

Dollis Junior School

Pursley Road, Mill Hill, London, NW7 2BU

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Through strong leadership, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have kept the staff team focused sharply on improving its practice and its impact on pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Since the last inspection, the governing body has increased the rigour considerably with which it holds leaders to account for the school's performance.
- By checking carefully on the quality of teaching, school leaders have been able to put in place carefully targeted training for individual teachers to improve the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.
- Teaching is good and improving across the school. This is leading to pupils' rate of progress increasing and their attainment rising, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6. Teachers in these classes have high expectations of pupils and continually check their understanding of what pupils are learning.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at play. They respond quickly to their teachers and are very considerate towards each other at all times.
- Most pupils are keen to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, work hard, take pride in their work and care over its presentation.
- Pupils' welfare is the highest priority for staff and governors. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure in school.
- Sport plays a major role in school life. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons and their teams are very successful in local sports competitions.
- The school draws well on the wide range of cultural backgrounds in the school to ensure that pupils learn to respect and value others, whilst at the same time understanding what it is to be British.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not fully develop their writing skills either in English or across subjects. As a result, their progress in writing is sometimes slower than in reading and mathematics.
- Support staff are not always effectively used to support learning throughout every lesson.
- Some teaching does not always challenge pupils to do their best work. Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, five of which were visited together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books from this year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 40 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the 70 responses to a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alexandra Owens	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the majority of primary schools.
- Most pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. This proportion is much higher than in most primary schools.
- Three quarters of the pupils speak English as an additional language. This includes a small number who enter the school at the early stages of learning English.
- Half of the pupils, many more than is usual nationally, are disadvantaged and so eligible for additional funding known as the pupil premium. This is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- At about one pupil in four, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club for pupils from this school and from the neighbouring infant school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' achievement in writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils develop their extended writing skills more effectively
 - the curriculum is planned to include appropriate writing skills in other subjects.
- Increase the rate of pupils' progress to outstanding levels by ensuring that:
 - the questions teachers ask, and the work they set, help pupils to extend their learning to the highest levels
 - marking provides more effective guidance for pupils on how to improve their work.
- Ensure that teachers always use support staff effectively to focus on pupils' learning during teaching sessions.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well as a team to raise everyone's expectations of what the pupils can achieve. They have set challenging targets of teachers and pupils and check very carefully that these are being met. This has led to improvements in teaching and rising achievement. They have also ensured that all staff follow policies aimed at enabling good behaviour to be the norm.
- Senior leaders check regularly on the quality of teaching in order to identify where further training is needed and where improvements are taking place. Teachers share ideas and learn from each other when working together in small groups to develop specific aspects of their teaching. This has led to individual teachers becoming more effective and teaching improving across the school.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics are leading developments and actions in their areas well, including changes to the National Curriculum and to assessment arrangements. New 'leaders of learning' in each year group are only recently in post. Their skills are developing, but they have not yet ensured consistency in their teams in teaching and marking.
- Close and effective partnerships with other schools and the local authority have played their part in supporting the school's recent improvement. These links have sharpened the skills of leaders at all levels in identifying areas requiring attention and checking the impact of actions subsequently taken.
- The school is strongly committed to making sure the needs of individual pupils are identified and met. It promotes equality of opportunity well and is rigorous in ensuring there is no discrimination. The pupil premium is being used effectively to provide small-group teaching and short-term programmes of support for individual eligible pupils.
- The range of subjects taught is broad, and the school makes sure all subjects have enough time allocated for them to be studied in sufficient depth. Clubs, trips and visitors to school considerably enrich pupils' experiences. Through assemblies and citizenship projects, pupils learn that living under the rule of law protects individuals. This helps them to develop values of fairness, tolerance, understanding and respect for others. The school uses the experiences of the wide range of ethnic groups represented in the school to share aspects of their customs and cultures. This helps to foster the good relations seen throughout the school. Opportunities for pupils to develop their higher level writing skills in a wider range of subjects are too few. Activities to develop their other skills are catered for well.
- The school uses additional funding well to extend its already strong provision for physical education and sport. Thoughtfully targeted spending has increased numbers attending school sports clubs, extended participation in competitive sports events and provided training for teachers.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are implemented by all staff. Procedures to ensure pupils' well-being are carefully monitored, regularly reviewed and adapted in response to changing requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Having reflected on its effectiveness, the governing body has changed the way it operates over the last 18 months. This includes working with a National Leader of Governance. Governors now have a much greater understanding on which to base their questioning of school leaders and their scrutiny of the school's performance. They interrogate assessment data carefully so that their challenge of senior leaders is meaningful. They fully share the headteacher's ambitions and priorities for the school, such as to improve writing. They are quite aware of the work being undertaken to improve teaching; only good teaching is rewarded financially. Governors carefully monitor school finances and the impact of their spending decisions, such as over allocation of the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move sensibly around the school and play happily together on the playground. Pupils are very polite towards adults and show great respect and consideration for each other. Pupils understand what is expected of them and say that teachers are firm, but fair. Attendance is rising at a faster rate than nationally.
- Pupils answer questions clearly and listen to each other's responses carefully. They generally enjoy learning, particularly when lessons are interesting, and rise to the challenges presented by their teachers. However, sometimes concentration waivers for a small number of pupils where less experienced teachers have not fully established their expectations and teaching does not grab pupils' imaginations.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents strongly agree. Pupils learn how to look after themselves and are taught to use the internet safely.
- Pupils take care of each other and make sure anyone looking unhappy or left out is included in their games and helped to make friends. Pupils are happy in school. Pupils are quite clear that bullying is not tolerated in the school. They and their parents agree that staff deal firmly and successfully with any rare incidents. This is confirmed by school records.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently strong and leading to secure learning and rapid progress. Teachers adopt methods and use resources that stimulate the pupils' imaginations and engage their interest, such as using video clips to encourage their ideas in writing. This drives the learning of all pupils in these classes.
- Teaching makes it very clear to pupils what they are to do, the purpose behind their work and how they can be successful. Pupils' understanding is checked carefully and teaching is adapted well in light of their responses. This is less effectively planned in some teaching for Years 3 and 4.
- The questions teachers ask and the work they set challenge the more able. There are times when pupils find work less stimulating. This means pupils are not made to think enough and do not always use a variety of ways to develop their ideas.
- Teachers manage the behaviour of the pupils in their classes well. They have a strong presence, make their expectations clear and are firm but calm. This means learning moves forward unhindered by the need to spend time correcting poor behaviour.
- Teaching assistants and other support staff contribute considerably to the pupils' learning when teaching individuals and small groups both inside and outside the classroom. They are less effective during parts of whole class teaching. This is because they are not always briefed and used effectively to support learning.
- Pupils are starting to respond to the guidance provided by their teachers, but this is not always effective for all pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are particularly good at correcting mistakes to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good from their starting points. Progress increased last year and has continued to do so this year. This accounts for the pupils' average, and rising, attainment in reading and mathematics. Progress is not as consistently strong in writing.
- Year 6 test results rose to average levels in 2014 in reading and mathematics. Results in writing were similar to the previous year. Pupils in Year 6 have made more rapid progress and are already working at higher levels. Progress in other years groups is also good.
- Improving writing is a priority for action. Improvements are underway and pupils' writing confidence is increasing. Pupils develop their writing by linking it closely to texts they are reading. They plan and edit their work, although not all activities include opportunities for purposeful writing or writing across subjects.
- The progress of the most able pupils is good. A small number reached Level 6 in mathematics in 2014, and considerably more are on track to reach this level in the current Year 6.
- Pupils speaking English as an additional language achieve well, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils of Black African backgrounds sometimes achieved less well than others, but this is no longer the picture.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good, with rapid progress for some individual pupils. This is because their needs are carefully identified. Any action programmes put in place are quickly evaluated and adapted if they are found not to be having the desired impact.
- Test results for disadvantaged pupils were behind others in Year 6 last year by over 18 months in reading, over one year in writing and over two terms in mathematics. The gap with other pupils nationally was over one year in reading and writing and over two terms in mathematics. More recent work and checks made by the school indicate gaps are much narrower in all year groups and closing rapidly. This indicates that disadvantaged pupils are now making the same good progress as others in each year group.

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	101355
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	448218

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dev Mohindra
Headteacher	Colin Dowland
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2009
Telephone number	020 8959 4728
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