

Earlham Primary School

Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, London, E7 9AW

Inspection dates

24–25 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics over the last two years in both key stages.
- Preliminary 2013 results suggest that attainment at the end of Year 6 has improved substantially in mathematics and it has also improved in reading and writing. More-able pupils have attained the higher Level 6 in mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and are well prepared for the move to Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is mostly good and a considerable proportion is outstanding. There is a strong emphasis on developing independent-learning skills and pupils respond very well to the challenges provided for them.
- Leaders, governors and staff make rigorous and regular checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress. This contributes substantially to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors support the school well with a balanced approach to holding the senior leadership team to account and providing it with support. They are passionate about providing the community's children with the best possible education and ensure pupils, at least, achieve well. They are very proud to be governors of this school.
- Behaviour is good in and around the school. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and lessons are seldom disrupted. Teachers ensure that the school's code of conduct is strictly adhered to and pupils respond with maturity to timely reminders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Although it is challenging for most pupils, the lower-ability pupils, those with no known special educational needs, are not consistently challenged to try harder tasks and see what they could be capable of achieving.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well in reading and writing as they do in mathematics.
- The use of progress-tracking data is not as efficient as it should be. It does not give teachers accurate information on pupils' progress. Leaders are aware of this and have put measures in place to tackle the problem.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, four of which were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with: the senior management team, a number of subject and other leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, the Chair of the Governing Body; and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and parents to find out what they thought of the school in general.
- Inspectors looked at the relevant documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and policies regarding behaviour and attendance, and the safeguarding of all pupils.
- Inspectors examined the most recent government data on the attainment of pupils in the school and the school's systems for checking on pupils' progress through the school year.
- In addition, inspectors took account of the responses from 48 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the responses from an internal school survey of parental views carried out in 2012.
- Responses from 30 members of staff to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Mina Drever, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Richmond

Additional Inspector

John Worgan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school, with most of its pupils coming from many different ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are Bangladeshi and Pakistani.
- Most of the pupils speak English as an additional language. In some year groups, there are no pupils with English as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of additional funding (the pupil premium) is above the national average. In this school the grant is provided for pupils entitled to free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action is above the national average. The proportions of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are very small and well below the national averages.
- Pupils can join the school either in the Nursery or in Reception.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In September 2013, four newly qualified teachers joined the teaching staff. The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher are both in acting roles.
- The school has embarked on an expansion programme to become two-form entry, with two Year 1 classes starting in September 2013 instead of one. A building programme is in progress.
- The school is a member of the Forest Gate Schools, set up by the current headteacher to foster mutual support independent of other authorities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - extending the learning of the lower-attaining pupils by giving them the opportunities to tackle higher levels of work
 - providing more consistently challenging work for the most able, especially in reading and writing
 - using progress data more efficiently so that teachers obtain a more accurate picture of how much progress pupils are making at any one time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage well below the stages of development expected for their age. Many arrive with little or no English. Entrants from the Nursery and from Reception make equally good progress and are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1. The results of the 2013 Year 1 phonics screening check (understanding the sounds that letters make in English) were well above average. Preliminary 2013 results show that at Key Stage 1, attainment rose in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress for Key Stage 2 pupils has remained above the national average for the last three years. Results for Year 6 in 2013 show substantial improvement in mathematics, with over a quarter more of the pupils attaining the higher Levels 5 and 6 than did the year before, although fewer most-able pupils attained higher levels in reading and writing.
- This improving trend in attainment is due to a number of measures put in place by school leaders over the last three years. For example, pupils have been supported with individual learning programmes and class teachers equipped with professional training programmes to address underperformance in writing and mathematics and the progress of specific groups, such as boys.
- Pupils' work books show that they make good progress over time. For example, the literacy books of Year 2 disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs showed that, in just half a term, since September, progress was made from virtually unreadable handwriting to much clearer sentences, demonstrating good use of sounding out letters and grammatical structures.
- All disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action and school action plus make good progress in all year groups. The attainment of those supported at school action rose in 2013, except in writing, where there was a slight drop.
- The very large majority of those who speak English as an additional language make good progress at least equal to, and often more than, that of other pupils and they attain very well, surpassing other pupils in 2013.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make good progress and achieve well. The gap between their attainment and that of their peers closed in 2012 and opened again very slightly in mathematics in 2013, by coming half a term behind. However, they were ahead of their peers in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test by half a term.
- Although achievement is on an improving trend, some pupils are not making the progress they are capable of because they are not challenged enough beyond what they can do without too much difficulty. In particular, some pupils of lower ability, with no known special educational needs, and some of the most able in literacy are not always tested with more difficult and challenging tasks to see how much they can achieve.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is well structured and well planned. As a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including pupils in receipt of the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers monitor learning and progress well. They tailor teaching strategies to the specific and different needs of learning groups and individuals, although, occasionally, some of the most able and those of lower ability with no known special educational needs are not challenged enough beyond what they can do relatively easily, especially in writing and reading.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with some examples of outstanding practice. Good questioning and modelling of the use of language provide excellent support for children's learning. Resources are very well organised and thoughtfully chosen, reflecting the

cultures, abilities and experiences of the children. They are designed to challenge children and provide a variety of experiences across the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

- Most lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between pupils and teachers. There is often excellent use of questioning and opportunities for pupils to talk with a partner to help them understand others' perspectives. For example, this practice was used to good effect in Year 2. Pupils had to consider why it is important for teachers to give clear instructions to the class and what the essential features are of successful instructions, such as the use of highlighting on the board, ordering with numbers, subheadings, bullet points.
- Teachers' high level of motivation to teach well and their in-depth knowledge of the pupils usually enable them to challenge every pupil. There is much focus on pupils' independent learning and guidance through strategies for pupils to help themselves and evaluate the quality of their own work. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class were asked to think about what they had learned and discuss how they could have made their work better.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy permeates the whole curriculum. For example, this starts well in Reception classes, where phonics is effectively taught using a variety of methods to review sounds previously learnt. Consequently, children stay focused and engaged. Parents are encouraged to involve themselves by attending Friday morning 'family phonics' which are helpful to children's learning. Highly trained teaching assistants are effective in providing good levels of support where it is needed.
- Work books are consistently well marked. Marking encourages dialogue between teacher and pupils, who respond to show understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers respond to the pupils' responses, showing that teachers check whether pupils have understood the feedback correctly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour and safety are good throughout all year groups because the school has many effective systems which enable pupils to develop strong moral values and interact well socially. They effectively learn how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy.
- Pupils are happy in school. In class they get down to work quickly with enthusiastic attitudes to learning. They move from one activity to another in an extremely calm manner. Background calming music is often played to promote thinking.
- Teachers have the highest expectations of good behaviour. A positive approach to behaviour management has impacted effectively on pupils' behaviour in and around the school. In the playground, mixed groups of boys and girls play very well together. Attendance has improved steadily over the last three years from the vigorous action taken by the school to persuade all families of the importance of education. Most pupils attend regularly and attendance is, currently, close to the national average.
- Pupils feel very safe and their parents believe that their children are safe in the school. They trust the school's leadership to tackle any behavioural problems effectively.
- Pupils understand all forms of bullying, which they say is very rare. They are confident that, whatever might happen – for example, racist incidents or verbal abuse – their teachers and other senior staff will deal with it so that it does not occur again. They understand cyber bullying too, with a raised awareness of its dangers through a week-long study of e-safety at the start of the school year.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because some lower-ability pupils and some of the most able can lose concentration in class if they do not feel fully involved in what they are doing because sometimes tasks are not challenging them enough.

The leadership and management are good

- Monitoring of teaching and progress by the senior leadership team shows a very clear

understanding of the characteristics of good teaching and learning. Individual programmes of professional development for teachers have led to a deeper understanding of the learning needs of pupils in this multicultural and multilingual school. Class teachers are extremely positive about the support they receive from leaders in their chosen professional development.

- The most effective professional development is at higher-degree level in specific areas needed in the school's classrooms. For example, staff learn how best to support pupils who arrive in school with little or no English, how to provide high-quality intervention programmes to pupils with special educational needs such as autism, and how to enable boys to aim and achieve higher, especially in reading and writing. This high-level, classroom-based training, in partnership with a neighbouring university, is impacting on the outcomes for all pupils as teachers and subject leaders disseminate their learning to other teachers in the school. Leaders below senior level benefit considerably from the professional development opportunities provided.
- Self-improvement is also provided by the Forest Gate Schools, an association of schools started by the headteacher three years ago. The intention is to help each school identify improvement priorities and create opportunities for mutual support and sharing of expertise independent of the local education authority.
- Leadership has been innovative in its implementation of strategies to improve children's experiences of the world, for example, in participating in – and winning – the Balmoral Bridge Art Project. There are visits to churches and mosques, visitors in school, and partnerships with a school in Essex and one in Uganda. The school also sponsors a child in Peru.
- The curriculum gives good opportunities to develop pupils' skills and it also provides rich learning opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a Year 4 class used all its collective imagination to gain a deep understanding and appreciation of what it must have been like working as a nurse in Victorian times, in cold and damp hospitals, compared with the dry comfort of highly equipped modern wards. The study of black peoples helps pupils empathise with what it must have been like to be a slave in Africa or America.
- The new government funding to develop physical education has already been spent, before it was received, by employing a dedicated highly skilled leader to retrain all teachers in effective and fun physical education activity. Greater involvement is planned for a sports consultant to support the various 'out-of-hours' clubs.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and of special educational needs is good. For example, the school has effective systems in place for ensuring that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are effectively and accurately identified, including those who speak English as an additional language. Provision to meet pupils' learning needs is well directed and reflected in the progress pupils make. Particular help includes: individual support for reading, numeracy catch-up programmes, nurture groups and a pupil-support worker.
- The school engages well with parents to the benefit of pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. They are confident that the school provides their children with a good experience of education. They are particularly complimentary about the children's good manners and the headteacher's communication and management style. Many speak very little English and their children act as interpreters for them.
- The school meets the statutory safeguarding requirements.
- The local authority has worked well with the school on a 'light-touch' basis for several years now, though it is strengthening its current support with the moderation of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a good balance of challenge and support to the leadership team in its drive towards higher standards. It feels passionate about providing the pupils of this school with the best educational opportunities and is effective in what it does for them. The new building programme, which is intended to give the school much-improved facilities, is being keenly supervised by the finance committee. Governors have a good range of skills and are able to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement very accurately. They accurately analyse data on the pupils' progress and attainment. The governing body holds the school to account through its various committees, and through the performance management

of the headteacher. Governors approve policies and the performance management targets of teachers and know what the quality of teaching is across the school. They participate in the school's self-evaluation and school improvement planning processes. They have an overview of the budget and make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent appropriately.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102718
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	425621

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Robinson
Headteacher	Laura Hewer
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
Telephone number	020 8534 6127
Fax number	020 8555 8231
Email address	info@earlham.newham.sch.uk

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