

Phoenix Primary School

Marlborough Grove, London, SE1 5JT

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Outstanding leadership at all levels maintains an unrelenting focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning at the school. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well.
- The continuous drive for improvement, together with focused support and challenge for teachers and support staff, means that teaching is outstanding. Exceptionally strong middle leaders working across the Mayflower Federation, together with excellent professional development, ensure teaching is of a consistently high quality.
- A real strength of the teaching is the support of teaching assistants. They work with teachers very effectively and enhance pupils' learning right across the school.
- Governors are ambitious and challenge leaders to maintain and build on the very strong outcomes as well as meeting the specific needs of the community that the school serves.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are unfailingly polite and courteous to visitors and work and play together exceptionally well. In lessons, pupils work hard and enjoy their learning. They cooperate exceptionally well when working on all types of activities as well as when moving around the school buildings. Pupils are rightly very proud of the standard of their work.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities and experiences where they can develop their skills, understanding and knowledge extremely well. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher ensures that pupils' progress is tracked and analysed exceptionally well. This information is shared with staff and enables teaching to be precisely focused on the needs of each pupil. Learning activities are skilfully designed so that pupils are challenged. Where underachievement is identified, support is swiftly provided and progress is monitored closely. Progress data also enable leaders to hold teachers to account and provide support and challenge as appropriate.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils attain extremely well in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with other children nationally. When compared with other children within the school, over time the outcomes have been a little variable. There has been significant improvement over the last year, particularly in reading, but small gaps remain in writing and mathematics. School leaders are aware of this.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are of the highest quality.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an excellent start for children. High-quality teaching provides extremely effective and structured learning. This means that children make outstanding progress. By the time they complete the Reception Year, children are excellently prepared for Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons, of which five were joint observations with members of the school’s senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four governors, the executive headteacher of the Mayflower Federation, the headteacher, and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6. In addition, a meeting was held with a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a range of information, including data on pupils’ achievement, planning and monitoring documentation used by teachers to check on how well the school is doing, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding. Pupils’ books were also scrutinised.
- An analysis was made of the 126 responses to a survey of parents undertaken by the school during the spring term. The 18 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey were also considered.
- The school is part of the Mayflower Federation along with Ilderton Primary School. The federation is led by an executive headteacher and has a single governing body. A coordinated inspection of both schools was undertaken over the same two day period. Some meetings were held jointly with the lead inspector for the inspection of Ilderton Primary School. These included meetings with the executive headteacher and the Acting Chair of the Governing Body and governors. An inspector from each inspection team also jointly interviewed the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and faculty and year leaders from both schools. There is a separate report on the findings from the inspection of Ilderton Primary School.

Inspection team

Robert Pyner, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jean Thwaites

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Christine Alexander

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups; the proportion is over three times the national average. The largest groups are about one quarter of the pupils who come from a Black African heritage and about a fifth who are White British.
- The majority of pupils have a first language other than English. However, only a few are in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is around four in 10, which is greater than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with greater learning needs and those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A larger-than-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has full- and part-time nursery provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school provision on the school site. This is managed by an independent contractor and so was not part of this inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The executive headteacher of the Mayflower Federation is a National Leader of Education (NLE). Since the last inspection, the governing body has appointed the executive headteacher and headteacher of the school.
- Subject and other leaders work across the schools in the Mayflower Federation. Staff from the federation are currently supporting another primary school within the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the small attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school in writing and mathematics are eradicated.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- This school is so successful because of the vision and ambition of the executive headteacher. He has used his experience of tried and tested improvement strategies to develop an excellent culture of improvement across the school which has been translated into sharply improved outcomes for all pupils. Since the last inspection, this approach has built an extremely strong team within Phoenix and, indeed, across the federation. Staff morale in the school is extremely high.
- The vision and ambition of the federation is turned into concrete and measureable achievement at Phoenix by the excellent work of the headteacher. His drive and determination to ensure that all pupils make excellent progress in academic subjects and in their personal development are very clear. Improvement strategies and layers of leadership are firmly in place in the school and across the federation. This enables leaders to use the considerable strengths of the staff across the federation to plan, support and challenge performance and outcomes. However, there is also strength in depth in terms of leadership within Phoenix. Line management structures are clear and leaders at all levels are held to account for the areas for which they are responsible. The headteacher and deputy headteachers give excellent direction and support across the school.
- The basis of the impressive improvement in the outcomes for pupils is the forensic detail involved in tracking pupils' progress, providing individualised support and matching challenging activities to abilities. There are very strong and interlinked systems to set comprehensive targets for pupils' achievement, record their progress, monitor the quality of teaching and provide support and challenge so teachers improve.
- Overall, the ethos of the school is one of continuing improvement. Nothing is allowed to stand still and every aspect of the school's work is designed to achieve maximum impact. This is the case from the business-like reception office when entering the school to the high-quality displays of work and artefacts in all areas.
- Middle leadership in the school is excellent. These leaders work across the federation as faculty or year leaders providing comprehensive support for staff. There are real strengths in the planning of work, intervention for groups and individuals identified as requiring further help and developing subject initiatives. School self-evaluation is accurate and development planning is comprehensive.
- Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum. Activities are meticulously planned to ensure they meet the abilities and needs of pupils as well as giving opportunities for 'hands on' learning and application of knowledge and skills. Regular theme days are planned to reinforce learning and give longer periods to study particular aspects of subjects. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these opportunities. The curriculum promotes learning about major faiths and beliefs across a range of themes. Overall, the curriculum promotes excellent progress in subjects and ensures pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As a consequence, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium grant is used very effectively to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged pupils are met and that they have equality of opportunity. Intervention for this group is based on the regular monitoring of their progress and there is swift intervention when underachievement is identified. Ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, fostering good relationships and tackling all forms of discrimination are at the heart of the school's values.
- The school has made effective use of the primary physical education and sports grant. This is used to provide wider opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting events and to develop healthy lifestyles. In addition, pupils can also undertake more individual sporting activities, such as skating.
- The school works extremely hard to support the community it serves. Parents recognise and appreciate the ease with which they can discuss issues with staff. The school has developed initiatives where parents can help their children. An example of this is the Family Reading programme. Parents can come into school and read alongside their child during one morning each week. Following each session, parents can attend a workshop to receive guidance about helping their children develop their reading skills at home. The session which took place during the inspection was well attended by parents.
- Safeguarding procedures are very thorough and monitored closely. The school is a safe and secure environment where the safety of pupils is paramount.
- The local authority maintains a 'light touch' monitoring regime for the school and this is appropriate. Staff from the local authority have undertaken a review of the school since the last inspection and this helped to provide an external validation of the school's work for leaders. The federation now works in partnership with the local authority in supporting another primary school.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has extremely high ambition for both schools in the federation. It holds the executive headteacher and the headteachers of the schools to account robustly. Governors have not held back from making difficult decisions since the last inspection. Their overriding priorities are to raise the achievement of the pupils and the aspirations of the community around the school.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the work of the school. This, in part, is facilitated by meetings being planned for before school so that, following these, governors can visit classrooms and speak to staff and pupils. Governors also make themselves available to speak with parents at specific times, for example following the Family Reading sessions.
- Arrangements for monitoring the performance of teachers are rigorous. Decisions about pay progression for teachers are transparent and aligned to the progress made by pupils. Governors have a strong understanding of the achievement by groups of pupils and they are fully aware of how the pupil premium is spent, together with its impact.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Leaders have the highest expectations for behaviour and pupils respond readily to the strong adult role models within the school. Impeccable behaviour, together with respect and tolerance for others, are central to the culture of the school. Parents appreciate the school's high expectations for behaviour in and around the school.
- The well-maintained environment of the school is enhanced by high-quality displays of pupils' work and artefacts which inspire their imagination and curiosity. Pupils respond to this and take great care of the equipment and materials that they use. Pupils are rightly proud of the presentation of their work in books which is exemplary.
- Pupils are attentive and alert in lessons. They work hard and apply themselves eagerly to their tasks and help others. Children in the early years develop equally positive attitudes to learning. Playtimes are active and the best use is made of the limited outdoor space. Pupils play safely and they are well supervised by staff. Peer mentors play a part in helping pupils play properly and safely. Pupils move around the school sensibly and with care for others. They are unfailingly polite and courteous to visitors.
- There have been very few exclusions since the last inspection and few recorded cases of racist incidents or bullying. Senior staff review and analyse information about behaviour each half term and develop individualised programmes for pupils where appropriate. The work of the family services manager in liaising with parents is effective in these cases. The school can point to cases of improved behaviour following individualised programmes for pupils.
- Attendance has improved and is thoroughly monitored. School leaders have the highest expectations for full attendance and take a full range of actions when unauthorised absence occurs.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff are trained to implement appropriate safeguarding procedures, including specific child protection procedures. Visitors are thoroughly checked and fully briefed about child protection and safety measures. Pupils are helped to understand how to stay safe because it is taught well in lessons and assemblies.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and understand how to stay safe on the internet. They say that bullying is rare and that staff will deal with it if it occurs. They show very safe practices when moving around the school.
- School survey responses, including those from the Ofsted online survey, show that parents are very confident that their children are safe in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- A key aspect of the high-quality teaching in the school is the focus on the assessment of the needs of groups and individuals and, as a result, all pupils make excellent progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together and, in lessons, activities are adapted to meet the specific needs of individual pupils and adjusted to meet changing requirements. In this way opportunities to develop learning are increased and so the pupils make better progress.
- The presentation of pupils' work in their books is excellent; this is the case right across the school. They are rightly very proud of the standards of their work and strive to meet the very high expectations of

teachers. The books show strong progress in a broad range of subjects with an appropriate focus on reading, writing and mathematics. Homework is used very effectively to enhance and develop learning in school. Homework books show a similar, very high standard of work and presentation as the books used in lessons.

- Activities are very thoughtfully planned to capture the imagination of pupils and enable them to apply their understanding and knowledge. For example, in a Year 6 class learning about Pythagoras' theorem, pupils were able to test it out using square sweets so that they could physically demonstrate the theorem. Pupils enjoyed this practical application of the focus of the lesson and could develop their understanding further using triangles they had constructed themselves.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught exceptionally well and this is the basis of the outstanding outcomes for reading. Pupils enjoy reading and can readily speak about their books and favourite authors and subjects.
- Setting by ability is used in the older classes to promote rapid progress, particularly in mathematics. More-able pupils are provided with appropriately challenging activities and the success of this can be seen in the excellent progress made by this group.
- The standard of marking matches the excellent quality of pupils' work in their books. The school's marking policy is followed meticulously throughout the school. Pupils understand it and can explain their responses to guidance from teachers. This significantly enhances the impact of the progress pupils make in lessons.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils join the Early Years Foundation Stage classes displaying knowledge, skills and understanding at levels below those typical for their age. As a consequence of excellent assessment of development and learning needs, together with outstanding teaching, pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Strong progress continues in Key Stage 1. The outcomes for the phonics (the sounds that letters make) screening check for Year 1 show that for 2014 the proportion achieving the expected standard was well above the national figure. This reflects the strong focus on reading and literacy skills that is central to the school. School records and inspection evidence indicate similar outcomes for the current Year 1 cohort.
- Given this excellent start to school, the outcomes for Year 2 pupils have been less convincing, but always around the national averages. Leaders have been aware of this and have focused work on this profile, particularly mathematics at the higher level, as well as reading and writing. As a result, progress monitoring for this year indicates that Year 2 pupils are on track to improve the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in reading, writing and particularly mathematics. This is supported by inspection evidence, including the scrutiny of pupils' books.
- The progress pupils make in Key Stage 2 is outstanding. The 2014 attainment outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly above average at the expected level. All groups within the school show a similarly strong profile. Progress tracking indicates that pupils will improve on these outcomes, especially at the higher levels, this year. Progress measures show that all groups of pupils make at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with many pupils showing stronger progress. Overall, taking pupils' starting points into consideration, this profile of achievement is outstanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress overall. The 2014 results for Year 6 showed that in reading, disadvantaged pupils at Phoenix were some two-and-a-half terms ahead of other pupils nationally. For writing and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were in line. This shows that disadvantaged pupils do very well when compared with all pupils nationally. The comparison between disadvantaged and other pupils within the school at Phoenix was different. For reading, disadvantaged pupils were almost a term ahead of other pupils. However, in writing and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were two-and-a-half terms behind other pupils. For this year the indications are that there have been significant improvements in these measures. Following focused work, tracking for the current Year 6 cohort shows that the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils within the school has closed significantly. The latest monitoring data show disadvantaged pupils one term ahead of other pupils in reading, with writing in line. For mathematics, disadvantaged pupils are just under a term behind other pupils. This represents significant improvement but remains to be embedded to ensure a consistent profile.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is better than that of the comparable national group and all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This is excellent progress for these pupils and is confirmed by the scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection.
- The progress made by more-able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is stronger than that of the comparable national group and all pupils nationally. This represents outstanding progress for this group, in

line with the overall profile for the school. School progress tracking shows that more-able pupils continue to be a targeted group for teachers and senior leaders so that their achievement remains high.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. The outstanding provision ensures that, from their individual starting points, the children make excellent progress. As a result, by the end of their Reception Year the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development exceeds the national average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is effectively led by an enthusiastic and skilled leader. Self-evaluation is accurate and the leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. There is a strong commitment to further improvement through coaching and staff development. This is enhanced by the effective links within the federation and the local authority.
- The children achieve so well across all areas of learning because the curriculum ensures activities are interesting as well as developing skills and understanding. For example, when cutting up vegetables to make soup, there was a focus on the children's knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to read and write instructions. This activity was used to excellent effect to reinforce writing skills as they wrote instructions. This was further developed when the children were challenged to write more extended and complex sentences using appropriate technical language. It is the learning which results from activities such as these that results in the children being very well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff know the children well and communication with parents about transition is a strength. There are many opportunities for parents and family members to engage and support children in their learning.
- Records of the children's progress are extensive. The interests shown and progress made by each child are recorded accurately and this informs planning for further activities. There is a strong focus on inclusion and planning specific and individualised activities. A good example of this is the 'Chatter Bugs' programme to promote communication skills.
- Staff work as a team across the Nursery and Reception classes. Teaching is typically outstanding. The planned outdoor provision is a particular strength, capturing the children's interests with a vibrant and exciting learning environment. There is a good balance of learning activities, including those that arise from the children's interests, enabling them to explore their ideas, and those directed by adults. As a result, the children enthusiastically engage, showing curiosity and delight in their learning.
- The children are well cared for by adults. The Early Years Foundation Stage is both an orderly and active community where the children learn and play happily together in a safe environment. In all activities the children behave extremely well.

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	100817
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	463305

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting Chair	Felicia Motcho
Headteacher	Simon Assig
Executive Headteacher	Sir Craig Tunstall
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 June 2013
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