

Mowlem Primary School

Mowlem Street, Bishops Way, Bethnal Green, London E2 9HE

Inspection dates

31 October–2 November 2017

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

- Senior leaders and governors work very well together to embed the school's values across all aspects of the school's work. Supported by a strong senior leadership team, the headteacher provides exceptional leadership in setting high aspirations and a culture where every pupil is able to achieve well.
- Children in the early years benefit from a very well-organised and enriching environment for learning, where creativity and curiosity are promoted very well.
- Children learning English for the first time are taught exceptionally well. They quickly begin to use and understand the English language. They are encouraged to explain, question and discuss. They rapidly gain confidence.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make effective progress. This is because their needs are well known and they have very effective support.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and provide very positive learning environments that inspire and support pupils. Learning activities are planned to reinforce and deepen the understanding of the subjects that they study.
- Leaders and teachers keep a tight check on the progress made by pupils. They use information well to ensure that additional support is provided in a timely fashion, where pupils need it.
- A priority of all staff is that of keeping children safe. From supervising pupils at play, through to discussing with pupils how to keep safe when using the internet, teachers have safety and pupils' welfare at the centre of their work.
- From low starting points for many pupils, progress is strong year on year, and disadvantaged pupils catch up and close the gap between them and their peers. Many pupils achieve well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Behaviour is excellent, and pupils actively look after each other around the school. Pupils are very clear about the rules and the expectations set for them of how they care for each other. These are promoted effectively through the school's values and by all staff. Pupils respond very well and show care and consideration for all.
- Pupils receive a broad and rich curriculum that ensures that they develop a deep understanding of the subjects and the topics they learn. They develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural values.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They plan work for pupils that is challenging. Sometimes, the level of challenge is set too high for some low-attaining pupils who, although often completing the task with support, lack in-depth understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that low-attaining pupils' understanding is always secure by:
 - planning work that is appropriately challenging and takes into account their level of understanding
 - reviewing their understanding, as well as completion of tasks, and using this to plan their next steps of learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership to her team. Over time, she has embedded a culture of high expectation and excellence in teaching. She motivates and guides leaders and has successfully developed strong and responsive leadership at all levels in the school. Senior and middle leaders work cohesively to ensure that the school's core values and ambitions are embedded across the school's work. As a result, pupils do extremely well. The school is not complacent, and leaders and teachers constantly keep provision under review to maintain and continue to develop and improve.
- There is a relentless focus on learning and assessment. Leaders regularly review progress and engage with teachers to help consider and refine plans to make sure that no pupil is left behind. This has been particularly successful with disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Teachers use this information very wisely to plan particular learning programmes and interventions. Progress made is kept under constant review. Interventions are altered according to the changing needs of pupils at particular points in time. This is ensuring that the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils is narrowing. There is limited difference between different groups by the time that pupils move to their next stage of education.
- Pupil premium funding to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is used very effectively to plan support and activities that accelerate their learning. Its use is helping to close the achievement gap between them and other pupils in the school.
- Leadership of SEN and/or disabilities is outstanding. Data is managed and used very well to identify pupils' needs swiftly and to plan additional work to encourage further progress. Additional specialist support is drawn in to advise and plan programmes and resources. Support staff are well trained and the combination of effective support, regular review and a good knowledge of what pupils need to learn ensures that they make continuous progress.
- Leaders use sports premium funding effectively. Monies have been used to provide additional specialist sports coaching and to enrich provision for disadvantaged pupils. Close monitoring of the ways in which disadvantaged pupils engage in sports and physical activity is undertaken rigorously.
- The curriculum inspires and motivates pupils to do their best in a wide range of subjects, during and after the school day. Subjects are well planned to provide depth and progression in learning and to reinforce literacy, mathematics and reasoning. Leaders have recently refined assessment to help better plan greater challenge for the most able pupils across topic work. Home learning is organised well and encourages pupils to follow up interests and learning after the school day.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively across the curriculum. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions. They are taught about valuing the contribution of each other and the key values of democracy, honesty and the difference between right and wrong. This actively promotes a good understanding of fundamental British values and a positive view of diversity.
- Parents appreciate the work of the school. They value the dedication of the

headteacher and all staff in providing a community where their children achieve very well and feel safe and happy.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very effective in questioning and challenging the school to ensure that high standards and quality are sustained. They make visits to the school and report and discuss what they see. By asking questions, they develop a good understanding of the school's strengths. Hence, they are better able to challenge leaders and encourage them to reflect and consider whether the actions they take are the most appropriate. This ensures strong teamwork between governors and leaders and a common understanding of the school's priorities and progress.
- Governors monitor spending carefully and ensure that additional funding is spent wisely to benefit pupils. They take an active interest in making sure that pupils are safe by attending training and by regularly reviewing the school's safeguarding procedures to make sure that they are working well.
- Governors are rigorous in ensuring that all relevant checks are made when recruiting staff. They work well to maintain good relationships with staff and parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Keeping children safe is at the core of the school's work and values. Leaders ensure that all staff are appropriately trained, and kept up to date on all aspects of safeguarding. The safeguarding policy is implemented effectively, and all staff are vigilant to ensure that pupils are safe and protected.
- Leaders keep a very close hold on safeguarding concerns and work swiftly and diligently when they arise. They have very good links with external agencies and work well in playing their role in supporting vulnerable pupils and families, as part of a broader team. Very good work is done to engage family support services and to maintain good communications with all those involved, when concerns arise.
- Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to keep safe when using computers and the internet. Leaders have ensured that a strong programme is in place to develop pupils' resilience when working online. Pupils respond very well. Pupils act as peer mentors and anti-bullying ambassadors, and see it as their role to keep watch and to support all pupils in keeping safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now outstanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge across all the subjects they teach. There is a high level of challenge provided for pupils. This particularly helps the most able pupils apply their knowledge well in reasoning and solving problems. The challenge for most-able pupils was raised as a point for action at the last inspection. The school has worked successfully to address this. Teachers know their pupils well. They respond well to pupils and use mistakes as teaching points to pick up on misconceptions and to

consolidate learning. Where pupils are learning English for the first time, teachers are sensitive and work hard to ensure that learning is not affected by a lack of confidence in using English. In one lesson, in which pupils were asked to read an extract from a book and explore what the character was thinking, the teacher had already identified vocabulary that may have been unfamiliar. He went through this with pictures and examples to make sure that pupils understood the meaning of the words, before asking pupils to read the text. This ensured that they could concentrate on the meaning without being confused by words they had not come across before.

- Although teachers' high level of challenge works well in improving the learning of most-able pupils, in some lessons the level of challenge for low-attaining pupils is set too high. With the support of additional adults, most pupils can complete the work, but some are left not always understanding how they have reached the answer, or what it means.
- Supportive and trusting relationships underpin teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils know that their teachers want them to do well. They, in turn, do not want to let their teachers down. Classrooms are well organised, with displays and additional questions and support. This helps guide pupils and gives them the tools they need to help them solve problems on their own.
- The teaching of mathematics is outstanding. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subject. They routinely plan additional challenge to promote reasoning and mathematical thinking. Good opportunities are taken to reinforce mathematical knowledge in other subjects through encouraging pupils to collate data and present it in graphs.
- Reading is taught well and pupils understand the importance of reading for pleasure and to find out information. Strong phonics teaching in the early years follows through into Year 1, with an appropriate balance between consolidating knowledge of sounds and applying this to their reading. Teachers use a good range of children's literature to capture children's interest and to encourage a love of reading. This works well. Pupils speak enthusiastically about wanting to read and about the ways in which teachers have motivated them to take pleasure from it.
- Teachers build on pupils' interest in reading literature. They use this to encourage pupils to write 'as authors', capturing ideas and expressing them in writing. Pupils make good and accurate use of their increasing knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. They are actively encouraged to refine and edit their work in response to questions and comments. Pupils readily respond and are keen to improve their work.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are taught well. They make very good progress from their starting points. This is because teachers and adults working with them have a very clear knowledge of their individual needs and what they need to learn, step by step. Additional adults working to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well trained and well briefed and know the pupils they are working with.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very confident learners and show very good attitudes to school and to their learning. As one parent said, 'It is difficult sometimes getting my daughter to come home. She would live at the school if she could.' This is typical of the commitment and interest shown by pupils. Pupils show interest and curiosity in wanting to learn and to achieve well.
- Pupils take care of each other and of the environment of the school. From a young age, they learn to work together and treat each other with respect.
- Pupils have a good spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. They learn about other cultures and have many opportunities to debate and discuss their ideas and questions about similarities and differences between faiths, cultures and people. Through this, they value the diversity of their community and value each other equally. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They willingly take responsibility and are keen to contribute to improving the school as elected members of the school council and peer mentors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is impeccable. They play very well together and take responsibility to make sure that those who are on their own are drawn into the friendship groups and included. Pupils respond very well to the good relationships with their teachers and the high expectations of how to behave. They do not want to let their teachers down. Excellent behaviour and conduct are embedded in the culture of the school.
- Pupils and parents agree that bullying is not a concern at the school. Pupils take on the role of anti-bullying ambassadors and responsibility for keeping a watchful eye in supporting pupils who may feel excluded by others. When incidents have happened in the past, these have been dealt with swiftly. Pupils have confidence that they would be promptly supported if such incidents happened now. The anti-bullying ambassadors encourage pupils to let them know if someone has been unkind. They review any notes or concerns given to them and, as a team, plan what to watch out for in the playground.
- Attendance is above the national average. Regular attendance is reinforced rigorously, and this has been a key factor in reducing persistent absence over time.

- The sustained work of leaders to ensure that all pupils achieve well and make consistently good progress has been successful. Progress and achievement of all groups of pupils across the school, and across a range of subjects, are consistently good and often better. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their

education.

- In 2016, the achievement of pupils by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above the national average. In 2017, this remains the case, with further increases in some areas. Disadvantaged pupils, many from low starting points, have made exceptional progress over time in closing the gap that exists between them and other pupils. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, there is little difference between different pupil groups. All do very well.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make very good progress against their starting points and frequently reviewed targets. Those pupils whose first language is not English make exceptional progress from the moment they start at the school. Very effective teaching and focused support make sure that they quickly learn the language and can confidently make progress across all subjects.
- From starting points often well below average, pupils make very good progress. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 in 2017 was at least similar to that in schools nationally, and a good proportion achieved beyond.
- Pupils in all year groups make sustained progress. They learn the skills and knowledge they need and learn how to use and apply these across subjects, and meet the additional challenges with which they are provided.
- Phonic knowledge is secure. The proportion of pupils achieving the national standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is at least in line with the national average. Pupils across the school are avid readers who read for enjoyment and have the range of skills they need to read with understanding.
- Standards are high across all subjects, and pupils gain depth while expanding their broader knowledge and understanding. They apply their writing skills across subjects, and show a good all-round knowledge of the subjects they cover.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- From starting points often well below average, children in the early years make outstanding progress. An average proportion of children achieve a good overall level of development by the time they leave the early years.
- Children starting at the nursery settle very quickly into routines. They learn to play together and explore their curiosity and new experiences very well. Those who are new to English are very well supported and taught, being introduced to new vocabulary and encouraged to talk, question and share their ideas. Teachers are very good at encouraging dialogue and involving children in conversations to reinforce language. Children are encouraged to play a full role in all the curriculum activities provided.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum when they leave the early years. Phonics teaching is strong and focused, ensuring that children have a secure knowledge of letter sounds and how these fit together. They are beginning to use this knowledge confidently to write their own sentences and messages, and to read with growing accuracy. The broad and enriching curriculum introduces children to a range of experiences that capture their interest, creativity and imagination. This helps develop their thirst for learning and sets a good grounding from which teachers deepen

their skills. This ensures good progress across all subjects as they enter Year 1.

- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. Leaders make sure that planning is regularly reviewed to meet the needs of all children. Following some differences in the achievement of boys and girls, planning has been refined and additional activities introduced to capture boys' interest in learning. This regular review and detailed tracking of the progress that children make is central to leaders' push to make sure that every child achieves very well.
- Teaching is outstanding, and adults work effectively to make sure that pupils are encouraged to question, share their ideas and develop and consolidate their skills and knowledge. They very quickly learn to be independent and explore their curiosity for learning. Children's behaviour is exemplary and, from the very start, they quickly learn how to behave and meet the high expectations set for them. Children are kept safe and know how to play safely.

School details

Unique reference number	100914
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10031823

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Roome
Headteacher	Julia Burns
Telephone number	020 8249 6880
Website	www.mowlem.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Email address	head@mowlem.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11– 12 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Mowlem is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is above average and the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is significantly high. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a strong link with local specialist provision to support pupils who have significant learning needs.
- The school is part of a learning partnership with other schools in the local area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning taking place in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with senior members of the school.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss learning and their views on the school.
- Discussions took place with leaders regarding their roles and the impact of their work. A specialist from an external agency supporting the school was interviewed about the work in supporting speech and language provision at the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and they spoke with pupils in the playground, in lessons and as they moved around the school building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school. They looked at improvement plans, curriculum plans and reviews of the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised books to see what progress pupils make across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered through meeting parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Paul Wagstaff, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Turvey	Ofsted Inspector
Helena Mills	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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