

Essex Primary School

Sheridan Road, London, E12 6QX

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2014

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. She is supported well in achieving this by a team of well-trained senior and subject leaders and an effective governing body.
- Training for teachers and support staff is focused sharply on meeting their individual needs. As a result, an increasing amount of teaching is outstanding.
- Behaviour is excellent at all times because pupils are so keen to fulfil their teachers' expectations. This makes the school calm, happy and harmonious at all times.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and have a great appetite for hard work. They feel very safe in school because of the great care taken by staff and governors to safeguard their welfare.
- Children make rapid progress in Nursery and Reception. The strong focus on language development starts here as children are immersed in an environment rich in talk.
- The school runs very smoothly because everyone understands and implements policies and routines.
- Progress in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is rapid and much improved following a reorganisation in teaching.
- All staff are fully focused on making sure all pupils can succeed whatever their needs and no individual is left behind.
- The strong team of support teachers and teaching assistants makes a considerable contribution to learning.
- The organisation and teaching of subjects through topics not only provide interesting experiences but are very well tuned to meet the wide range of the pupils' needs.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted at every opportunity. Cultural diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More able pupils make good progress, but their learning is held back when they are not challenged enough.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply, and so develop, their mathematical understanding.
- Pupils sometimes have insufficient time to think about answers when asked questions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons, 24 of which were seen together with the headteacher or senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff and members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took into account the results of a survey undertaken by the school at the start of the academic year.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents including the school’s own information on the pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors took account of the 92 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils in Year 2 reading.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Buist	Additional Inspector
Michael Jude	Additional Inspector
Gill Whalley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Two thirds of the pupils are from families of Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Indian heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. Many are at early stages of learning English.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for a well above average proportion of the pupils. This is extra government funding given to schools to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for six pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. This provision opened in September 2013.
- More pupils than in most other primary schools join or leave part way through their primary school education.
- The school works in close partnership with other schools in the Manor Park area, in a soft federation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of teaching that is outstanding by making sure that:
 - pupils are given time to think more carefully and deeply about the questions they are asked
 - more able pupils are continually challenged in all lessons
 - pupils have the opportunity to develop and apply their mathematical skills more regularly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress is good, and improving, with the result that attainment is rising and has reached an average level. Year 6 test results rose in 2013 and were at the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 in mathematics, reading and writing. There are no patterns to any variations in the attainment of pupils from the main minority ethnic groups.
- Children enter the school with skills well below those typical for their age. Many have limited English. Their rapid progress in Nursery and Reception is because of the strong focus on their language and personal development. This provides a firm platform for their future learning.
- Pupils new to English make rapid progress in the development of their language skills. All staff model correct grammar and insist pupils respond in full sentences. Intensive individual support gives later arrivals a firm foundation so they integrate swiftly into their classes.
- The focus over the last year on writing has met with great success. Progress has increased and pupils write in a wide range of formats. Their writing is interesting and well planned, including regular opportunities to write in their topic work.
- Initial reading skills develop well and Key Stage 1 pupils use their understanding of phonics well to support their reading. By Year 6, pupils read widely and many say that the school library is their favourite place in the school.
- Progress has increased and attainment risen in mathematics since the last inspection. Pupils regularly apply their skills by solving problems and through practical activities. However, understanding is not always deepened sufficiently for all pupils, but particularly the more able, who are not always given the opportunities to fully extend themselves.
- The pupil premium is used successfully to accelerate the progress of eligible pupils. This includes extra individual and small group work and mentors to support mid-phase admissions. As a result, the gap in attainment was negligible in Year 6 tests in 2013 in all subjects between eligible pupils and others in the year group. This pattern is reflected across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This includes those in the new resourced provision, several of whom have become integrated into mainstream classes. Individual needs are rigorously identified and carefully constructed programmes put in place and adapted if necessary.

The quality of teaching is good

- Classrooms are calm and pupils hardworking because teachers make their lessons interesting and exciting. Rarely do teachers have to remind pupils of their expectations, so lessons flow undisturbed. Teachers use their assessments of the pupils to finely tune their teaching and the activities they provide to move the learning of all pupils forward. They adapt lessons in the light of the pupils' learning and reinforce key points and tackle misconceptions promptly and effectively.
- The team of support staff is very effective, whether working within the classroom or leading sessions on programmes such as to help pupils who are struggling with their reading. Those working with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including in the new resource provision, have formed strong and constructive bonds with those they work with. This is a major factor in pupils' good progress.
- The strong adult team in the Nursery and Reception work closely together. They use assessments of the children to plan activities to meet all levels of learning and language needs. Expectations are high, teaching is engaging and adults are skilled at deciding when and how to intervene to help move learning forward. Learning is linked carefully between inside and outdoors with a range of highly motivating activities to capture and retain the children's imaginations.
- Pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to meet their individual

targets. They receive valuable guidance through feedback from their teachers and their marking and act upon suggestions for improvement or additional challenges. This helps to promote the typically good progress made by pupils which is evident across the school.

- Teachers question pupils to check their understanding and draw out ideas. However, the way questions are asked means pupils do not always have the time to think their answers through.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They treat each other and adults with great respect, are polite and well mannered at all times, and move quietly and sensibly around the school. Pupils work and play amicably together and help newcomers to the school to settle in quickly and make new and lasting friendships.
- Children start to develop an interest in learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. They learn to work together constructively, to share and take turns. These skills are built on consistently across the school. Pupils listen very carefully to each other and their teachers and are keen to answer questions. They are highly ambitious and take great pride in the neat and careful presentation of their work.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe in school, which is confirmed almost unanimously by parents and carers. Pupils are taught how to recognise and deal with risky situations, including bullying. They say incidents are rare and dealt with quickly by staff. This is borne out by the school's meticulous records and parental views.
- Pupils are very proud of their school, the way it helps them to learn and the preparation it gives them for secondary school. They say how much they enjoy the wide range of interesting activities provided. This is reflected in their steadily rising and above average levels of attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with strong and determined leadership. The staff team is united behind her vision and direction for the school. Teamwork is strong at all levels, with staff working together closely in subject and year teams. The school knows itself well through rigorous self-evaluation and uses this to identify priorities to be tackled to bring about its continual improvement.
- Subject leaders are well trained and make a significant contribution to improvements in their areas. Less experienced members of each team are coached by senior leaders. They also attend training appropriate for the stages of their development and work with other schools across the federation.
- The quality of teaching is rigorously checked so that there is a clear picture of what is needed for each teacher to improve their performance. From this, individual programmes of support are put in place, including sessions before school to improve expertise in mathematics and coaching from experts within the school. Only teaching that leads to pupils making good or better progress is rewarded financially.
- Local authority engagement has been light touch with this successful school. However, it has worked effectively alongside the headteacher to set more challenging targets so that the school could 'raise its game' following the fall in Year 6 test results in 2012.
- The school's success in achieving equality of opportunity is seen by any differences in achievement by different groups being minimal. Tailored programmes for individuals, whether this is to extend the gifted and talented, to meet the targets for special needs pupils or to support the language development of pupils, enable them all to make good progress.
- Topics link learning well between subjects. They fire the pupils' imaginations and are supported by visits to theatres, places of worship and the Houses of Parliament. Numerous opportunities are taken to celebrate the school's cultural diversity and help pupils appreciate other cultures.

Links with schools abroad such as in Sri Lanka and South Africa extend the pupils' global awareness considerably. Art galleries are visited and pupils participate in a termly music project around different cultural themes.

- New sports funding is being used well to extend opportunities for pupils and develop staff expertise. This has already led to a considerable increase in the number of pupils participating in the school's many sports clubs.
- Parents are overwhelmingly in support of the school. They feel involved, able to contribute and well informed. Workshops help them to understand how children learn and how they can support them at home. The English language classes provided help parents and families to engage with the school more easily.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors reflect well the range of backgrounds represented in the school. They are becoming increasingly challenging in their role, having undertaken a self-evaluation to identify where they could become more effective. They are well trained and include a wide range of appropriate expertise such as in financial planning. Members of the 'data group' have a very clear understanding of assessment data and its implications. They work closely with senior staff to explore patterns and identify action to be taken such as after the decline in Year 6 test results in 2012. Governors are clear about the impact of spending decisions, such as the pupil premium, and the action being taken by the headteacher to move teaching from good to outstanding. Governors support improvement planning through the allocation of resources and by checking their impact, but are not always closely involved in establishing priorities alongside senior leaders.

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	102763
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	431747

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	986
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rick Probett
Headteacher	Rosie Cowan
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 March 2011
Telephone number	020 8472 0322
Fax number	020 8471 0857
Email address	info@essex.newham.sch.uk

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