

# Harlesden Primary School

Acton Lane, London NW10 8UT

## Inspection dates

12–13 September 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' work has had insufficient impact on improving teaching and raising standards across the curriculum. Turnover in the leadership team has been detrimental to the quality of pupils' education.
- Until recently, leaders have not focused enough on addressing the decline in pupils' reading outcomes, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils' progress is variable and too many pupils leave Year 6 working below the standard expected for their age.
- Leaders and staff give too little emphasis to ensuring that pupils read widely and often. Adults do not routinely check that pupils read books that match their abilities. This has contributed to pupils' inconsistent progress in reading.
- In key stage 2, leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has not been successful in improving disadvantaged pupils' reading outcomes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Teaching does not expect enough of pupils, particularly the most able. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2 is below national figures.
- Governors have not held leaders to account with sufficient rigour, including whether the pupil premium funding is spent well.
- Although leaders are taking successful steps to reduce absence levels, pupils' attendance remains below national figures.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team is ambitious and driven. They have a clear vision, underpinned by well-focused improvement plans and high expectations. As a result, pupils' outcomes are starting to improve, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- The early years is led effectively. Children make good progress in a safe and happy environment. They are well prepared to succeed in Year 1.
- Pupils are caring, articulate and confident. Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils are curious learners. They approach their work with enthusiasm and pride. Pupils conduct themselves well, both in classrooms and at playtimes.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff ensure that pupils are well supervised and feel secure.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders evaluate sharply the impact of their work to improve teaching, pupils' progress and the curriculum
  - successful strategies are fully embedded
  - additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils enables a greater proportion to attain the age-expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 2
  - the governing body provides leaders with incisive challenge.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently strong across a range of subjects by making sure that:
  - teaching routinely provides pupils, particularly the most able, with appropriately challenging work
  - teachers adapt curriculum plans to support pupils to deepen their knowledge and make strong progress over time
  - in the early years, higher-attaining children benefit from appropriate opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- Improve pupils' reading outcomes by ensuring that:
  - pupils read frequently and widely
  - teachers check that older pupils, particularly the most able, read books that are demanding enough
  - younger pupils read books that match their knowledge of phonics in order to support them to become accurate and fluent readers at the earliest possible stage.
- The leadership team sustains improvements in pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with other schools nationally.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The work of the new leadership team is too recent to have secured sustained improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum, particularly in reading.
- In the past, leaders did not routinely check whether their actions were effective in promoting good gains in pupils' learning. Changes at senior leadership level meant that initiatives were introduced but not embedded or evaluated. This has contributed to the decline in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Recently appointed leaders are creating a culture of ambition. Leaders now expect more of themselves, pupils and staff. Their work to bring about improvements is characterised by much-needed rigour and urgency. Staff have responded positively to leaders' vision. Middle leaders, in particular, feel empowered to raise standards. However, much of leaders' work is in its infancy. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, although improving, is not consistently good.
- The curriculum provides pupils with plentiful opportunities to explore different topics and subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils told inspectors how much they had enjoyed studying the art of Monet and trying out the techniques used by the artist. While the curriculum is broad, over time it has lacked depth. Leaders have given insufficient emphasis to the knowledge and understanding that they want pupils to acquire and remember.
- Over the last year, leaders have introduced a more demanding curriculum with a clear focus on ensuring that pupils develop age-related knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. This includes a structured approach to the teaching of reading and mathematics. At the same time, leaders have revised the school's assessment system to ensure that leaders and staff have high-quality information on how well pupils learn, and they can now spot gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. It is too soon to judge whether this work will lead to sustained improvements in pupils' outcomes.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is not used consistently well. This is particularly the case in reading. Disadvantaged pupils have not benefited from effective extra help to improve their progress and attainment by the end of Year 6. Over time, leaders have not measured the impact of strategies in place, and have not refined approaches to secure consistently strong outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders make effective use of the sport premium funding to provide high-quality teaching of physical education (PE) and lunchtime activity clubs. Pupils value greatly the opportunities the school offers, and they told inspectors that the clubs are 'one of the best things about coming to school'.
- Leaders have a strong understanding of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Additional funding is used appropriately to provide these pupils with the support that they need to enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- The school's values and caring ethos promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils appreciate the difference between right and wrong and

told inspectors that it is important to 'be fair' and 'kind to everyone'. This is reflected in pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. Through the curriculum, pupils learn to respect and accept difference and are well prepared to contribute positively to life in modern Britain. For instance, older pupils spoke maturely about the importance of being equally respectful towards people of different religions, as well as those who do not have a faith.

- The local authority has supported the school well through regular meetings and visits to the school. This has enabled the new leadership team to identify priorities accurately and begin to check the impact of their work with increasing rigour.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are supportive of leaders' work and share their vision for the school. However, over time, the governing body has not kept a close eye on whether leaders are doing enough to raise standards, particularly in reading and for different groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged.
- Members of the governing body visit the school regularly to review the quality of education. Nevertheless, they have not asked sufficiently probing questions to support leaders to identify strengths and weaknesses, including whether the pupil premium funding is used effectively.
- In contrast, governors have a strong grasp of safeguarding arrangements. They are rigorous in checking that the school's procedures are as effective as they should be in keeping pupils safe.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders carry out all the required checks to make sure adults are suitable to work in the school. Visitors receive comprehensive information on what they should do if they are concerned about the safety or welfare of a pupil. The site is secure and well maintained.
- Pupils feel safe. They know they can talk to a member of staff if they have any concerns or worries. Most parents and carers agree that their children are safe and happy at school.
- Regular training means that staff know what to do if they are concerned about pupils' welfare. Leaders and staff have a strong understanding of different safeguarding risks, such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation and gang-related activity. Staff are vigilant, and they report concerns promptly when they arise.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach for reporting and recording pastoral concerns. Records are detailed and well maintained. This enables leaders to acquire a full picture of pupils' needs and identify those who need additional support. Leaders work closely with external agencies and parents to make sure that vulnerable pupils receive timely and effective extra help.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently strong across classes and subjects. The new leadership team has established higher expectations than has previously been the case. For example, they are ensuring that pupils from the same year group are taught similar age-appropriate content, irrespective of the class they are in. Nevertheless, variability remains and this hinders pupils from making good progress over time.
- Teaching is not routinely ambitious enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Leaders have not done enough to raise the level of challenge for pupils, even though this was an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Sometimes, pupils undertake work that is too easy before they can progress to tasks that are effective in developing their knowledge and understanding.
- Although improving, the teaching of reading is of variable quality. The school's new reading curriculum gives suitable emphasis to the development of pupils' reading comprehension skills, such as making predictions about what they read. However, sometimes teachers do not adapt curriculum plans to ensure that pupils complete appropriately demanding reading activities. This prevents pupils from understanding the meaning of what they read in greater depth.
- The teaching of writing provides pupils with effective opportunities to write at length and in different styles. However, until recently, leaders had not ensured that teachers followed the school's handwriting policy. This has led to an inconsistent approach to the teaching of handwriting skills. Pupils find it difficult to form and join letters correctly, for instance using capital letters in the middle of words.
- The school's new mathematics curriculum is having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Teaching provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to repeat and practise important skills and knowledge so that they acquire a secure grasp of key concepts at an age-appropriate level. Sometimes, however, teachers set tasks which restrict pupils' thinking and their ability to work at a higher standard. 'Challenge' tasks keep the most able pupils busy but do not contribute as well as they could to furthering pupils' understanding.
- Phonics teaching is improving. Leaders have invested in a new systematic scheme across the early years and Year 1. Staff have secure subject knowledge and use this effectively to help pupils sound out and decode unfamiliar words correctly. Nevertheless, more work is needed to ensure that these improvements embed fully.
- Overall, teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Adults anticipate what pupils might find difficult and adapt activities appropriately. Similarly, they provide helpful guidance so that pupils sustain their focus and want to succeed in the task set.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding. Their questions enable pupils to remember what they already know about a topic and how this information links to their current learning.
- The teaching of PE is strong. Staff have good subject knowledge and use this well to plan activities that support and challenge pupils in equal measure.

- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils are keen to meet these expectations and show high levels of motivation and focus in classrooms.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is palpable. In classrooms, pupils usually collaborate well and contribute readily to discussions. They show pride in their work.
- Pupils have kind and accepting attitudes towards others. They are keen to make sure that everyone feels happy and included at school, for example by making sure no one gets left out of playtime games. Pupils told inspectors that 'there aren't many disagreements' and when they do happen, staff resolve them quickly by ensuring that pupils 'say sorry' and 'shake hands'.
- Pupils feel safe from unkind or prejudicial behaviour, including bullying. They said that such occurrences are rare and they are taken seriously.
- Through the curriculum, pupils have suitable opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they use the internet. Leaders involve outside agencies appropriately in this work. For example, the community police have spoken to older pupils about how they might protect themselves from being drawn into gang-related activity.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils arrive promptly to school. Staff supervise pupils closely so that the school day gets off to a smooth start. In classrooms, pupils follow teachers' instructions without a fuss and they require few reminders to behave well and concentrate on their learning.
- The school is a calm learning environment. Pupils are courteous and behave in a sensible manner, both in classrooms and when moving around the school site.
- Pupils understand and appreciate the school's approach to promoting high standards of behaviour. They told inspectors that incidents of poor behaviour are infrequent and that they are dealt with quickly.
- Leaders use a range of strategies to make sure that pupils attend school regularly. Despite this work, pupils' attendance remains below the national average. Leaders and staff do not evaluate sharply enough how effective different strategies are in reducing absence levels. This prevents leaders from adapting and targeting their actions precisely to the needs of individuals or groups of pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' progress has not been consistently strong. The progress of current pupils is improving. However, improvements are uneven across subjects and year groups, for instance in the current Year 5.
- In the 2017 key stage 2 reading assessments, Year 6 pupils' progress was significantly below their peers nationally. Too few pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attained the standard expected for their age. Provisional information for the 2018 key stage 2 assessments indicates that pupils' progress did not improve.
- Although pupils are enthusiastic readers, leaders and teachers do not check that pupils are reading regularly and for pleasure. The most able pupils are not given sufficient encouragement to try different authors and types of books. Equally, teachers do not routinely check whether pupils' reading habits and choices contribute well to the development of their vocabulary and comprehension skills. As one older pupil put it: 'To get better at reading, we need to read harder books.'
- Teaching does not challenge the most able pupils to attain the highest standards by the end of key stage 2, particularly in reading and writing. Provisional information on pupils' performance in the 2018 key stage 2 assessments shows that the proportion of Year 6 pupils exceeding the age-expected standard was below national figures. This was also the case in the 2016 and 2017 key stage 2 assessments.
- Over time, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been variable. In the 2017 key stage 2 assessments, Year 6 pupils did not make enough progress in reading and mathematics. As a result, too few pupils attained the age-expected standard.
- Pupils' outcomes are typically stronger in mathematics. In the 2018 end of key stage 2 assessments, the attainment of Year 6 pupils rose to above the national average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. In writing, too, provisional information suggests an improvement in pupils' outcomes. Pupils' attainment was broadly similar to national figures in 2018.
- In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 rose markedly in 2018. Further work is needed to ensure that these improvements are sustained for the current pupils.
- Year 1 pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check was poor in 2016 and 2017. This was particularly the case for boys. Better quality phonics teaching brought about improvements in 2018, with the attainment of Year 1 pupils close to national figures. Although teachers provide pupils with reading books, they do not check whether pupils have the necessary phonics knowledge to read these books accurately and confidently. Pupils sometimes become demotivated and have to guess what the words say, rather than decoding them accurately. This reduces pupils' progress in reading over time.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leaders have improved the early years greatly. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the quality of education in the Nursery and Reception classes and are ambitious to secure further improvements.
- Leaders ensure that children, including disadvantaged children, receive consistently strong teaching and make good progress over time. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen considerably over the last three years and is above the national average.
- Leaders and staff make effective use of reliable assessment information to identify and support children who have fallen behind. Leaders involve parents closely in contributing to assessments of children's learning. This enables teachers to identify what they need to do to improve children's development and progress.
- Leaders have rightly prioritised ensuring that children get off to a strong start in phonics. They have successfully implemented a new systematic approach to phonics teaching, and they have invested in staff training so that all adults have the necessary subject knowledge and expertise. This work has paid dividends. Children acquire strong phonics skills and confidently apply their knowledge to read and write at the age-expected standard.
- Classrooms are bright and interesting, both indoors and out. Adults provide plentiful resources to stimulate children's thinking and curiosity. For example, children enjoy exploring different textures, such as foam and sand in the outside area. Adults encourage children to talk about what they experience to promote their language development.
- Adults nurture children's personal development and well-being effectively. Staff are skilled at motivating children to join in with new activities. Clear boundaries and expectations mean that children learn to share resources sensibly and behave well. The early years curriculum helps children to understand how to keep themselves healthy. For example, children brush their teeth every day in school to instil good dental hygiene habits.
- Transition arrangements are strong. Leaders and staff provide a well-thought-through programme of events prior to children joining the school, which includes home visits, 'stay and play' sessions and parent workshops. As a result, children get off to a strong start and quickly feel secure and ready to learn.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained and know what they need to do to secure children's welfare.
- Sometimes teaching could do more to stretch children's knowledge and understanding, particularly those children who are higher attaining. Early years leaders have identified this as an area they intend to focus on.



## School details

Unique reference number	101499
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10056701

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

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	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Narinder Nathan
Headteacher	Sarah Wawn
Telephone number	020 8965 7445
Website	<a href="http://www.harlesdenschool.com">www.harlesdenschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@harlesden.brent.sch.uk">admin@harlesden.brent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15–16 July 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded considerably and can now accommodate three forms of entry in each year group. Currently, most year groups have two classes.
- The majority of senior leaders were appointed in the last academic year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- Compared to the national average, the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is low.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms in all year groups, including the early years foundation stage. They held discussions with pupils about their learning and looked at work in pupils' books. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors on the majority of classroom visits.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school's effectiveness and their actions to secure improvements. Inspectors also held discussions and reviewed documentation on pupils' outcomes, the curriculum and the behaviour and safety of pupils.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and the school's improvement adviser from the local authority.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed at playtimes and around the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views. The 36 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils were also considered.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from every year group in key stages 1 and 2. They also looked at samples of pupils' reading journals.
- In addition to informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day, inspectors took into account the 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including written comments.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, including middle leaders. Inspectors also considered seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jeff Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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