

# Harbinger Primary School

Cahir Street, London E14 3QP

<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 April 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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

- School leaders have secured good improvements since the previous inspection. They have a comprehensive knowledge of the school and its pupils. Consequently, leaders have identified the correct areas for further improvement.
- Governors have an insightful knowledge of the school and rigorously hold school leaders to account.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and design learning activities that closely match pupils' learning needs. As a result, current pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. They are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants who have a good understanding of their needs.
- Pupils are happy and say that they enjoy coming to school. They are safe and know how to stay safe. The school curriculum is skilfully organised and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds play and learn harmoniously, which contributes to the school's strong community ethos.
- Children in the early years unit enjoy a wide range of exciting learning experiences. They make good progress and are prepared well for their learning in Year 1.
- Work to promote pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is a strength of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not securely apply their knowledge and understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation to their writing, including in subjects other than literacy.
- Teachers do not share the same high expectations of pupils' written work and handwriting.
- Occasionally, expectations of what children can achieve in the early years are not high enough, particularly in the application of phonics (the sounds that letters make) into writing.
- Attendance is improving but is still below average.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make outstanding progress by ensuring that:
  - pupils use their knowledge and understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation in writing across the curriculum
  - pupils further improve their handwriting to raise the overall presentation of their work
  - teachers give children opportunities to fully extend their writing skills and application of the sounds letters make (phonics) in the early years by providing consistently high levels of challenge, particularly for the most able.
- Continue the drive for good attendance by working closely with parents to ensure they understand the importance of regular attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is truly valued and appreciated by the staff, parents and pupils at Harbinger Primary School. They appreciate her dedication and commitment to getting the best outcomes for every pupil in the school. She is ably supported by her two assistant headteachers. As a team, they lead the school effectively.
- Leaders' determination, combined with their comprehensive knowledge of the school and its pupils, has resulted in accurate identification of areas to improve. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils, and have been successful in raising pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. The school's improvement plans correctly identify the actions that now need to be taken to bring about further improvements. Leaders work diligently to improve outcomes for all pupils and have strong capacity to secure these improvements.
- Leaders have been successful in creating a highly inclusive school in which everyone one feels valued and respected. The school's values of learning, well-being and togetherness are well embedded in the ethos of the school. To illustrate, pupils say, 'We are one big family'. Teachers say they are proud to work at this school. One comment, which echoes the views of many, was, 'Harbinger is a place where children and teachers feel valued, understood and listened to... it is a school which values its staff and pupils as individuals.'
- Teachers appreciate the strong support that leaders offer them to improve their practice, for example through a coaching and mentoring model. Over time, leaders and staff have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders empower leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching. Purposeful and productive arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching are having a strong impact on raising standards.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to learn about the world around them. During an assembly relating to values, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of how to persevere and overcome difficult situations. They made insightful reflections on their own learning after hearing the fable of The Lion and the Mouse, such as, 'if you do not try something, you will never know if you can do it' and 'even when things are difficult, don't give up'.
- Pupils enjoy their learning at Harbinger. The curriculum is skilfully organised to provide pupils with a wide range of learning activities through themed topics, taking into account the national curriculum. The curriculum promotes equality of opportunities and diversity through themes such as celebrations and stories across the sea, and equally promotes British values of tolerance and respect for different cultures. Learning opportunities are extended outside the classroom with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as clubs, visits to places of worships, museums and school journeys. Pupils eagerly talked about these experiences, such as a recent visit to an outdoor education centre. They said, 'Trips like this give us great confidence to try new things and develop our teamwork'.
- British values are also well promoted through other aspects of the school's work, such as the school council, where pupils exercise the rules of democracy by voting for peers to represent them on the council.
- The sports funding is used effectively to improve the quality of teaching in physical education, to offer an increasing range of sports clubs and to increase participation in sports competitions. The take-up of activities has improved, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils talk with great confidence about their participation and enjoyment of the sports clubs they attend.
- Additional funding provided through the pupil premium is used effectively to close the gaps in attainment between those disadvantaged and other pupils nationally. The school's assessment information shows that current pupils eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have an excellent knowledge of the school and rigorously hold senior leaders to account on school improvement. They receive reports on pupils' outcomes and challenge leaders on the progress all pupils are making, thereby giving them an accurate picture of the quality of teaching.
  - Governors regularly attend training which impacts on their performance in fulfilling their statutory duties. For example, governors found the 'Strategy Day' helpful in gaining a better understanding of

the school's improvement plans. This enables governors to work effectively with school leaders to make strategic decisions on how to move the school forward.

- Governors are clear about how additional funding is spent and how this impacts on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors ensure that policies relating to pay progression for staff are fully adhered to and that movement up the pay scale for teachers relates to their performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to stay safe. Staff are well trained and are vigilant to notice any changes of behaviour that may place pupils at risk to issues such as radicalisation. The school monitors pupil absences effectively. Leaders ensure that systems are robust in pursuing pupils' final destinations when they leave the school, to ensure no pupil goes missing from education. Inspectors shared this view.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders know their pupils well and set a clear direction for the provision of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. They have developed an approach called 'what makes good' and apply this to every aspect of learning. It features prominently and consistently within teaching and learning across the year groups and is used well by pupils and staff alike. For example, pupils know what makes a good discussion text and use this knowledge in their writing about rainforests. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them in terms of their work and are able to make progress in their learning.
- Writing is taught effectively across the school, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where pupils develop a secure understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation rules. For example, in Year 6, pupils confidently applied their sophisticated knowledge of adverbial phrases to create a narrative in response to published illustrations. They produced pieces of writing which were of extremely high quality. However, this is not commonplace across the school and pupils need to apply what they know about spelling, punctuation and grammar to their written work across the curriculum.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and are very aware of the specific learning needs of the different groups of pupils within their class. They design learning activities to make sure all pupils access their learning and make good progress. The most-able pupils are challenged and fully stretched, for example through extension activities to extend their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- The work in pupils' books shows that leaders have placed greater emphasis on handwriting at the lower end of the school and leaders are aware that handwriting is an area to improve across the school. Pupils need to further improve their handwriting skills in order to raise the quality of presentation in their written work.
- Teachers adhere very closely to the school's marking policy. Teachers consistently use the school's agreed approaches to give feedback to pupils on their learning. In addition, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own learning and assess their peers' work. As a result, assessment helps to move all pupils' learning forward.
- Phonics is taught effectively, particularly in key stage 1. Pupils confidently use and apply their phonics knowledge well to tackle unfamiliar words in their reading.
- The homework set by teachers is used to consolidate the learning that takes place at school. In response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, most parents agree that their child receives appropriate homework for their age, and sampling undertaken by inspectors confirms that, overall, homework is used well to consolidate the learning that takes place in school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils feel extremely valued and respected at Harbinger. They have a wide range of opportunities to have a say and make decisions, and there is a strong presence of pupil voice. Pupils accompanied an inspector on a tour of the school. They showed great pride in Harbinger and spoke extremely positively about how adults help them to do well, have fun and make friends. Pupils evaluate what makes a good school council and make decisions in line with what they believe accurately represents the views of their classmates.

- Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe. They say, 'We can trust the adults.' Pupils know about all forms of bullying and say that bullying is a rare occurrence. They have confidence and trust in the school adults to deal with bullying.
- Leaders and staff take pupils' emotional well-being extremely seriously. They make sure that the school is a safe and harmonious place, where pupils develop a strong awareness of their own identity and respect the similarities and differences in others. Pupils and parents speak highly of the pastoral care and welfare support offered by the school.
- The school's work with outside agencies is very strong. This helps the school to fully address the learning and welfare needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them feel vulnerable. Work to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is particularly effective.
- Harbinger is an extremely happy school where pupils from different minority ethnic groups play and learn together harmoniously, as evidenced by inspectors during lunch, playtimes and in lessons. Religious education and personal, social, health and economic education help pupils to learn about themselves and others. This results in a better understanding of each other and contributes to the very strong community ethos within the school.
- Pupils enjoy their healthy lunches at school. They know the importance of healthy eating and are given opportunities to learn about staying healthy. For example, in Year 2, through their themed topic 'Oliver's Vegetables', pupils learn about healthy food and learn to make healthy drinks. Likewise, The Space, a place to go to if a pupil is feeling upset or lonely, helps them to talk about their problems and supports them to overcome any difficulties.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very proud of their school leaders and the improvements they secure for them. For example, pupils talked with great confidence and enthusiasm about the 'Pirate Ship' that was built in the playground after members of the school council requested improvements to the playground in order to make playtimes safer and more enjoyable.
- Pupils also have opportunities to raise funds for charities and develop a strong awareness of how their actions affect and influence others.
- Pupils conduct themselves well during lessons and when they move around the school. Behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime is good.
- Pupils, in all year groups, are keen to learn. They speak with confidence about what they are learning and display consistently strong attitudes to their work. They show respect towards each other and their teachers. Pupils responding to Ofsted's online survey confirm that teachers encourage pupils to be friendly towards other pupils.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, and low-level disruption is extremely rare in lessons so no learning time is wasted.
- Attendance is improving steadily but remains below average. Strategies are in place to tackle absences, and staff work hard to involve other professionals where necessary. Actions taken are having a positive impact on the attendance of individual pupils and families. The school has identified the need to place greater emphasis on helping parents to understand the importance of regular attendance.

### Outcomes for pupils

**are good**

- The school's own assessment information confirms that all groups of pupils are making good progress from their starting points and no pupil is left behind in terms of the amount of progress they make. This is the result of accurate teachers' assessments which are used to plan learning activities that closely match the needs and abilities of pupils. Inspectors confirmed this by scrutinising work in pupils' books and talking to them about their learning during lessons. All pupils now need to make more rapid and sustained progress in their writing across the wider curriculum.
- In Year 6 national tests and assessments in 2015, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was in line with the national average and they made good progress in these subjects from their starting points. However, in writing, both attainment and progress were below average. Such weaknesses in writing are no longer evident for the current Year 6, whose writing is often of a high standard. This is the result of high-quality teaching, teachers' high expectations and exceptional attitudes to learning displayed by pupils.

- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils by Year 6 in 2015 was lower than that of other pupils in the school and nationally in reading and writing. In mathematics, their attainment was lower than other pupils in the school, but in line with other pupils nationally. The gap has been closing over time in reading but not in writing. The gap has closed in mathematics.
- Progress in literacy is strong in upper key stage 2. This is because the most-able pupils are challenged and fully stretched.
- Similarly, progress for disadvantaged pupils compared favourably with that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, but was lower than others in writing. Evidence shows that these gaps in writing are now narrowing because pupils are making good progress. This is the result of effective teaching.
- Current pupils in Year 2 have made strong progress across key stage 1 in all subjects to attain standards in line with those expected for their age. This is evident in the school's own assessment information.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check was above average. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. Pupils make good progress in their phonics because they are given opportunities to apply their phonics skills to reading.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because pupils are identified effectively and offered the support they need quickly.
- Pupils who are learning English as an additional language do well at the school. Teachers use a range of strategies effectively to help pupils achieve as well as their peers.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because they are making good progress.

## Early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Accurate evaluation of the early years provision has resulted in a rich and stimulating learning environment which addresses specific aspects of learning and development. Children engage in a wide range of activities to develop their communication and language skills. Adults skilfully question children to promote their language development. For example, in one activity, children responded well to adults' questions to describe objects inside a box. Adults interact well with children, providing good models of speaking and listening.
- The early years unit provides a seamless transition from Nursery into Reception class and gives children the opportunity to interact and learn with and from each other.
- Children enter Reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typically below those of children their age. In 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was below average. The school's current assessment information indicates that all children are making good progress and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Children are taught phonics effectively and use their knowledge of sounds and letters well to read and write words and sentences. However, children, including the most able, are not sufficiently challenged consistently, particularly in writing.
- Children behave well in the early years unit and know how to stay safe. For example, they understand and explain that some of the play equipment in the outdoor area is out of bounds during wet weather. They also know about the dangers associated with strangers and when crossing the road.
- The early years staff develop strong relationships with parents and provide many opportunities for them to get involved in their child's learning. For example, parents are invited to reading mornings and school trips.
- Safeguarding is effective and there are no breaches of the welfare arrangements.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100904
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10011896

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Katy Bennett-Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mandy Boutwood
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7987 1924
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.harbinger.co.uk">www.harbinger.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@harbinger.towerhamlets.sch.uk">admin@harbinger.towerhamlets.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 January 2014

## Information about this school

- This school is above average in size, compared with other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. Over half the pupils are from a Bangladeshi background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- Mobility rates are high, with pupils arriving and leaving the school at different times during the academic year.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above average.
- Children in the early years unit attend the Nursery and Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery either on a full-time or on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specific information about the phonics scheme, school's mathematics framework in curriculum overview for each of the year groups and sports premium for the academic year 2015/16 on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 15 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteachers. They also looked at books and talked with pupils about their learning within lessons.
- Inspectors talked with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- A group of pupils went on a learning walk with an inspector to share their views about the school, the curriculum and their learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and phase leaders.
- In addition, meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and three governors. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 9 responses from free texts. They also took into account the school's own parent survey which was completed recently. Inspectors met with parents in the playground at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took into account survey responses from staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the school's information on current pupils' progress, the evaluation of its performance, plans for improvement, and records relating to behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.

## Inspection team

Rajeshree Mehta, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Rawlings	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Bailey	Ofsted Inspector

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