

George Eliot Primary School

Marlborough Hill, London NW8 0NH

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- After the last inspection, the school went through a series of leadership and staffing changes. Pupils' progress weakened and outcomes declined significantly during this time.
- Almost all teachers and leaders have joined the school within the last two years. The school's leadership and staff are now more settled, and are steadily securing improvements, but there is more to do.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are improving. However, they are not routinely challenging enough to enable all pupils to make good progress. Teachers' expectations of pupils are not typically ambitious. Assessment information is not used routinely to set suitably demanding work.
- The progress of current pupils is improving this year. Outcomes require improvement and particularly so in writing, and phonics in key stage 1.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school set a clear direction for the school. Other senior and middle leaders are developing in their new roles, but are not held fully accountable for the impact of their work. Consequently, leadership, while improving, is not yet good.
- The new curriculum is broad and constantly developing. Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects and experiences. Not all subjects, however, have demanding content which takes the pupils' learning into sufficient depth.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the well-managed Nursery and Reception classes.
- Staff care for, and safeguard, pupils adeptly. Pupils in turn are happy, behave well and look out for each other. Bullying is rare.
- Pupils are treated with respect; they learn to make friends and show respect equally to others.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are effectively taught. They quickly learn English well enough to join mainstream classes.
- The governing body is well organised and supporting the school's leaders in securing improvement.
- Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors are generally very pleased with the changes taking place.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve across all subjects
 - making better use of information about how well pupils are doing to match work closely to their needs, and challenge them more
 - continuing to improve pupils' writing and their understanding of phonics.
- Increase the impact of senior and middle leaders in their areas of responsibility and hold them accountable for how well pupils achieve.
- Improve the curriculum further by increasing the depth and challenge of the content and in each subject discipline.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- This is an improving school. After a period of high staff turnover and declining outcomes since the last inspection, the school has productively re-established itself, and its systems.
- The executive headteacher and head of school are successfully changing the school's culture and practice for the better. They have been quick to make necessary and very widespread staffing changes. Parents appreciate the passion and care shown by staff for the pupils and their interests.
- Most senior and middle leaders are new to their roles. They are learning and improving their work together, and receive valuable training. However, they gauge their work often by what they and other staff have done, without checking how much the pupils have benefited or learned as a result. Leaders' work is not targeted sharply enough, and they are not held sufficiently accountable for its impact.
- Senior leaders evaluate the school honestly. They know that more improvement is needed, and that the developments they have started require further time and work to embed.
- Performance management for staff is organised in a timely way. Staff value it and the training and advice available to them. Nevertheless, teaching is not yet good.
- Leaders have revised the school's arrangements for managing provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders see clearly where the provision is working well and where further improvements are necessary.
- Leaders are rightly and creatively working to ensure that there is a broad curriculum. A pupil aptly described the school as 'a nice place to learn and do a lot of different things.' However, the school's expectations of pupils across the subjects are not high enough. Consequently, despite improvement, outcomes are not yet good.
- The school provides suitably for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The school spends the physical education and sport premium well. All pupils take part in a wide and popular range of active sports and physical exercise. Older pupils enjoy numerous opportunities to participate in sporting activities outside school hours.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is increasingly well spent to the benefit of disadvantaged pupils, whose accomplishments, in a wide range of areas, are improving.
- Leaders are taking positive steps to work closely with parents. Parents are increasingly satisfied with the improvements leaders are making to the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are increasingly sharp in their questioning of leaders. They are working well with senior staff to set the strategic direction of the school. They recognise that the school does not always analyse clearly enough the impact of its improvement actions.

- Governors usefully visit the school to build their first-hand knowledge of its work. Individual governors' roles, and a committee structure, are suitably organised. Governors check carefully the effectiveness of the school's procedures to keep pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe. All staff are regularly and highly trained in safeguarding and child protection. They know what to do, and are confident to act, if a pupil needs help. The school provides support well, in conjunction with families and others such as the police and social services, when necessary. Staff protect pupils carefully from risks associated with extremism or radicalisation.
- Pupils feel safe. The school has clear procedures to deal with any incidents within or around the school premises. They know emergency procedures well. Proper checks are made on all adults who work with the pupils. Staff assess risks carefully. The school keeps clear and accurate records of its child protection and safeguarding work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The school is working hard to improve teaching. Teachers manage classes well, usually give clear explanations, and provide stimulating resources. Pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils regularly do the same or similar work, whatever their level of attainment, and this is often not demanding enough.
- In mathematics, for instance, pupils are set worthwhile investigative tasks. They regularly choose how to do them, and clearly explain and discuss their methods, but too often, the mathematical content is too easy. Pupils notice the lack of challenge.
- In music, pupils enjoy performing together, for instance using percussion instruments. They comment sensibly on each other's performances. However, tasks in music are simple. Pupils do not achieve highly, or engage deeply with key musical elements.
- Teachers across the school have recently become more adept than in the past at ensuring that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are fully included in lessons and activities with their classmates. The quality of teaching and provision for these pupils is uneven between classes.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language when they join the school are well taught and are quickly able to participate in class. Staff develop pupils' use and understanding of English vocabulary well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Parents are pleased about this. Pupils are confident and happy in school. They are keen to discuss their work and learning. They enjoy being part of the school's

cosmopolitan and harmonious community. Recent developments, including the broad curriculum, a high standard of whole-school singing, and the revised programme of personal, social and health education, contribute usefully to pupils' well-being.

- The school has a very effective focus on equalities and the individual value of each member of the school community. This was shown in a whole-school assembly, where these themes were clearly brought out. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were positive. Homophobic and racist incidents are infrequent. When they happen, staff record and deal with them appropriately.
- The school has good systems, and works well with external agencies, to help pupils who need specific pastoral help at any time.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and kind. In class, pupils are attentive, punctual and keen to learn. They understand and respect the school's rules.
- Bullying is uncommon. When it happens, it is dealt with effectively by teaching or non-teaching staff, who ensure that appropriate support is available and actions are taken so that it does not recur. The number of fixed-term exclusions is low and there have been no recent permanent exclusions.
- Pupils' attendance is average. The school checks absences carefully. Staff quickly follow up on pupils who are often away from school. Due to recent good work with families, the rate of persistent absence has fallen.
- Occasionally, pupils' attention wanders in lessons if the work is too easy and they become bored. This is not disruptive but slows down some lessons slightly, when staff need to remind pupils to concentrate. Pupils report occasional boisterous and silly behaviour in the playground, but nothing that concerns them unduly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the 2017 national assessments, Year 6 pupils' attainment was below average and progress was weak, particularly in writing. The pupils who had low attainment when they were in Year 2 generally made more progress in key stage 2 than their classmates.
- In key stage 1, in 2017, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was also notably below average. In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard fell from previous years and was below the national proportion. Pupils' knowledge of phonics continues to be below where it should be.
- Standards in writing across the school are now improving. Across the school, pupils write interestingly and use features such as metaphor. However, their use of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation requires further improvement. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children's early literacy skills are now developed well.
- Disadvantaged pupils performed weakly in key stage 2 last year, and this has been the historic pattern right across the school. However, these pupils are now making

markedly better progress across the curriculum.

- Pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting experiences across many subjects. There is unmistakable evidence of improvements in their progress across the curriculum. In art, for instance, many pupils like using their new sketchbooks, and the quality of their work has started to rise. In physical education, pupils' skills are clearly improving.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, generally make similar levels of progress to their classmates.
- In mathematics, pupils demonstrate increasing confidence in reasoning and problem solving. There remain, however, some gaps in their mathematical understanding.
- Pupils are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education. The momentum from their better progress this year is helping Year 6 pupils' readiness for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception Years from their different starting points. They do well in all areas, including early reading, writing and mathematics. Children in Reception classes this year are being well prepared for Year 1.
- Children develop good dispositions for learning such as concentration, resilience and working independently and with others. They behave kindly. They learn how to consider the needs of others, and to listen and take turns.
- The leadership of early years has developed very well and is good. Leaders evaluate the provision accurately. Improvement is rapid.
- Teaching in early years is typically good. Adults explain things and question children well. This helps children to quickly develop their thinking and skills. Staff assess children accurately and then plan good activities to suit the children's needs and interests. Sometimes, staff do not extend children's learning and skills as effectively. The teaching of phonics, although effective, is not routinely challenging for all children.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is well targeted and well spent. It helps eligible children to make good progress like their peers.
- Children who speak English as an additional language receive good support and teaching, and quickly become fluent enough in English to participate confidently in lessons.
- Parents and families are involved well in early years. There are good communications between home and school. Parents contribute usefully to the assessments of their children.
- Children are well safeguarded, and staff are trained to a high level in this. Children feel secure, and secure arrangements are made to ensure their physical and emotional well-being.

School details

Unique reference number	101115
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10047372

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Novak
Executive Headteacher	Naomi Leaver
Head of School	Lee Duffy
Telephone number	0207 722 2000
Website	www.georgeeliotschool.co.uk
Email address	office@geschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2012

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group.
- In 2017, the school met the floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- A much larger than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- About two in every five pupils are entitled to the support of pupil premium funding. This is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN/and or disabilities is a little below average.

- There have been many changes in leadership and staff since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed classes in all year groups, some jointly with senior leaders. They observed around the school at playtimes and lunchtimes, before and after the school day, and during assemblies.
- They held discussions with the executive headteacher, head of school, other senior and middle leaders, governors and many members of staff. They met a representative of the local authority. They met with groups of pupils and listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 4 read.
- They took account of the views of parents from the five responses on Parent View, which included written responses, from Ofsted’s website. They met with several parents formally and informally and received letters from parents. They analysed carefully the opinions of staff and pupils from confidential questionnaires.
- They looked at samples of pupils’ work in several subjects and sometimes discussed these with the pupils.
- Inspectors evaluated documents, including the school development plan and evaluations, the school’s assessments of pupils’ achievement, safeguarding records, registers of attendance and behaviour, and minutes of meetings.

Inspection team

Robin Hammerton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Turnock	Ofsted Inspector
Lando Du Plooy	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Harvey	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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