackling unfamiliar words.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents, who are very supportive of the school's work.
- Pupils are keen and have very positive attitudes towards their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 parts of lessons. Six were observed jointly with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with key staff, four members of the governing body, three groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a consultant to the school.
- Inspectors observed lunchtimes and break times and spoke to pupils informally around the school.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's evaluation of its own performance, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. They also looked at a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of 11 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, a written comment from a parent and 29 responses to the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Peter McCarthy	Additional inspector
Christina Kenna	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Apart from the headteacher, most of the senior and middle leaders are new to their roles. At the time of the inspection the school did not have a deputy headteacher as she was on maternity leave and a new deputy headteacher was about to start after the half-term holidays.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly lower than the national average.
- Children who attend the Nursery do so part time and those in the Reception classes are full time. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well above average. The two main groups are from Somalia and Turkey.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides extra support for pupils with complex learning needs in the Rainbow Room.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is at least typically good in order to raise achievement further in writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are given the right levels of challenge so that they can achieve as well as they can
 - making sure that pupils use and apply their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects
 - raising expectations so that pupils produce high-quality written work that is well presented
 - making sure that pupils are given clear advice on the next steps needed to improve their work.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - helping pupils to take more responsibility in managing their own behaviour around the school
 - ensuring that all pupils feel safe in all of the outdoor play areas
 - helping pupils to attend the school on time by building on the good work that has already started.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of the new senior and middle leaders so that they are fully involved and accountable for raising achievement in their areas
 - ensuring that leaders check frequently on the quality of marking so that pupils are clear about how to present and improve their work
 - making sure that all leaders analyse information about pupils' progress more effectively so they can have a clear and more accurate picture of the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because achievement and teaching are not consistently good. Behaviour and safety are not good. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have not been tackled as effectively as they should have been. Actions taken by leaders are now starting to improve all areas of the school's work, showing that the school has the capacity to make further improvements.
- Senior and middle leaders' checks on the quality of work in pupils' books are not rigorous enough. This is why pupils' work is not always marked in line with the school's expectations and pupils do not present their work to a high enough standard.
- The data system used by leaders provides plenty of valuable information about pupils' achievement. However, leaders do not analyse or use this data well enough to give them an accurate and precise picture of the school's performance. Their analysis is overgenerous.
- Procedures for monitoring teachers' performance, such as looking at pupils' books and lesson observations, are in place but lack rigour. The leadership makes links between teachers' performance and their pay.
- The curriculum does not help more-able pupils to achieve as well in their learning as they should, although it adequately promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school uses the pupil premium well to help promote equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged pupils by subsidising educational visits and providing a range of after-school club activities. This is helping to close the achievement gap between them and the others in the school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of trips that are linked to the topic. This helps to celebrate the diversity of the school community and promotes British values. The school has its own inspiring organic garden where pupils enjoy learning about the natural environment. The school has won the London School Environmental Award.
- The sports premium funding is used effectively to improve teachers' skills to deliver high-quality sport so that it is sustainable once the funding ceases. More pupils are now taking part in a wider range of sports such as gymnastics, athletics and dance.
- The school has successfully fostered good relationships with its parents. Various activities such as workshops are encouraging more parents to support the school's work.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to the school as it does not have significant concerns about it because of the new leadership appointments and recently improved capacity.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand the school's information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They know that progress is not consistently good throughout the school, but are nonetheless overly optimistic when judging the school's overall effectiveness.
 - Governors utilise their skills well. They attend training regularly so that they know how to carry out their roles and responsibilities. They make regular visits to the school. Governors have been active in revising the anti-bullying and behaviour policies. They have contributed strongly to improving the provision and learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - Arrangements for the performance management of the headteacher are in place. Governors have recently been involved in changing the pay scale in order to reward exceptional performance of staff. They know how the school has tackled underperformance in the past.
 - Governors ensure that the school's finances are managed well. They closely monitor how the pupil premium funding is spent and know what difference it is making. Governors ensure that safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**require improvement****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Around the school pupils do not always regulate their own behaviour well enough unless being supervised by an adult. Staff do not always encourage pupils to develop pride in the way they present their work in their books.
- In lessons, pupils are eager to learn. However, because some pupils are sometimes late to school in the mornings, they miss the first part of the lesson. The school is now taking a firmer stance on this and pupils' punctuality is improving.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. They wear their uniform with pride. Pupils respond well to adults' instructions in lessons.
- Assemblies provide reflection time for pupils to think about how they can do their best and make others happy. Assemblies explore with pupils how they can show genuine care and concern for their peers as well as celebrating the success of others. All of this helps to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school has worked extremely hard to improve attendance, which has increased from well below average to just below average.
- The breakfast club provides a calm and healthy start to the school day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. A few pupils say that they do not feel completely safe in certain parts of the playground. Leaders are now aware of this and have put immediate steps in place to address it.
- Pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Pupils clearly understand the different types of bullying. They say that it does happen but do not feel it is a serious problem. When it does take place it is mainly name-calling. Pupils were able to say who they would go to if they needed support.
- The few parents who responded to the online questionnaire say that the school keeps their children safe.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Weaker teaching in the past impeded pupils' progress. The headteacher and other senior leaders implemented a number of successful strategies to address this and progress has improved. Even so, it is not yet consistently good enough to help all pupils throughout the school to achieve as well as they should.
- Mathematics is not always taught well. Sometimes the work is too easy. Pupils, particularly the most able, are not always encouraged to extend and challenge their thinking skills in this subject. Pupils do not appreciate the value of mathematical skills because they have too few opportunities to apply them in other subjects. Expectations are not high enough. Work in pupils' book shows that basic spellings, punctuation and grammar are not generally accurate or errors addressed soon enough, especially in their topic books. Teachers do not encourage pupils to write at length or apply their literacy skills regularly in subjects other than in English. Also, staff do not encourage pupils to take pride in the way they present their work.
- The quality of marking is variable. It is much better in literacy and mathematics books than in topic books. However, teachers do not consistently give pupils enough clear guidance on the next steps needed to improve their work. This restricts their progress.
- Phonics (the sounds letters make) is taught effectively. It is quickly helping those at the early stages of reading to develop their confidence well. For example, in a Year 2 class the teacher's enthusiasm and good use of questioning enabled all pupils to quickly understand and read a wide range of words containing the 'ear' sound.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support learning for the different groups of pupils, particularly those who need extra support and those who speak English as an additional language. For example, teaching assistants in a Year 4 mathematics lesson used practical resources and questioning well to help pupils gain a clearer understanding of how to solve fractions.
- Teachers effectively encourage pupils to work and learn together. There are strong and positive relationships between adults and pupils in the classroom.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Although improving, pupils do not make consistently good progress throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2, standards have been below average for the last three years.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should throughout the school. Although this is improving steadily, attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 for this group of pupils is well below the national average. This is because the work pupils do is often too easy.
- Some pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. However, this good progress is not consistent throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Despite weaknesses in the quality of teaching, in 2014, standards in reading, writing and mathematics improved and were broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The 2014 national assessment tests showed that the disadvantaged pupils in Years 6 were just under half a term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics. When compared to other pupils nationally they were almost a year behind. In reading, the disadvantaged pupils are just over two terms behind the others in the school and other pupils nationally. The school's information for the different year groups currently in the school shows that the gap is closing quickly, and in some year groups, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than the others in the school.
- The results for the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2014 show significant improvement. They are now slightly above the national expectations, whereas they were well below expectations for the last three years. Pupils say they enjoy using the school library because they get to read a variety of interesting books for pleasure.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to the other pupils in the school. Pupils who need additional and specialist support attend the Rainbow room. They work with staff in small groups and do activities that are suited to their complex learning needs. As a result, they make good progress from their individual starting points.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery with skills that are below levels typically expected for their age. However, this current cohort of children have started with skill levels that are exceptionally low. They catch up quickly and have made good progress by the time they leave Reception. They begin Year 1 as confident learners.
- Those children with very low levels of personal, social and emotional development have additional and effective support, and their progress is closely monitored.
- Teachers plan and use assessments well. They take into account the different interests and needs of all children. However, the most able do not always achieve as well as they should. Some teaching activities are not pitched at the right level.
- All adults work well together to provide an exciting learning environment where children are happy to learn. During the inspection, the Halloween theme created plenty of excitement. Children counted spiders and bats excitedly. They were intrigued by the way ice melted because of the heat from their hands. They experimented with high levels of engagement and much discussion.
- Behaviour is good. Children respond well to adults' instructions and display positive attitudes to learning. Children are good at sharing resources and play well together. Adults ensure that children are kept safe.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders formally and informally check teaching and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Strong partnerships are established with parents who contribute to their children's online 'learning journey'. The school keeps parents well informed of their children's progress.

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	131741
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	449315

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	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Douglas Tweddle
Headteacher	Greg Crawford
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 December 2010
Telephone number	020 7272 2655
Fax number	020 7281 6804
Email address	admin@poolespark.islington.sch.uk

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