

Pooles Park Primary School

Lennox Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 3NW

Inspection dates

5–6 October 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 and senior leaders have worked with determination to secure rapid improvements since the last inspection. Leaders' actions have improved the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Middle leaders' roles have developed well since the last inspection. Leaders now focus strongly on raising standards.
- Governors are knowledgeable and ambitious for the school. This enables them to hold senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching and achievement for pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a clear strength of the school. Pupils learn about their rights and responsibilities through the curriculum. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding wisely. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils nationally.
- Leaders are diligent in keeping pupils safe at school. Pupils enjoy their learning and like coming to school. They are proud of their school.
- Attendance has improved well in the last few years and is now in line with the national average.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' progress in their writing. In addition, insufficient opportunities are provided for them to write at length and in a range of subjects. Pupils, particularly the most able, do not make better than expected progress in writing.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in problem solving.
- Children in the early years are happy, safe and well settled. They make good progress from their low starting points. However, their attainment in writing is not as strong as in other areas of learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils in all year groups to work on mathematical reasoning and problem solving
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write at length across a wide range of subjects
 - sharing the most effective teaching more widely within the school.
- Improve outcomes by increasing the rates of pupils' progress so that more pupils, including the most able, achieve the greater depth standards expected for their age in writing.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years provision by ensuring that children have a range of opportunities to develop their writing skills, particularly in the outside learning environment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers have worked tirelessly, and with great determination and passion, to secure the improvements required since the last inspection. Leaders have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise standards significantly at Pooles Park Community School. Parents told inspectors about the improvements they have noticed in their children's reading. They say pupils read more often and have made good progress.
- Middle leaders have a stronger focus on raising standards since the previous inspection; for example, standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 have risen. Phase and subject leaders have clear plans for improvement, and they now keep a good check on pupils' progress in their respective subjects and year groups.
- Senior leaders have high expectations of staff and teachers. They regularly check the quality of teaching and learning in each class to support and challenge teachers to raise achievement of pupils across the school. This is clearly evident in how the raising achievement plans are used consistently across all year groups. As a result, standards are rising.
- Senior leaders do not sufficiently capitalise on the expertise of middle leaders to enhance teaching even further. Middle leaders have the skills and expertise to raise the quality of teaching even further by sharing their practice widely across the school.
- The local authority has contributed significantly to the school's improvement since the last inspection. School leaders have benefited from additional support and challenge. This has resulted in improved teaching, and standards have risen, particularly for pupils at the end of key stage 1 and the most able pupils at the end of key stage 2.
- The curriculum has been effectively designed so that close links are made between subjects within the national curriculum. For example, in Year 5 this term, pupils are learning about Ancient Greece in history. In English, pupils learn how to write a Greek myth. The English curriculum is underpinned by using high-quality children's books to develop pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their learning. Pupils' learning is enriched and extended beyond the classroom through educational visits, workshops, visitors and clubs. For example, a trip is planned for pupils to visit a national museum, as part of their topic on Ancient Greece.
- The curriculum is enhanced specifically for the most able pupils. For example, in Years 5 and 6, learning is extended in mathematics and science. Pupils are taught by a visiting secondary teacher. In turn, the most able pupils are given opportunities to teach younger pupils during school events, such as science week.
- Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum, whole-school projects and events, assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Additionally, pupils are taught about their rights and responsibilities, which also promotes British values. For example, in Year 5 pupils learn about their right to have their own culture respected and respecting differences between people.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to good effect to improve standards for disadvantaged pupils. For example, in 2015, the pupil premium funding

was used to provide additional staff support in key stage 1. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The sports funding is used prudently to train teachers to further develop their skills and confidence in teaching physical education. Opportunities for participation in competitive sports and sports clubs have increased. This contributes to promoting pupils' healthy lifestyles.

Governance of the school

- Governors are fulfilling their statutory duties effectively and are clearer on their roles since the school's last inspection.
- Governors are knowledgeable and have high aspirations for the school. They use their understanding of their school well to hold senior leaders to account and ask searching questions. Governors are aware of the actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.
- They work in close collaboration with senior leaders and seek verification from external consultants on the school's performance.
- Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a vigilant culture within which pupils' safety and welfare is of paramount importance. Staff receive regular training which enables them to spot any changes in pupils' behaviour and raise concerns, when necessary. The school is proactive in identifying early help through a range of strategies, such as admissions interviews.
- Parental partnerships are very strong. The school builds strong relationships of trust with parents and carers, so that the most vulnerable pupils have a safe haven from some of their most complex home circumstances. Parents are clear about whom to approach should they have concerns about the safety and welfare of their child.
- Leaders work very effectively with external agencies to fully address the learning and welfare needs of pupils whose circumstances make them feel vulnerable. As a result, pupils are well cared for. Parents strongly agree that their children feel safe and are well looked after at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have worked relentlessly to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessments since the last inspection. They regularly check the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Consequently, pupils are making good progress.
- Phonics is taught effectively in key stage 1. There is a daily commitment to teaching phonics and reading. Pupils in key stage 1 use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. In key stage 2, there is a commitment to teaching reading through daily guided reading sessions. This supports pupils to become fluent readers. However, reading corners in the classrooms do not motivate pupils to read and promote the pleasure for reading.

- Pupils are given the opportunity to write for a range of purposes, using different types and styles linked to their topic. For example, in Year 2 pupils write their own explanations of the life cycle of a frog, which is linked to their topic 'Going Up, Growing Up.' However, evidence in pupils' written work shows that pupils are not encouraged to write more, even though they are capable of doing so.
- Mathematics teaching ensures that a range of mathematical concepts and topics are taught in all the year groups. Evidence in pupils' books indicates that pupils make good progress in their developing mathematical knowledge and skills. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply these skills to problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons and elsewhere in the curriculum.
- Pupils talked enthusiastically to an inspector about the ways in which their teachers help them to improve their work. Scrutiny of books sampled confirmed that teachers consistently follow the school's presentation, marking and feedback policy. Consequently, pupils move forward in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and told inspectors they enjoy coming to school. This was very apparent when a group of pupils accompanied an inspector on a walk around the school. Pupils eagerly talked out their learning and school experiences. For example, pupils enthusiastically talked about the community garden, where they learn about growing food and sustainability.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and learn about safety through the curriculum and assemblies. For example, in Year 2 pupils learn about keeping safe in the home. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe online.
- Pupils say that bullying is not a concern at their school. Pupils learn how to prevent bullying through special events, such as anti-bullying days. They know about the different forms of bullying. Pupils have every trust and confidence in school staff, who will take their concerns seriously and deal with bullying, should it occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and within lessons. Those from diverse backgrounds play and learn together harmoniously.
- Pupils talked with confidence to an inspector about the school's behaviour management systems. They are fully aware of the rewards and sanctions they receive for both good and poor behaviour. This contributes to a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- Pupils feel valued and respected by teachers and other adults in the school. In turn, pupils show respect for each other and adults. Inspectors experienced this too during conversations with pupils. For example, during a formal discussion with an inspector, pupils showed respect for each other by listening attentively and contributing to the discussion.
- Leaders understand the importance of checking the well-being, safety, progress and

attendance of pupils who receive some of their education in other settings. As a result, pupils are safe and their learning needs are met.

- Leaders' actions have been effective in improving attendance over the years. Attendance is now broadly in line with the national average. As a result, learning time is maximised.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's own assessment information and the work in pupils' books show that progress is good in all year groups and across subjects. This has resulted in more pupils working at the standards expected for their age since the previous inspection.
- Progress is good in mathematics. Inspectors confirmed this through a scrutiny of pupils' mathematics books and the school's assessment information. However, inspectors noted that pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to problem solving. This slows pupils' progress.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in writing in English. However, not enough pupils make better than expected progress. Sometimes, writing activities do not provide sufficient challenge for pupils to develop their skills well enough.
- In 2016, a large majority of Year 1 pupils reached the expected standards in the phonics screening check. School assessment information indicates that pupils in key stage 1 have made good progress in reading.
- The most able key stage 1 pupils use their phonics knowledge well to sound out unfamiliar words. The most able Year 6 pupils read with fluency and expression. Leaders recognise that not enough pupils demonstrate enough of a love for reading.
- In the 2015 national tests, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading and writing was below average. This was particularly the case for the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Unvalidated data for the new 2016 test shows that pupils have reached broadly average standards in these subjects. This denotes significant improvement since the last inspection.
- In 2015, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in writing was below average, particularly for the most able and disadvantaged pupils. School assessment information for Year 6 pupils in 2016 indicates that attainment has risen for these groups of pupils. This is the impact of the effective use of pupil premium funding and improved teaching.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally with similar starting points in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. This is the result of improved teaching. The school's assessment information indicates that pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers take into account pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons and small groups, which helps pupils to make progress. Leaders track their progress carefully and put into place the additional support and interventions needed.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader provides good leadership, and has a strong knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the early years. The attainment of Reception children at the end of early years foundation stage has improved well since the previous inspection.
- In 2015, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development had declined and was below average. However, the percentage of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2016 rose significantly. The school's assessment information indicates that children made good progress from their low starting points in all areas of learning. As a result, the majority of the children now leave Reception well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- The school assessment information indicates that writing is an area for development. Over time, attainment and progress in writing has not been as strong as other areas of learning. Adults have begun to take effective action to provide more writing opportunities for children but it is too early to evaluate the impact.
- Children are happy and they settle confidently into the regular activities provided because adults are quick to understand their needs and interests. They sustain good attention and concentration on their selected activities. Consequently, behaviour is good in the early years.
- Teachers use their assessments well to plan activities across all areas of learning. The activities include open-ended questions that encourage children to think and solve problems. For example, children in Reception were encouraged to think about what their shape monster might look like.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection value the positive relationships between themselves and adults in the early years. Parents welcome the workshops, such as phonics, offered by the school. Parents have an opportunity to contribute to their child's learning and development through the school's online assessment system. This enables parents to support their children's learning at home and provides good continuity for children's learning.
- Safeguarding is effective and the welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	131741
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10019670

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Douglas Twedde
Headteacher	Greg Crawford
Telephone number	020 7272 2655
Website	www.poolespark.com
Email address	admin@poolespark.islington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school was experiencing technical difficulties with its website. However, the necessary information is available within the school.
- This school is large in size, compared with other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is well above average.
- The early years provision has both Nursery and Reception classes. Children attend Reception on a full-time basis. Children attend the Nursery either on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on their age.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There is a breakfast club that is run by the school.
- The assistant headteacher is a local authority lead moderator for key stages 1 and 2 assessments.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 26 lessons, some of which were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' books, both while visiting lessons and independently. An inspector also attended one assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils within lessons and at playtime and lunchtime. The lead inspector spoke more formally with two groups of pupils; one group was made up of some of the most able pupils in the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 3, 4 and 6.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers. Inspectors also held discussions with the SENCo, early years, subject and phase leaders. The lead inspector also met with a group of teachers and teaching assistants.
- An inspector accompanied a group of pupils on a learning walk. Pupils voiced their views of the school and their learning experiences. Additionally, inspectors carried out learning walks in Year 2 and the early years foundation stage.
- Inspectors took into account 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 28 free-text responses. Inspectors also met with parents informally in the playground at the start of the school day.
- Eleven responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- Inspectors analysed a range of school documentation, including the school's own information on current pupil's progress, records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and the checks that leaders make on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Raj Mehta, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Rawlings	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Ryan	Ofsted Inspector

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