

Michael Faraday School

Portland Street, Walworth, London, SE17 2HR

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception Years, making good progress.
- Progress throughout Key Stage 2 improved markedly last year.
- Over the last year the teaching of writing has been reorganised and this has helped pupils to make better progress in their written work in English lessons.
- Effective teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) enables pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and spelling.
- The headteacher and the leadership team have set clear expectations for good teaching and they support staff to improve their practice.
- Teaching is good because most activities are carefully planned at the right level for pupils. As a result, they make good progress.
- Leaders, managers and governors have made sure that teaching and achievement have improved.
- Pupils speak very highly of their school. They feel safe, behave well and treat adults and each other with kindness and courtesy.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. This, together with the work of their active school council, helps to prepare pupils for life in modern democratic Britain.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is exemplary. Older pupils help younger children to feel well looked after. The school has helped parents to support their children's safe use of the internet.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all adults are skilled in asking questions that help pupils, particularly the more able, to deepen and widen their knowledge.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not consistently high enough in subjects other than English, and this slows pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers. One session was observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed pupils' activities at breakfast club, break and lunchtimes, and at an assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives from the governing body, and subject and school leaders. Discussions took place between an inspector and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a letter from a parent as well as informal discussions with parents and carers. The views of staff were taken into account through meetings and the 38 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current year as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning documents were examined.
- Records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including security checks on staff, were also examined. Behaviour logs and attendance records were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Michael Austins	Additional inspector
Avtar Sherri	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Children start school part time and progress to full time when they reach compulsory school age.
- The proportion of pupils eligible to receive support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for free school meals and for looked after children) is above the national average. About four in ten pupils are supported by this additional funding.
- The largest groups are pupils of African, White British and Other White heritages. There are also sizeable groups of pupils of Bangladeshi and Caribbean heritages.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average, with almost one in five pupils in the school receiving support. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average, with about one in ten pupils receiving this support.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum standards for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since its last inspection new leaders of literacy and early years have joined the school leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - making sure that all adults ask challenging questions that prompt all groups of pupils, particularly the more able, to think deeply and in detail about their answers
 - increasing the impact of marking on pupils' progress in English by making sure that pupils act on teachers' guidance
 - making sure that marking is as detailed in mathematics and other subjects as it is in English so that pupils are helped to make rapid progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Accelerate progress in writing by making sure that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' writing in a range of subjects at Key Stage 2.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The passionate headteacher and leadership team have focused on using frequent observations of pupils' learning and scrutiny of their work to drive up standards and the quality of teaching. Subject leaders have been encouraged to take a full part in checking on standards in their areas of responsibility. As a consequence, they are making an impact and improving standards.
- All leaders make detailed use of tracking systems to identify quickly any pupils who may be falling behind. Effective support is then arranged to help these pupils to catch up.
- In recent years, standards in writing have been lower than those in reading and mathematics. Leaders have addressed this. Their focus on writing, with additional resources and training for teachers, is now having a positive impact on raising pupils' progress and attainment in writing.
- Robust systems have been developed to make sure that only those teachers who meet the targets that are set for them move up the salary scale. The headteacher does not shirk from difficult conversations about teaching performance when these are necessary. Extensive programmes of support, paired teaching and modelling of best practice have been developed to help teachers to improve their work.
- Teachers new to the profession receive effective support. 'I feel supported and challenged already by the senior leadership team', is a typical comment.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils reflect on the differences between right and wrong in carefully planned assemblies that focus on ethical values. Values of tolerance and democracy in British and other societies are highlighted in history lessons and in winning entries in the Mayor of London's citizenship competitions.
- School council membership give pupils the opportunity to exert an influence on their well-designed playground. Participation in musical presentations at the Globe Theatre and art gallery events has widened pupils' cultural horizons. Visits to different places of worship extend pupils' spiritual understanding of Christian and other major faiths. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The government's sports funding has been used well to link with a secondary school and employ their staff to train class teachers. Consequently, skills in teaching gymnastics and games have improved. Coaches have also led additional clubs thus increasing participation in sports, opening up places at a talent academy for tennis and promoting healthy lifestyles outside class time.
- Safeguarding systems meet current requirements and policies are consistently applied. Leaders promote equal opportunities and do not tolerate any discrimination that may arise.
- Leaders work successfully with other schools to develop common assessment arrangements for the new curriculum.
- The local authority has given good-quality support to the school. Advisers, together with the headteacher, have conducted joint checks on classroom learning and evaluated progress towards annual targets.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and teaching in the school. This is because the headteacher provides clear information in regular reports. Governors are now using published national data to ask more challenging questions about comparisons of pupil outcomes in the school with those of pupils nationally. They make regular visits to check that reported improvements are taking place. The governing body has improved its effectiveness by undertaking local training programmes organised by the local authority. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress and have revised the pay policy. The governing body receives summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher; governors are aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance. Checks are made that extra government funding is spent on the intended groups and that this is helping to improve their achievement. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and the budget is carefully managed to support the school improvement plan.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive as a result of the encouragement and careful attention that they receive from teachers and other adults. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the school's reward system and are proud of the responsibilities that they are given.
- Pupils work constructively with each other in lessons. Behaviour is good, rather than outstanding, because attitudes to learning are not consistently excellent across all classes and subjects.
- Typically, pupils conduct themselves very well around the school. This is because all staff set high expectations. Positive values are emphasised in assemblies and pupils quickly respond to this. For example, a pupil at lunch, where good manners were very evident, remarked that 'it's fun here because adults are very helpful'.
- Pupils take great pride in their well-equipped playground and they appreciate the way that their constructive suggestions to the school council about introducing more clubs were taken seriously.
- Pupils understand what bullying means and they say that, although it does sometimes occur, staff can be relied upon to help them to overcome any disagreements very quickly. This is borne out by school records.
- Attendance rates of pupils who are persistently absent are improving. This is because of effective checking and insistent following up of absences with parents. Attendance last year rose to exceed the national average. Exclusions have not been resorted to because the management of behaviour is effective.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them and speak appreciatively of the way that they would be happy to approach any adult, confident that their concerns will be addressed quickly. Knowing the pupils as individuals is a priority for all adults and consequently pupils say they feel very secure in the school.
- Pupils have a very strong awareness of personal safety, including when using the internet, because it is explained well in lessons. Pupils have signed 'safe use' contracts to remind them of the correct actions when using the internet. Workshops are run for parents to help them to keep their children safe online at home.
- Pupils take some responsibility for promoting safety and look after each other well outside classrooms. Older pupils take responsibility as trained monitors in the very well-equipped playground to help others to behave sensibly and safely. Inspectors observed other pupils' spontaneous concern for others. For example, when a younger pupil was seen crying in the playground, another pupil spotted this and went over to spend time comforting him.
- The parents who responded to Parent View, or who otherwise expressed their views, unanimously believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very pleased with the activities that have been provided for them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because positive relationships are established quickly between all adults and pupils in the classroom. Consequently, pupils are eager to become involved in their lessons. Well-planned and interesting activities are set at the right level of difficulty for almost all pupils so that they make good progress.
- For example, in Year 2, pupils were captivated by the opportunity to put questions to a character from the Crimean War. They showed insight and empathy in their responses to the information that was communicated about makeshift hospital conditions. As a result, most pupils were able to suggest varied adjectives and vivid similes that they went on to use when drafting letters from the wounded patient. Adults questioned pupils skilfully as they worked and gave clear guidance about expectations so that all groups made good progress. Pupils extended their writing with detailed descriptions.
- Activities in mathematics are designed to stimulate pupils to make progress in solving problems. Adults work with different groups to encourage pupils to explain their answers. Teachers have begun to use a common marking practice for mathematics across the school to give guidance to pupils about how to improve their work, but marking in mathematics and other subjects is not yet as detailed as it is English.
- Teachers mark pupils' English work thoroughly and regularly and give helpful advice in their English books. However, the teachers' detailed marking does not yet result in pupils making clear improvements to their work as a result of taking on board teachers' guidance.
- Teachers do not yet set the same high expectations for extended writing in other subjects and, as a result, progress sometimes slows.

- Well-trained teaching assistants give good-quality support to pupils who need additional help to complete tasks. However, some pupils in Key Stage 2, including the most able, are not always challenged to attain the very highest levels in class because they are not set questions that are challenging enough.
- Reading is encouraged across all year groups. Leaders have re-organised the resources in classrooms, and time for reading is scheduled frequently for all classes. Pupils' progress in reading is recorded systematically so that it can be checked by parents as well as teachers.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards of writing declined recently in 2013 at the end Key Stage 2. However, leaders have acted decisively and reorganised the teaching of writing. In 2014, attainment in writing improved and a higher proportion of the Year 6 group made good progress given their starting points. In 2014, Year 6 pupils also made good progress in reading and mathematics, which represented a marked improvement from 2012 outcomes in these subjects. The school's own progress information about other year groups at Key Stage 2 also shows consistently strong progress in reading and mathematics.
- The school's own progress information on pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1 shows that most pupils made expected or better progress from their starting points in all subjects. The numbers of pupils attaining above the expected level in Year 2 rose in 2014 and increased numbers of more able pupils attained the higher level in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making the same good progress as their classmates. This is because they are supported well by staff who take their specific needs into consideration.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups make equally good progress. Those for whom English is an additional language also achieve well. This is because focused training has been given to staff who support small groups and help to develop their language skills rapidly.
- In 2014, the performance of the most able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 was stronger than previously in reading and writing. The progress made by the most able pupils in the past has not always been as rapid as could be expected. Leaders recognise that this is because teachers did not always give pupils hard enough work to enable them to do well in a wide range of subjects. The most recent test results show that this picture is now beginning to improve.
- The teaching of phonics is good and helps pupils to develop their reading skills well. In 2014, a higher proportion of pupils met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check than in 2013. Over the past three years, pupils have been above national expectations for this measure.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to run small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the gap between eligible pupils in Year 6 and their classmates had narrowed to less than two months in writing and mathematics, and less than six months in reading. This was a marked improvement on 2013. Disadvantaged pupils actually outperformed their peers in the school in Year 1 and Year 3 in reading, writing and mathematics, and this reflects their sustained improvement. This picture is a marked improvement on that in 2013. Although disadvantaged pupils are not yet attaining at the same level as pupils nationally, their achievement is improving.

The early years provision is good

- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Parents are visited at home and given frequent progress reports with suggestions to help their children to learn outside school hours. Children quickly get used to the routines established by staff, who skilfully defuse any minor disagreements.
- Children join the Nursery classes with skill levels that are generally below those expected of three-year-olds nationally. As a result of good teaching, in 2014, an above-average proportion achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. This reflects a trend of good academic and personal progress over several years. Children are well prepared to begin Year 1.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe and secure environment for children. Staff are skilful in helping children make good progress through a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. Teachers use questioning effectively to help children develop their language skills and confidence in description. However, leaders recognise the need to extend training in this respect to all adults.

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	100803
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	444265

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angus Norman
Headteacher	Karen Fowler
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 May 2007
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