

Gospel Oak Primary School and Nursery

Mansfield Road, London NW3 2JB

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The foundation of the school's success is its cohesive community and collective sense of ambition for its pupils.
- The headteacher's determination, clear leadership and thorough understanding of the school's priorities have led to a robust and purposeful approach to school improvement.
- Leaders at all levels are highly effective, skilful and share a common aim. This ensures that their high expectations pervade all aspects of the school's work and that policies are implemented consistently across the school.
- Governors have a professional approach to their roles. They provide the right level of support and challenge to school leaders and evaluate their work critically.
- Pupils' outcomes are outstanding. In 2015, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were above average. The proportions of pupils making expected, and more than expected, progress were well above average.
- Teaching is highly responsive to pupils' needs. Teachers are very perceptive, quickly gaining an appreciation of pupils' levels of understanding and expertly intervening to support their learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their respectful attitudes towards each other and adults are exemplary. They value their education highly, are ambitious and are extremely well prepared for life beyond school.
- The breadth of the curriculum combined with extremely effective specialist teaching and a wealth of extra-curricular activities means that pupils benefit from high-quality and diverse opportunities.
- Teaching in the early years establishes the secure foundations on which children build as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. The resilience, confidence and security of understanding in key skills prepares children exceptionally well for their learning in Year 1.
- Pupils demonstrate an extremely high level of responsibility. They are polite, enthusiastic and move around school without fuss or the need for any significant adult intervention.
- Parents hold the school in exceedingly high regard. They have great praise for the staff, their inspirational approach and the extent to which their children feel safe in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that children benefit from enhanced outdoor provision in the early years by undertaking the planned developments promptly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher joined the school in January 2012, after the last inspection. He has ensured that those areas of the school's work previously judged as being outstanding have remained so. The pace of improvement has gained momentum under his leadership. An unrelenting focus on pupils' academic and social development ensures that leadership decisions have a firm basis. His daily presence, and that of other teachers, at the school gate is welcomed by parents, who are hard-pushed to identify ways in which the school could do better for their children.
- Phase leaders, whose roles have been introduced since the previous inspection, ensure that resources delegated to their phase are deployed effectively and efficiently. As a result, pupils receive timely and well-targeted support from teaching assistants.
- Subject leaders are skilled, making accurate and thorough evaluations of pupils' work. They identify precisely what teachers need to do to improve their practice. They scrutinise pupils' workbooks closely to make sure policies are applied consistently across the school. They check that previous recommendations have been enacted and that pupils' progress is evident in their work.
- Leaders understand the need for training to accompany their high expectations of staff. Staff, whatever their roles, receive the training and support they need to carry out their roles effectively. Whether their role is to support pupils' learning, play or pastoral needs, staff welcome opportunities to develop their practice.
- Pupils are inspired by the broad range of subjects they study. They described in great detail their study of the relative sizes of planets and the distances between each and the sun. Their fascination and enjoyment were palpable. Visitors to, and visits from, the school make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. During the inspection, a visiting theatre group led a Shakespeare workshop. Year 5 pupils, currently studying *The Tempest*, drew on their knowledge of the plot and characters to contribute enthusiastically, some dressed in costume. The depth of their knowledge allowed them to quote lines from the play and to enjoy the actors' period vocabulary and language.
- The wide range of clubs on offer allows pupils to develop their interests in language, sport, music and numerous other pastimes. The high levels of attendance are indicative of pupils' thirst for knowledge and love of learning.
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of disadvantaged pupils' needs. Pupil premium funding is spent wisely to maximise pupils' progress through targeted small group support, homework clubs and activities to support pupils' participation and achievement across the curriculum.
- Physical education has a high profile, with the associated additional funding being spent very effectively. The number of trophies on display in the school's reception area is testament to the number of tournaments entered and to the success achieved. The inclusive approach to sport includes a commitment that each child will represent the school in a sporting activity at some point during their time there. High-quality specialist teaching leads to pupils being determined to beat their previous personal best and to teams being well prepared and equipped to enter competitions within and beyond the local authority. Recent competition successes have included winning the Camden Active Schools award and the girls' football team winning the Inner London English Schools Football Association under 11 cup.
- An equally high priority is given to music in the school with each child in Years 5 and 6 learning to play a brass instrument. The distribution of instruments allows for the formation of four brass bands, one in each class. Specialist teaching provides the expert guidance and direction that pupils need to sing and play confidently. The school choir is currently rehearsing for a performance in the Royal Albert Hall in March.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is highly effective. Pupils are extremely reflective, demonstrating great maturity in their relationships and in their approach to learning. They are socially aware, confident and understanding of the views and beliefs of others. The understanding pupils have of each other's cultures and faiths helps them to get along productively.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body understands the school's performance well. It achieves a good balance between challenging and supporting leaders. Agenda items for meetings are selected carefully so that the most important issues are prioritised. Governors make sure that, where they have identified areas for improvement, they check that actions have taken place and that improvements have been noted as a result.

- Governors adopt an evaluative approach to their own effectiveness. Meetings conclude with a review of the impact they have had on the school's work.
- The governing body receives information about the quality of teaching and about the performance of groups of pupils, allowing it to make strategic decisions about how best to improve the school.
- Governors are acutely aware of the importance of disadvantaged pupils being supported effectively by the pupil premium grant. In addition to their in-depth knowledge of the local community, they have an analytical approach to checking that the school's work is effective in this area.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding leader has undertaken the appropriate training for the role and school staff have received training to keep them up to date with changes in legislation. The safeguarding leader has established an effective system to keep herself informed of changes to local and national requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- From an early age, pupils are expected to justify their opinions and explain how they have solved problems. Teachers' questioning encourages them to think in greater depth or to consider an issue from a different perspective. This is an effective vehicle for allowing pupils to clarify their thoughts while reinforcing their understanding. It helps pupils to develop confidence and the ability to listen to, and reflect on, the views of others. Their skilful questioning allows teachers to identify precisely the point at which pupils begin to feel a little unsure, allowing them to make the most of lesson time and to increase pupils' rates of progress.
- Teachers use their thorough subject knowledge to present learning clearly, organising lessons and sequences of lessons to ensure that pupils gain a thorough understanding of concepts. This ensures that learning is well embedded, with pupils building successfully on what they have learnt previously. The specialist teaching of physical education, music and information technology ensures that subjects other than English and mathematics are taught in great depth.
- Teachers create environments in which pupils feel safe to contribute to lessons. Teachers capitalise on the mistakes that pupils make. They skilfully analyse where an error has been made, helping to prevent misconceptions from becoming established. At the same time, they evaluate the quality of their teaching, noting how they could explain things more effectively in the future.
- Teachers throughout the school adopt a consistent approach to assessing and evaluating pupils' work. The comments teachers write in pupils' workbooks add further challenge, for example encouraging them to pursue mathematical investigations in greater depth having completed the original task.
- Pupils think deeply about their learning. Teachers give pupils opportunities to reflect on the topics they are learning. Teachers understand that pupils need time to fully form a view before engaging in discussion or debate. They know that pupils need time to consider and respond to the detailed and well-judged comments they record in pupils' workbooks.
- Older pupils have a highly developed understanding of their teachers' approach to planning their learning. They know that their teachers look carefully at their performance in tests, making sure that subsequent lessons are planned to address the areas they performed less well in. Information technology is used well to support learning. For example, in a Year 3 lesson about the punctuation of speech, the text pupils recorded on their digital tablets appeared simultaneously on the white board. This gave the teacher an immediate picture of each child's understanding, enabling her to provide immediate feedback.
- The teaching of mathematics pays due attention to the need for pupils to be fluent in their recall of mathematical knowledge while providing ample opportunity for them to apply their knowledge when solving problems. Teaching is firmly focused on pupils developing a secure understanding of the concepts taught rather than merely repeating what teachers have demonstrated.
- Pupils are keen readers. They access information from non-fiction books efficiently, using the contents page to locate the information they are searching for. Year 4 pupils enjoyed rehearsing their poetry in the playground at breaktime, reciting verses from *Jabberwocky* by Lewis Carroll.
- Whether working independently or with others, pupils enjoy writing. They write confidently in a variety of genres, applying what they have learned previously and using the resources available in the classroom to support them. Year 5 pupils applied their knowledge of the characters and plot of *The Tempest* to record their views on whether Caliban was a villain or victim.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. A culture of mutual respect among members of the school community supports the sense of purpose and optimism shared by all. Pupils look forward to their lessons and recall what they have learnt with enthusiasm and joy. This positive outlook is a significant contributor to the progress that pupils make.
- The wide range of clubs beyond the school day provides numerous opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests and develop others. The high levels of attendance at these clubs is indicative of pupils' interest in learning. Pupils choose from sport, language, music and computing clubs among others.
- Pupils are aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Lunchtimes are sociable occasions with pupils choosing to sit at the good manners tables, making a commitment to eat all of the food on their plates. A number of pupils start the week by attending the running club which meets at 8am on Monday mornings.
- Staff and parents responding to Ofsted's surveys unanimously agree that children feel safe in school. Older pupils recall the Metropolitan Police visiting school to raise their awareness of gangs. Pupils adopt a range of strategies to keep themselves safe. They know about how to report online bullying and that they should consider carefully which internet sites to visit.
- Staff are vigilant and supervise pupils well around school and in the playground. Their detailed knowledge of pupils' needs allows them to make well-judged decisions about when to intervene in disagreements. This provides pupils with valuable opportunities to resolve their own difficulties. Pupils develop resilience, independence and confidence as a result.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Those who completed the online parent survey and parents spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in agreeing that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. During the inspection, pupils carried themselves with pride, responding confidently in conversation with inspectors.
- Attendance is in line with the national average for primary schools. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is significantly lower than average. Firm and effective action has been taken in the past to address unauthorised absence. Pupils are keen to attend school because of the value they place on their learning and the enjoyment they reap from it.
- Pupils take part in a range of either organised or self-initiated games at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Although staff actively supervise, intervention is rarely required. An appropriate range of appealing equipment is available, including a climbing wall and a selection of smaller equipment.
- Pupils move between lessons and to and from the playground efficiently, without fuss or delay. This is attributable to a combination of factors, including the high expectations of staff, consistent application of policies and, most significantly, a culture in which all members of the school community are working to a common purpose.
- Pupils regulate their own behaviour without the need for adult intervention. Pupils are confident in tackling any minor disagreements that occur but know that staff will help them to resolve more involved problems. School records indicate that these occurrences are extremely rare.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- In 2015, the proportions of pupils making expected progress and more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 were well above average.
- In 2015, the proportions of disadvantaged pupils making expected progress were in line with those of others nationally in reading and writing. The proportion making expected progress in mathematics was well above that achieved by others nationally. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils making more than expected progress in reading and writing were well above those of others nationally.
- The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) check has risen for the last three years and has been consistently well above the national average.
- In 2015, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 were above

the national average in writing and mathematics, and well above it in reading.

- Pupils speaking English as an additional language make significantly more progress than similar pupils nationally.
- The school's own information about pupils' progress and the work in pupils' books show that they are making outstanding progress over time. This is a result of teachers' high expectations, high-quality teaching and pupils' exceptional attitudes to learning. The school's assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils are making faster progress than others in school. As a result, the gap between their attainment and that of others in the school and nationally is narrowing rapidly.
- Disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because teachers take account of their individual needs, provide tailored support and maintain high expectations.
- Pupils achieving Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. They have consistently made more progress than similar pupils nationally over recent years. This is due to teachers' high expectations combined with their focus on deepening pupils' understanding through their searching questions.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Determined leadership combined with a good understanding of what constitutes effective early years education has improved the quality of provision significantly since the last inspection. The early years phase now combines both Reception and Nursery classes, whereas they were previously located separately. A major extension has expanded the early years building which has also undergone refurbishment.
- Children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is in line with the national average. Children achieve particularly well in the early learning goals relating to physical development, understanding of the world and literacy.
- Staff make the most of opportunities to teach and reinforce children's phonics knowledge. For example, children practise the initial sounds of 'apple' and 'orange', the fruit they choose during snack time.
- Children respond extremely well to teachers' high expectations of them. Excellent relationships between adults and children provide a sound basis for the high level of challenge evident.
- In common with the approach taken in the other key stages, children are expected to explain their thinking. For example, children in Reception were challenged to explain which features of the story they had been reading suggested the book was a fairy tale. In another lesson, based on the story of Rumpelstiltskin, they worked out how long it would take to turn 20 straws into gold if 10 took one minute and 20 seconds.
- Activities are well selected to address specific aspects of pupils' development. The environment is well organised and safe. However, the outdoor area, awaiting further development, does not present children with as stimulating an environment as other areas of the school.
- From an early stage, children learn to tackle challenges presented by teachers or those they come across in their environment. For example, one child skilfully manoeuvred his tricycle, performing a three-point turn to avoid the inspector during a visit to the Nursery class. The stimulating environment and well-chosen activities provide good opportunities for children to develop their resilience, learning to assess and manage risk appropriately.
- Detailed records track children's progress in key areas of their development. Teachers put the information they collect about children's achievements to good use in planning lessons and activities. They use what they know about children's interests to challenge them in areas in which they are less confident.
- By the time they finish Reception, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1. They have the basic skills they need as well as the social and emotional resilience to support their subsequent learning.

School details

Unique reference number	100025
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10001384

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Beevers
Headteacher	John Hayes
Telephone number	020 7485 7435
Website	www.gospeloak.camden.sch.uk
Email address	admin@gospeloakschool.com
Date of previous inspection	15–16 June 2011

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in January 2012, since the previous inspection.
- The school is significantly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards (the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress at the age of 11).
- The proportion of pupils with ethnic minority backgrounds is well above average.
- Approximately half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made short visits to each class to observe teaching and learning, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and with the leader of the educational and pastoral support team. A meeting was also held with a group of staff comprising teachers and teaching assistants.
- Meetings were also held with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents in the playground at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the 93 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of the information provided by two parents who contacted Ofsted directly.
- The responses to the staff and pupil online surveys were considered and meetings were held with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including that relating to the school's own evaluation of its performance and to safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

Jeremy Loukes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Majumdar	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Hudson	Ofsted Inspector
David Wolfson	Ofsted Inspector

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