

Berger Primary School

Anderson Road, Hackney, London E9 6HB

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has created a culture of high ambition and care. Since the previous inspection, there have been marked improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and behaviour.
- The work done to ensure pupils are safe and the care given to pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable are excellent.
- Teaching is consistently good because teachers prepare an exciting variety of activities that engage pupils' interests and help them learn well.
- Pupils across the school are making good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects. There are currently no significant differences between the progress of any groups of pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given well-targeted support to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and try their best to learn hard. They enjoy coming to school and so attendance is consistently above average.
- Early years provision is good because children are taught well in a nurturing environment. Adults know the children well and plan activities that help them learn successfully and develop socially.
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have made a good contribution to securing recent improvements.
- The good curriculum supports pupils to learn and behave well. It provides an extensive range of stimulating experiences that pupils clearly enjoy and that ensure their good health and well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and contributes well to their understanding of life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils, especially the most able, are making outstanding progress.
- New subject leaders have not yet sharply developed their skills to ensure that pupils make consistently rapid progress across the subjects.
- Teachers do not always plan activities that are hard enough to challenge pupils to think deeper.
- Occasionally, the feedback given to pupils is not sharp enough to help them to improve the quality of their work rapidly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that more pupils, especially the most able, make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers always have high expectations of what pupils are capable of, including in the early years, so that they are set more challenging work
 - pupils of higher ability have increased opportunities in mathematics to apply their skills and knowledge to solve more complex problems
 - teachers learn from the good practice found in the school to consistently give pupils feedback and challenge that help them to improve their work rapidly.

- Improve the effectiveness of new subject leaders by further developing their leadership skills, so that teaching in their areas of responsibility ensures that more pupils make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, who took up post just prior to the previous inspection, has been relentless in driving forward improvements in all aspects of the school's work. The expanded senior leadership team and all other leaders, including governors, are passionate about their work and strive for continuous improvement. As a result, all aspects of the school's work are now good and are continuing to improve.
 - Leaders have high expectations and have the support of the very large majority of staff. There is a strong ethos of collaboration, sharing and mutual support. Senior leaders make a point of visiting lessons every day. They support teachers and develop their skills by modelling good practice, team teaching and by joint planning as appropriate. As a result, leaders have helped teachers at all stages of their careers to develop their expertise and ensure that teaching is securely good and improving.
 - Inclusion leaders keep a close eye on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils such as those known to be entitled to the pupil premium, those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. They analyse precisely in which areas of learning each of these individual pupils is struggling. They arrange specifically targeted interventions to address these gaps. As a result, these pupils are catching up quickly with their classmates.
 - Leaders implemented a new behaviour management policy at the start of this academic year. The new processes for rewards and sanctions are implemented consistently and have been welcomed by staff, pupils and parents. It has led to marked improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning and general behaviour in class and around the school.
 - Leaders have implemented the new National Curriculum well. Pupils study a broad range of subjects, with a strong emphasis on the arts and creativity, which captivate their interest and help them enjoy learning. Pupils appreciate the many visits, such as to museums and the theatre, to broaden their learning, as well as the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered to them at lunchtimes and after school.
 - Senior leaders arranged for the entire staff to visit an outstanding school to learn from their good practice, particularly in designing and implementing their curriculum. Subject leaders work closely with leaders of the same subjects in other schools and benefit from expert guidance to help them become knowledgeable and skilled in their specific areas of responsibility. In turn, they train their colleagues in school effectively in how best to teach the range of subjects. Some of the subject leaders who are new in post are still at the early stages of developing their broader leadership skills to enable them to check on the quality of the teaching in their subject areas sharply and hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils.
 - Primary sports funding is used well to train teachers so that they deliver high-quality sports lessons. It is used to purchase physical education equipment and to provide more sports clubs and events during lunchtimes, after school and for multi-sports activities during half term. This broadened provision means that many more pupils are now participating in regular exercise to improve their physical health.
 - Leaders' use of pupil premium funding (additional money to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after by the local authority) is helping to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The school's information shows that current eligible pupils are making similar good progress as their peers in most subjects across the year groups.
 - The local authority has provided a wide range of support for the school's leaders and in developing the quality of teaching. The school's staff have fully embraced the support and this has been a strong contributory factor in the school's improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
- Governors bring a good range of experience and expertise, including from education, finance and human resources, to bear on their successful work with the school.
 - Governors visit the school regularly to talk to staff, observe learning and to hear the views of pupils. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well as they verify what they are told by the school's leaders through the external termly report of the local authority adviser who attends full governing body meetings.
 - Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and how it is improving. They ensure that performance management is effective and that pay rises are awarded appropriately.
 - Governors check pupil performance information frequently and require senior and sometimes middle leaders to report to governing body meetings, where leaders are held to account for pupils' progress.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All procedures for safeguarding and looking after children are rigorously implemented. There is an extremely strong culture of care in the school. Leaders engage very effectively with parents and carers and a wide range of agencies to ensure that all pupils are supported and are safe. All safeguarding training is fully up to date and many staff are trained in first aid. There is plentiful information around the school on display boards about safeguarding and individual children's medical needs. The deputy designated safeguarding lead meets support staff every morning for a brief refresher training session on safeguarding and medical care issues.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good across the school. There have been marked improvements since the previous inspection. New agreed teaching strategies for reading, writing and mathematics introduced at the start of this academic year are ensuring that all groups of pupils are making sustained good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and enjoy very good working relationships with their pupils. Pupils therefore try hard and follow their teachers' instructions without fuss or delay.
- The new assessment systems give teachers much useful information about how well pupils are progressing. Teachers mainly use this information well to plan activities suited to the abilities of the pupils. There are occasions, though, where pupils, especially the most able, are not given more challenging work to help them think more deeply and reach higher standards.
- The teaching of reading is improving at a good rate and is now good. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Right from the start, children in the early years are helped to decode words and to develop a love of books and reading. Across the school, the day now starts with reading and a comprehensive teaching programme designed to develop pupils' reading skills, such as inference and comprehension. Reading at home is actively encouraged and parents with children in early years read with their children in school for 15 minutes at the start of each day.
- Writing is taught well. Evidence in books shows that pupils are learning a wide range of skills that they are applying to their writing to make it more sophisticated. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills for a wide range of audiences and purposes. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote a biography on Thomas Edison and Year 6 pupils wrote letters to a toy manufacturing company to seek employment.
- Teachers have received good-quality training in the teaching of the new mathematics curriculum. Leaders identified that in some year groups, there were gaps between what pupils had previously learned and the new age-related expectations. Senior leaders worked closely with teachers at the start of the year to address any gaps and to consolidate pupils' skills. This proved a successful strategy, so that the teaching of mathematics is now ensuring that all gaps are closing and that pupils are making good progress. There are further opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. The most-able pupils, however, are not always deepening their mathematical understanding enough as they are not applying their skills to solve complex mathematical problems.
- Teaching assistants are used well to help those falling behind to catch up with their peers.
- The majority of teachers apply the school's new marking policy well. Pupils know how to improve their work and are given time to respond to their teacher's feedback. There are some teachers, though, that give superficial feedback and are not giving specific enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, which is not consistent with the policy. This is slowing pupils' progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Care and support are at the core of the school's culture. The school site is secure and procedures to ensure pupils are safeguarded from any potential risk are robust.

- Learning mentors make a very strong contribution to encouraging good attendance and punctuality and in helping pupils who have difficulties in managing their own behaviour and engaging positively with learning. They have established an extensive network of links across a wide range of agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. These include services for mental health, educational psychology, social care, benefits and housing agencies, as well as charities supporting homeless people and refugees. As a result, attendance for all groups of pupils is now above average, persistent absence is low, exclusions are reducing quickly and vulnerable pupils are supported to learn well.
- Personal values are embedded across the school. The pupils' school council worked with the school's leaders in its successful application to become an accredited Unicef Rights Respecting School. Pupils also develop their own class charters on how they will behave and work together. Pupils are involved in charitable work, sometimes leading with their ideas on how to raise funds. They have supported Red Nose Day and Water Aid, for instance.
- Pupils have many other opportunities to contribute to school life and develop their leadership skills. Prefects play an important role in helping staff organise the smooth running of the school each day. 'Buddies' support younger pupils in the playground by helping them modify any inappropriate behaviour, and play buddies organise games in the playground during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Pupils use technology safely and learn how to stay safe in different situations. They know how to keep healthy.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and prepares them very well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about processes of government during democracy week and they learn about a range of religions and cultures found in this country and abroad. 'Work week' develops pupils' economic understanding extremely well. Year 6 pupils, for example, had to use their design and technology skills to design and manufacture a product, their mathematical skills for budgeting, and their presentation skills to make a pitch to 'dragons' who visited the school from the City and decided which products represented viable business potential.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The newly introduced behaviour policy has led to marked improvements in pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Staff reinforce expectations by working with pupils to strive to perfect a specific behaviour of the week. Pupils told inspectors that these include, for instance, 'stamina in learning' and 'courteous behaviour'. As a result, pupils arrive punctually to school and immediately on entering the classrooms, diligently get on with their work. These positive attitudes in lessons are apparent all day and are helping pupils to succeed in their learning.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying and say that incidents have reduced significantly since the last inspection and that it is now rare. This is borne out by the school's records. Pupils are clear that should it occur, members of staff take appropriate action.
- Behaviour around the school and at breaktimes is good. Occasionally, a very small number of pupils get over-excited and behave boisterously in the playground. Playground buddies and staff quickly intervene and calm things down.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Current pupils throughout the school are making good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics as well as in science and foundation subjects. This was confirmed during the inspection by the school's own records of pupils' progress, by looking at pupils' work, talking to pupils about their work and observing learning.
- Unvalidated published data for the 2015 teacher assessments and external tests suggest that pupils had not achieved well at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. School leaders demonstrated that the unvalidated data do not show an accurate picture for the following reasons. Three new pupils joined the school during Year 2 with exceptionally low skills, and although making good progress, the standards they reached in the tests were low. Two pupils, newly arrived in the country with little or no prior English, joined the school during Year 6. In addition, that cohort had a sizeable proportion of pupils with severe cognitive disabilities. All of these pupils made very good progress from their low starting points, but were unable to reach the standards expected for their age.

- Pupils with special educational needs and those who join the school with little or no prior English are making good progress from their lower starting points because well-targeted support is provided to meet their needs.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the school are good. Work in books and the school's tracking data show that they are broadly making progress in line with other pupils in the school.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress. They are not, however, making the rapid progress of which they are capable as they are not always given work that is challenging enough.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years are well led. Teaching is good and teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is strong. Their use of assessment to track progress is accurate and used well to move children's learning forward in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff work closely with external agencies and professionals to provide additional support as required.
- The school's accurate assessments show that children enter the Nursery with skills that are lower than typically found, especially in their social and language development. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. This includes disadvantaged children, those with special educational needs, the most able and those who need to catch up quickly. They leave Reception well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- The classrooms and outdoor areas provide children with plentiful stimulating and engaging resources. Children are curious and therefore happily engage in a wide range of activities that help them learn well and make good progress.
- Children work in a safe environment and are well cared for. Routines are well established and children follow instructions, move considerately between activities and work well together. Inspectors observed a group of four children sitting together on the carpet with one of the children sitting on a cushion, higher than the others. She was the 'teacher' and the others followed her instructions to solve mathematical equations on their mini whiteboards.
- Teachers and other adults engage children in much dialogue, asking questions to deepen their understanding and encouraging them to speak to adults and to each other. As a result, children quickly gain confidence and learn to express themselves well. Mostly, staff also support children's learning with careful questioning, which encourages children to work things out for themselves. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to challenge the most able to think for themselves or try more challenging tasks.
- Partnerships with parents are having a positive influence on children's learning and school experiences. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through daily electronically conveyed reports, and by regular meetings. They benefit from workshops that staff run support to parents in helping their children learn at home.

School details

Unique reference number	100218
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10002001

This inspection 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	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John I'Anson
Headteacher	Steve Gleason
Telephone number	020 8985 6280
Website	www.berger.hackney.sch.uk
Email address	admin@berger.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2013

Information about this school

- Berger is well above the average-sized primary school.
- Two thirds of all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Over half the pupils on roll are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs support. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The early years provision comprises two part-time Nursery classes for three-year-olds and two full-time Reception classes for four-year-olds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a reorganisation of the school's leadership structure.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 20 lessons. Fifteen of these observations were made jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also read with pupils.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' books to inform further the judgements made about pupils' progress, attainment and the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, such as that relating to pupils' attainment and progress, information about how teachers' performance is managed, and minutes of governing body meetings. They also looked at records and documentation about pupils' behaviour and attendance and the ways in which the school keeps pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents gathered from the 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View and from informal conversations in the playground. Inspectors also took account of the views of 55 members of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Milan Stevanovic	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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