

West Acton Primary School

Noel Road, Acton, London W3 0JL

Inspection dates	15–16 June 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 school's strong values are woven into all aspects of its work. This has created a very positive culture that promotes pupils' personal and academic development effectively.
- The headteacher's tenacious leadership drives improvement very effectively. There have been solid improvements in teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders are resolute in their support of the headteacher's vision. They use their different skills and expertise to work together effectively to improve standards.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities. They support the school well and ask probing questions where necessary.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are especially good at working together to help each other and are polite, courteous and respectful.
- Teaching is good. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well. Consequently, pupils make better than expected progress in their subjects.
- Pupils' reading and writing skills are taught well across the different subjects and in most year groups. They are encouraged to read widely and to write at length, for example in science and topic work.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved and is good. Pupils know how to use their mathematical skills to solve problems. As a result, they strengthen their understanding with a real sense of achievement.
- The curriculum provides pupils with broad and relevant experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom. Pupils are interested and excited about their learning. They enjoy the opportunities to take part in a wide range of after-school activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not consistently strong across all classes. Where this is the case, work does not stretch pupils enough, and as a result they do not make the same sustained progress as others.
- Despite first-rate work to improve the quality of teaching, there remain instances where teaching does not extend pupils' understanding sufficiently. Sometimes pupils are not given specific enough advice about how to move their learning forward.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards further so that progress is rapid and sustained across the school by:
 - ensuring that the school’s high expectations are used consistently to set work that interests and challenges pupils
 - using the best practice that is evident in many classrooms to raise standards across the school.
- Ensure that all teaching is as at least consistently good by:
 - using high-quality questioning more frequently to stretch pupils’ thinking and understanding
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils’ work is clear about the next steps that they need to take to move their learning forward.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher's leadership is strong, principled and relentless. She has driven improvement based on her high expectations of pupils and teachers alike and has developed a set of strong values to create a culture in which everyone is encouraged to achieve. These values have had a significant impact on the improvement since the last inspection and provide the glue that keeps the school's vision focused on achieving excellence.
- Senior leaders, staff and governors all share this vision and work successfully to make it part of everyday practice. The senior leadership team works together very successfully to use its complementary skills and knowledge to work with teachers to develop the curriculum and improve teaching quality. As a result, teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. However, some teaching still needs to improve further to provide pupils with a consistently strong experience. Leaders have done much to support and coach teachers, but those new to the school are still developing their teaching to align it with the West Acton culture.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with a broad range of interesting and motivating experiences. These include art, music, and personal, social and health education, as well as French. Pupils are excited by their lessons and the experiences the school provides for them. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed great curiosity when developing their understanding of number sequences, while those in Nursery Year were excited by learning about different shapes. Writing and mathematics have been priorities over the past year and the impact of this work on pupils' progress is clear in their books. Pupils' writing has improved and they are solving more difficult mathematical problems.
- Learning is enriched by a wide range of activities, visits and after-school clubs. For example, during 'English enrichment week', visiting authors provided reading and writing workshops and pupils dressed up as their favourite book characters. Visits are regularly planned as part of the curriculum; for example, Year 1 pupils have visited the Science Museum and the Tower of London, while Year 6 pupils have visited theatres as part of their work in English. There are also visits to local churches, mosques and temples. The school provides a range of after-school activities and clubs, including those for sports, dance, drama, French and Japanese as well as a reading club.
- The school's values promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, including fundamental British values. Specific lessons and activities, such as religious education and the inter-faith week, provide opportunities for pupils to learn about different religious traditions. The recent Autism Awareness Week activities gave pupils insights into those who are different. As a result, pupils develop their appreciation of life in modern Britain and their respect for and tolerance of others.
- Senior leaders have worked hard to develop the way that they check pupils' progress and pick up those who need additional support. They have sensibly researched ideas from other schools and have successfully adapted these to fit with West Acton's distinct culture. Assessment now focuses on pupils' skills in each year and provides information about each pupil's progress. The strength of this system is that it enables staff to identify quickly those who are falling behind as well as those who need additional challenges. As a result, pupils make good progress regardless of their starting points, ability, background or special educational needs or disability.
- Improving teaching and learning has been a strong priority for the school. The procedures for overseeing the quality of teaching and learning are well considered and effective. Senior leaders rightly use a range of information to build up a profile for each teacher and use this to identify individual and school-wide areas for improvement. As a result, leaders have a very robust understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know exactly where to put their efforts. Training and professional development, including the 'visible learning' initiative, are linked closely to these priorities and this ensures that teaching and pupils' progress continue to improve.
- The extra funding the school receives for sports and physical education is used effectively. The school provides a variety of sports activities, which are enjoyed by pupils a great deal. Pupil premium funding has been put to good use. There is a range of strategies and interventions, including in-class support for specific pupils, training pupils to become play leaders, and before- and after-school clubs. These have had a noticeable impact on pupils' learning, and disadvantaged pupils achieve as well or better than others in the school and nationally.

- Links with parents and the community have been enhanced considerably since the last inspection. Parents contributed to the work to establish a set of clear values and this has resulted in their becoming much more involved with the school. Parent information evenings, a six-week parenting course and a lively weekly newsletter that includes information about reading at home and child protection all help to ensure that parents are kept up to date with developments and are encouraged to support their children's education.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have become increasingly effective following a restructuring of the governing body. They bring a wide range of expertise to their work and use this to ensure that they meet their legal requirements effectively. Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are secure and linked appropriately to increases in salary. Governors are very supportive of senior leaders, but are not afraid to ask difficult questions. This ensures that they contribute effectively to the school's development.
 - Governors have a firm grasp of the school's priorities. As well as receiving useful information from the school, they visit regularly to talk to pupils and teachers and visit classrooms. As a result, they are able to make informed judgements about the school's overall performance and its direction of travel and check the impact of their decisions.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school takes safeguarding and child protection very seriously and has robust systems for keeping pupils safe. Staff are appropriately trained and procedures for checking teachers' suitability are secure. Senior staff responsible for safeguarding deal with any issues very thoroughly and are persistent in following up referrals with the local authority's children's services.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and set work that stretches and challenges their thinking. For example, Year 3 pupils took great pleasure in debating why the Greeks did not deserve to win the war against the Trojans. They used their discussions to argue their opinions confidently. In another class, there was a constant focus on high expectations of behaviour and challenge. This resulted in pupils being very enthusiastic about their learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use often to plan lessons and tasks that motivate and interest pupils. This results in pupils having very positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well, able to concentrate for significant periods of time and are enthusiastic. A particular strength is the mature way that pupils work together to discuss their work, debate ideas and help each other. This has a strong impact on their learning, and even when they find the work difficult, they do not give up.
- Pupils develop effective strategies to help them to read. In key stage 1, teachers use successful approaches to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters represent). As a result, pupils become fluent in using the English language and make good progress. Reading is encouraged well and many pupils read widely and often. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make especially good progress to become confident English readers, writers and speakers.
- The school has begun to make noticeable headway in improving pupils' mathematical skills and understanding. This work is paying dividends and pupils develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills well. As a result, pupils, especially the most able, have a real understanding of mathematical ideas rather than simply a set of rules that they use without thinking.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. This is because they are well trained and have the expertise to pick up misconceptions quickly and put pupils on the correct path. This ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Clear verbal and written feedback to pupils is often used to good effect to provide help to correct and improve a piece of work. Pupils are also encouraged to reflect on their work and identify for themselves what they could do better. In many cases, pupils also mark each other's work, which encourages them to develop their analytical skills. These approaches result in clear improvements in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and help them to move their learning forward.
- In some cases, pupils are not given specific enough advice about how to improve their work. As a result, pupils make less progress than others.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are included effectively in lessons. They receive well-targeted additional support from both teachers and teaching assistants, enabling them to make good progress from their starting points.

- Teachers cater well for the most and least able pupils. In both English and mathematics, teachers are developing effective approaches to ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently, while the least able pupils are provided with specific help and given work that provides a step-by-step approach. For example, the teaching assistant in one lesson helped pupils to talk together to respond to questions, while the most able were expected to work on their own and come up with two or three responses.
- The evidence in pupils' books, observations in lessons and the school's assessment information revealed that teaching is not consistently good across all classes. In some, the school's high expectations are not translated effectively into tasks that are as challenging as they should be. Where this was the case, pupils' progress slowed. In other instances, teachers' questions are not sharp enough to both check and stretch pupils' thinking and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Consequently, pupils feel very safe and enjoy school enormously. For example, some Year 6 boys said that they did not want to leave at the end of term.
- The school's commitment to including everyone is a key part of the school's everyday work. The school values are evident in classrooms and around the school, not just as words on the wall but in the way that pupils treat others and know how to learn. The 'value of the month' for June was 'collaborative', while previous values have included 'inquisitive' and 'confident'. Pupils respond extremely well to these values. They are very tolerant and respectful, and highly accepting of the wide range of different backgrounds and traditions represented in the school. As pupils stated, 'West Acton is a family'.
- Relationships between pupils are very strong. They work together effectively to discuss ideas and help each other. This has a significant impact on their learning and they develop their social skills well.
- There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, including acting as play leaders and being representatives on the student council. Pupils develop a clear sense of responsibility and readily help others. They understand how to behave and have a very good appreciation of right and wrong.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are taken very seriously by the school. The NSPCC recently visited the school to talk to pupils about keeping themselves safe. Through assemblies and workshops, pupils were told about talking to a trusted adult if they have a problem. Pupils know whom to turn to if they are concerned about something, and many know how to access ChildLine.
- The school also promotes staying safe online effectively. E-safety is part of the personal, social and health education programme and the weekly newsletters to parents always include e-safety tips. This ensures that parents and pupils know the dangers of online bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well behaved in classrooms and respond well to teachers' instructions. Everyday routines are very well established and pupils know how to meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. For example, pupils move seamlessly from the carpet to their chairs or from one activity to another so that no time is wasted.
- Occasionally, where teaching does not stretch pupils sufficiently, behaviour becomes a little unsettled and slows progress. However, because pupils understand how to behave, there is very little disruption to learning, even when the work is not grabbing their attention.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They are polite and courteous, and help others without being asked. Inspectors were especially taken by pupils' self-confidence and their ability to talk sensibly about their work and the school.
- Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils are confident that if it does happen, it will be dealt with quickly. They report that there is no teasing of pupils or calling them hurtful names because they are different.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average, including that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The school maintains a strong focus on attendance and reducing absence. Each week, there is an 'Attendance Championship' to celebrate the best attendance, and this is included in the weekly newsletters for parents.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils start school with skills that are broadly below average, especially in communication and language, and a high proportion have little or no spoken English. Standards have risen significantly over the past four years, especially at key stage 1 where the effective use of phonics enables pupils to catch up quickly with their reading and writing. As a result, pupils make better than expected progress, so that by the time pupils leave school at the end of key stage 2, they reach at least average standards.
- Pupils at the school currently are making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics in nearly all year groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. However, where teaching does not stretch pupils sufficiently, progress is less good.
- The school has focused its teaching on ensuring that it meets the needs of the most able pupils. They are set work that is often very challenging, and as a result, they are making strong progress from their starting points. In both English and mathematics, a clear emphasis on enabling pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding is ensuring that the most able pupils are successful at tackling complex tasks that require them to think.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better than expected progress. This is because teachers and teaching assistants support pupils well in class. However, another reason is that the school provides a range of initiatives designed to help parents develop their children's literacy skills at home. For example, the school provides a six-week programme, called 'Parent Gym', and workshops for parents on phonics, reading and how to support children moving into key stage 2.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability made better progress than their peers, especially in reading and mathematics. The steady improvement in teaching quality and the resulting rise in standards mean that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability currently at the school continue to do well.

Early years provision

is good

- Provision for children in the early years is good as a result of effective teaching and assessment, and close attention to detail. Children make solidly good progress from low starting points and the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development is average.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. They have tackled the weaknesses successfully to ensure that children are provided with the opportunities to learn effectively both in the classroom and outside. For example, the teaching of phonics has been strengthened so that now children develop their communication and language skills well. This is evident in children's learning journals, which show clearly how well they have developed their skills since they started school.
- Assessment is accurate and links closely to the new approaches adopted in key stages 1 and 2. This helps to ensure that there is a smooth transition from Reception into Year 1. Regular opportunities for teachers to compare their assessments with those of others in the school, and with teachers in local schools, mean that staff have a strong appreciation of each child's progress. They use these assessments well to provide children with stimulating activities that are fun.
- The curriculum for children in the early years is broad and covers all the areas of learning. Teachers and adults adapt the curriculum to meet children's needs, for example by using a 'super heroes' theme to appeal to boys. As a result, the gaps in achievement between different groups of children are narrowing.
- Children develop positive attitudes to learning during their time in the early years. They are able to concentrate well and become very engaged in their work. They are especially good at getting on well together and are very well behaved. A particular strength is the way that children move from one activity to another without the slightest hint of any silliness. They become very confident and were happy to talk to the inspectors about their work.
- Children's welfare and safety are promoted well. Consequently, safeguarding is effective and children feel safe and well looked after.
- Links with parents are strong. They are welcomed into the Nursery and Reception classes to talk about their children's progress and given opportunities to learn about the curriculum. For example, they can find out about how phonics is taught and what they can do at home to support their children's reading. This creates a positive relationship between teachers and parents.

School details

Unique reference number	101876
Local authority	London Borough of Ealing
Inspection number	10011912

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	575
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Virginia Jordan
Headteacher	Mrs Emma Appelby
Telephone number	020 8992 3144
Website	www.westactonprimaryschool.org
Email address	admin@west-acton.ealing.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 June 2014

Information about this school

- West Acton Primary School is larger than most primary schools.
- When it was inspected in June 2014, it was judged to require improvement.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is high. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is a much higher proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language than in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs or disability is lower than average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school at different times of the year is very high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each year group, including in the Nursery and Reception classes. Many of these were jointly observed with school leaders.
- Pupils' work in books across a range of subjects was looked at.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour at break- and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, including governors, and with subject leaders, pupils and parents.
- A range of documentation and policies were scrutinised, which included the school's self-evaluation, and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and assessment.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to the quality of teaching and the school's website, including information about extra-curricular activities, trips and visits.
- Records, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding were reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of the 50 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and of 25 responses to the survey of staff.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rajeshree Mehta	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Harvey	Ofsted Inspector

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