

South Grove Primary School

Ringwood Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 8PW

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have extremely high expectations of staff and pupils. This has led to strong improvements in all aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection including teaching and achievement.
- Standards have risen sharply in the last three years. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in reading and writing is in line with the national average and improving strongly in mathematics.
- The school is welcoming, caring and supportive of pupils from all backgrounds. Pupils from different cultures develop language and communications skills right from the start, in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching has been increasingly effective in the last 18 months and is responsible for rapid improvements in pupils' progress across the whole school.
- Systems to manage staff performance are rigorous and all staff benefit from high-quality training. This process has helped the rapid improvements in the quality of teaching, which is now good and of high quality.
- Teaching in the 'resource provision' is good. Pupils with complex needs are developing good personal and social skills which are preparing them well for their next steps in education.
- Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development underpins the exceptional attitudes and behaviour of pupils in their lessons. Pupils are extremely motivated and eager to learn and are unreservedly polite and caring of one another. Pupils say they feel very safe and their school is a 'bullying free zone'.
- Support staff who work with pupils in need of extra help make an exceptional contribution to these pupils' successful learning.
- The governing body holds the school robustly to account for its performance, management of finances and safeguarding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few more able pupils stay too long on easy tasks and do not progress as quickly as they can.
- The standards reached in writing are lower than in mathematics.
- Marking does not always lead to improvements for a few pupils with statements of special education needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, 10 of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to other lessons, looked at pupils' work, observed four assemblies and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, parents and pupils. The lead inspector met with the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), recent school questionnaires and a written letter from a parent. Inspectors also considered 41 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including national test results and the school's own information about pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, and records and documents relating to staff performance.

Inspection team

Justina Ilochi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Richmond

Additional Inspector

Peter Lacey-Hastings

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for certain groups, including children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is almost twice the national average.
- Above 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and this is much higher than average. The largest group of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. Other significant groups include Black African, Black Caribbean, White British and pupils from other White backgrounds.
- Two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language and many are at an early stage of learning to speak English at the start of Nursery or Reception. This is more than three times the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average while the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is almost three times the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced some changes to its structure. The headteacher was appointed to substantive post in September, 2012 and the deputy headteacher in September 2013. Several leaders and managers such as the Early Years Foundation Stage Manager, the Inclusion manager were appointed in the last 2 years. The number of members appointed to the governing body was reduced in September 2013.
- The school has a 'resourced provision' for pupils with complex special educational needs with autism and global delay. Currently, the provision has 17 pupils across the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding and enables pupils to make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - higher attaining pupils are always challenged as soon as they are ready for more demanding work
 - teachers pay equal attention to the composition and development of writing styles and types as they do to grammar and punctuation
 - teachers mark the books of the few pupils with statements of special educational needs with the same rigour as the rest of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Standards have improved sharply since the previous inspection to broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, more pupils than ever before in Year 2 and Year 6 attained the higher levels in mathematics and this is set to continue this year. For example, current school records show that the proportion of the most able pupils working on the highest levels in reading and mathematics is already broadly in line with that seen nationally.
- School records show that in the last two years all pupils leaving in Year 6 made good progress from low starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, pupils from a range of ethnic groups such as those from Pakistani heritage, Black African, Black Caribbean, White British and pupils from other White backgrounds have reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils from Pakistani backgrounds reached the highest levels in writing and mathematics in 2013. This represents good achievement from their starting points.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs supported on school action or school action plus are making good progress and reaching standards comparable to similar pupils nationally.
- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels below what is typical for their age, and many speak little or no English when they arrive. As a result of good quality teaching, children make good progress from their initial starting points and narrow the gaps in their knowledge and skills when they leave Reception.
- Many pupils' books show good communication, English and mathematics skills across a range of subjects, directly resulting from the consistently good quality teaching the pupils have received in the last two years.
- The phonics check (sounds that letters make) for six year olds in 2012 and 2013 demonstrate rapid improvements in reading skills and this is having a strong impact on pupils' reading which is secure throughout the school. This is because of the strong daily teaching of reading in Reception, Years 1 and 2 and the way the school has encouraged all pupils to read more widely and often both in school and at home.
- The school's strategies to accelerate the progress of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have been effective in securing higher attainment levels especially in mathematics. Attainment in writing is lower than mathematics. Teachers do not always balance their excellent marking and checking of grammar and punctuation in pupils' books with the development of composition skills for writing in different styles and types.
- Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding initiative are making more progress in English and mathematics than all pupils nationally. Gaps are narrowing rapidly across the school in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. For example, school records show that in Year 6, gaps have closed completely for girls known to be eligible for free school meals while boys are only about a term behind other boys in the school in mathematics. This is an improvement on the last year when pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 were one year or more behind others in reading and mathematics. This is because funding for pupils supported through the pupil premium has been well spent on meeting the needs of identified pupils through very well targeted one-to-one support and small-group teaching within lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers create an attractive and welcoming learning environment; they establish very positive relationships with pupils and know their classes well. Having high expectations of themselves and their pupils and the combination of the teachers' enthusiasm and passion for teaching,

together with the pupils' excitement for learning, have led to the rapid improvements in the achievement of most pupils in the last two years.

- The planning of learning is consistent across the whole school and supports pupils' good progress well. For example, in a highly successful Year 5 mathematics lesson for lower ability pupils, the teacher effectively used support assistants to guide pupils' learning in one-to-one sessions or in small groups so all pupils made good progress. Some pupils, like those that are at the very early stages of speaking English as an additional language, made rapid progress.
- Adults who support pupils in need of additional help, including pupils who have complex special educational needs, play an important role in these pupils' successful learning because they are well briefed to support selected pupils by professionals such as the speech, language and communications therapists. As a result, the personal, communication and social skills of pupils on the autistic spectrum and pupils with global delay who are educated in the 'resource provision' are good and improving rapidly.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff provide a stimulating, happy learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, where children quickly learn to work well with each other and make good progress.
- Pupils' books show the positive attention given to regular marking of pupils' work and the demanding targets and high expectations of all teachers. As a result, almost all pupils can talk confidently about how well they are doing and their next steps in learning to inspectors. Their books are well presented; close attention is paid to neat, legible handwriting and it is evident that all pupils take pride in their work. However, teachers have not used a similar rigour to mark and assess the work of pupils working below National Curriculum Level 1. Consequently, the progress of a few pupils with statements of special educational needs is slower compared to the rest of the school.
- The teaching generally caters for the higher attaining pupils by providing them with more demanding tasks but sometimes these pupils spend too much time completing the same tasks as others because teachers have not anticipated where to intervene in order to set harder work for them as soon as they are ready.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. Pupils act very responsibly on the playground where they are well supervised. Their attitudes to learning are exceptional and play a significant part in their improved achievement.
- Pupils demonstrate strong social skills. They are eager to learn and are highly motivated. They get on extremely well together and respond positively to adults. Pupils are taught to help and respect one another and to work well together in groups and this contributes to their successful learning. In the words of several pupils that spoke to inspectors, 'Our school is a bully free zone'.
- Procedures to manage behaviour are robust and followed consistently by staff; as a result, incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, are infrequent. School's records of incidents confirm the dramatic reduction in unacceptable behaviour in the school in the last two years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they are happy and feel safe and well cared for at school. Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks in life beyond school, including through the use of the internet.
- Pupils value the many opportunities to take on, and in some cases train for, important roles and responsibilities such as the 'anti-bullying ambassadors' and pupil 'mentors'. These pupils' activities make a valuable contribution to improving the school and everyone's well-being. For example, pupils spoke highly of the safety in the playground and around the school and described the school as a 'bullying free zone'.
- Pupils enjoy school where their academic achievements and other contributions to school life are rewarded and celebrated and as a result their attendance has sharply improved and is in line with that seen nationally. A few pupils who used to refuse to come to school in the past now

attend regularly.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher together provide exceptional leadership for the school. The new team of leaders including phase leaders are highly ambitious, professional and uncompromising in their drive for all pupils to achieve as well as they can. All staff rise to the school's high expectations in order to consistently secure improved outcomes for all pupils. As a result, in the short time since the previous inspection, achievement has continued to improve and the behaviour of pupils in and around the school is outstanding.
- Underpinning the school's positive picture of rising pupil achievement is the extremely strong systems in place for checking pupils' progress that are robustly aligned to the management of staff performance. The considerable investment in high-quality training for staff, especially those new to teaching, is having a notable impact on their classroom performance.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest in its assessment of relative weaknesses. This has resulted in concerted and effective action which has led to rapid improvement in monitoring staff and pupils' performance and achievement. Consequently, the school has a very strong capacity to maintain its current strengths and develop them even further.
- The high quality of teaching is supported by an excellent programme of professional development which is coherent, effective and very supportive. It is based on the identified needs of staff and enables those at an early stage of their career to experience best practice. The appraisal system that supports teachers' performance and links to salaries is very robust and linked closely to Teachers Standards ensuring that challenging targets are set in relation to pupils' progress.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of exciting enrichment and cultural opportunities for high-quality learning and is successfully broadened by many exciting clubs on offer after school. Its well-planned thematic activities provide context and enjoyable ways for pupils to learn and use their reading, writing and problem-solving skills. Displays in classrooms and corridors are highly effective in increasing pupils' historical and geographical subject knowledge as well as providing a vehicle for art and design. This has led to continued improvements in the achievement of pupils.
- The school's ethos underpins the strong spiritual and moral atmosphere of the school. Many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are provided, especially through well-led assemblies. This aspect is supplemented by strong musical activities and lessons which encourage pupils to explore different faiths and cultures. Pupils demonstrate a positive and confident approach to life which results from having high self-esteem. This is especially true of the well-taught music lessons for pupils in the 'resource provision' where pupils are learning through 'signing' and music to improve their communication skills and understand the world around them.
- The school's actions to keep parents informed about the work of the school are extremely effective and responses from parents during this inspection were overwhelmingly positive. For example, the school organises specialised lessons for parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language to learn alongside their children. Consequently, all pupils are able to enjoy reading at home right from the Early Years Foundation Stage and the phonic test results have improved dramatically in the last year.
- The school makes good use of the additional funding it receives for sport by employing sports coaches who have broadened the range of sports available and is training staff to ensure this provision will remain ongoing. Senior leaders, including the governors, are monitoring participation rates in sports activities after school, to ensure that as many children as possible are involved.
- The school works in a positive way with the local authority and has always welcomed the useful advice and support it receives. Since the previous inspection, the local authority has carried out regular termly reviews of the school's work and supported the training of the newly reconstituted

governing body.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The work of the governing body has contributed to the excellent quality of education the school provides. Governors are committed and well informed. They hold leaders to account robustly and successfully for all aspects of the school’s performance and have developed close links with parents.
- Governors have benefited from relevant training and know how well the school performs against national standards. They pay close attention to the school’s pupil performance information.
- Governors manage the resources of the school very effectively. In particular, they ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the pupils it is provided for to enable them to make rapid progress and close the gaps with other pupils.
- Governors make sure that the system for managing the performance of staff is robust and linked closely to pay for teachers and senior leaders. They monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on progress of pupils very closely.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and ensures that all requirements are met and effective in relation to the safeguarding of pupils.

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	103072
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	430840

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	564
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Hackney
Headteacher	Julie Maltwood
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 June 2012
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