

Sir Thomas Abney Primary School

Fairholt Road, Stoke Newington, London N16 5ED

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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.

- Good leadership and management at all levels have ensured that the school continues to provide a good standard of education for its pupils. Some aspects of the school's work have improved since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and other leaders check carefully how well pupils are progressing and help teachers improve their practice. As a result, teaching is good and pupils' progress is improving.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally courteous and kind to visitors, each other and adults. They work hard in lessons and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning.
- The school keeps pupils very safe and pupils, staff and parents agree. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe in and out of school and manage risks appropriately.
- The governance of the school is effective. Governors are highly committed and support the leaders of the school well as they improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors visit regularly to monitor improvements.
- Early years provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. As a result, children make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Leaders have successfully improved pupils' attendance and reduced persistent absence to low levels.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, including in early years, in reading and writing. Learning is well-planned and staff ask good questions. Teaching in mathematics is outstanding over time.
- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school, and teaching ensures that there are good gains in pupils' progress lesson by lesson.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those who attend the specialist resource base, make good progress.
- Leaders took effective action after progress slowed last year in reading and writing. This has ensured that pupils' progress accelerated in these subjects. Pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. This is one of the reasons that their behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- The school addresses a variety of relevant issues and actively promotes pupils' understanding and application of British values.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although marking and feedback are effective overall, they do not always provide sufficient challenge to help the most able pupils deepen or extend their learning. As a result, too few attain the highest levels at Key Stage 2.
- Targets set for teachers for the management of their performance are not always challenging enough, particularly for those that are the most experienced and highest paid.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with half a day’s notice. The inspection team observed learning in 20 lessons or part-lessons across all classes and year groups. Seven lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteachers. Inspectors also observed sessions for small groups of pupils, three assemblies and break and lunchtimes. In addition, inspectors scrutinised work in pupils’ books in a range of subjects. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with pupils, school leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses from parents to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as outcomes from parent surveys that the school conducted. They also spoke to parents informally in the playground at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the 36 questionnaire responses received from staff.
- The inspection team examined a range of documentation, including that related to safeguarding, the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, the minutes of governing body meetings, information about pupils’ progress and attainment, notes of visits from the local authority, records of behaviour and attendance and records relating to the management of staff performance. The school’s website was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club which takes place on the school premises and is run by the governing body. They also visited the school’s specialist resource provision.

Inspection team

David Thomas Hatchett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Lacey-Hastings	Additional Inspector
Keith Tysoe	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most other primary schools in the country and has grown since the previous inspection. Children in the two Nursery classes attend full time or part time and those in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The school enjoys rich cultural diversity with nearly all pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups of pupils are of Eastern European and Turkish ethnicity, followed by Black African and Caribbean heritages. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. Twenty two pupils attend the school's on-site specialist provision for speech, language and communication difficulties, but are mostly integrated into mainstream classes in the school. Many of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the usual times, is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection in 2010, there have been significant changes to the staffing of the school and over half of the teaching staff has changed. However, the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body continue in post. The headteacher supports two schools in the local authority in the role of a school improvement partner.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at the higher levels of Key Stage 2 and accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing to the rate of that in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that marking and feedback, including for homework, always extend and deepen pupils' understanding, particularly for those who are the most able
 - making sure that targets for teachers as part of the management of their performance are suitably challenging, especially for those who are the most experienced.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the two deputy headteachers and other leaders, provides a strong steer to the school's work. They check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement rigorously. As a result, they have maintained the school's good effectiveness since the previous inspection while improving some aspects.
- Leadership and management at all levels are good, including of the specialist resource base, provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and leaders that hold subject responsibilities. All leaders carry out their roles effectively.
- Leaders have successfully created a harmonious learning community where all pupils and adults get on and look after each other irrespective of their backgrounds. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and combats discrimination effectively. As a result, all groups of pupils in the school achieve well. These positive aspects reflect the views that parents expressed in their responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and governors also contribute to this. Leaders make accurate judgements on the quality of learning in lessons and this was confirmed during joint observations with inspectors.
- The school's curriculum is good; it promotes good progress and is suitably broad and balanced. The school was quick to adapt to the changes of the new National Curriculum and ensures a particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, it also provides, through the good use of the primary sports premium, significant physical education and sports provision which is of high quality. This also includes on-site swimming lessons for all classes and specialist sports coaches. As a result, pupils make good progress in physical education.
- A wide range of after-school clubs, educational visits and a programme of visitors and speakers to the school enhance the curriculum and enable pupils to develop leadership and other skills. The breakfast club is well managed, keeps pupils safe and provides a good start to the school day for those pupils who attend.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well and this contributes to their outstanding behaviour and safety. Assemblies develop pupils' appreciation of the difference between right and wrong and provide excellent opportunities for pupils to share in the successes of each other. The school actively promotes fundamental British values, such as democracy, rule of law and mutual respect through a range of topics, such as the recent general election and the importance of voting. An effective school council is well organised and includes representatives from across all classes in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is clear evidence on corridor displays of their impact and changes they have overseen. This work prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. They ensure pupils are kept safe. Staff training in child protection is up to date and procedures meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority rightly identifies the school as effective. A school improvement partner visits the school once every half term and has supported the leadership team with self-evaluation, lesson observations and introducing a new approach to pupils' assessment in Years 3, 4 and 5. A very recent visit by the local authority rightly validated the school's performance data for Year 6 which indicated that pupils make good progress overall.
- The management of teachers' performance is well organised and consistent at all levels. Governors ensure that they seek appropriate external advice when they manage the headteacher's performance. Staff value the frequent opportunities that they have to discuss their performance with senior leaders. Targets for teachers on the main pay scale correctly identify the need for pupils in their classes to make consistently good progress. However, the targets that the most experienced teachers are set, including for those in leadership positions, are not always sufficiently challenging for their career stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and visit regularly. The governing body is currently undergoing a reconstitution process, but continues to provide a good direction to the school's work, under the experienced leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body.
 - Governors monitor key aspects of the school's work, and keep a close eye on the spending and impact of pupil premium and other finances. The work of the finance committee is well led by an experienced

governor with appropriate expertise. The work of link governors in key areas is also effective.

- Minutes of governing body and committee meetings show that governors ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account for the school's performance, including how well pupils are taught and the progress they make. Governors show a good understanding of key educational matters and seek training in areas where they need it so as to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, for example, so that they fully understand pupil performance information.
- Governors have ensured that only the best teachers are rewarded with pay rises, and that the school has appropriate safeguarding procedures that meet statutory requirements.
- Although governors carry out their monitoring and evaluation role regularly and with diligence, they are rarely identified in the school's improvement plans for monitoring or quality assuring leaders' work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Parents, pupils and staff also agree.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable throughout the school, including in the early years, in and out of lessons, and when using the playground and outdoor spaces. Pupils' conduct is excellent and they wear their uniform smartly and with care and pride.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They take turns and listen to each other's views and contributions with interest and respect. Pupils take great pride in their work, and much of it is recognised and displayed throughout the school and in classrooms and corridors. There is an ethos of recognising and celebrating success irrespective of pupils' attainment. Pupils look after their work and books very well. The presentation of their work is usually of a high standard.
- Pupils' positive and supportive attitudes ensure that those who join the school during the year settle into the school quickly and are able to benefit from the good provision without delay.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying that exist in society, but say it is very rare at Sir Thomas Abney Primary School. Pupils say that when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively by adults. The vast majority of parents surveyed say that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Assemblies reward pupils for their excellent behaviour and outstanding attitudes to learning, as well as their consideration and thought for others. In so doing, the school acknowledges pupils' development socially and morally, as well as academically.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents, pupils and staff also agree that children are safe and well cared for in school. High-quality relationships underpin pupils' sense of safety.
- As a result of effective safeguarding arrangements, pupils say they feel safe in school and that if something was worrying them they would immediately know which adult they would speak to.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the risks associated with using computers and outdoor equipment. In the early years, children use scissors and other equipment sensibly and safely. They speak to adults when they are unsure of what to do.
- As a result of leaders' effective work, historic low attendance has been eliminated and it has recently risen to average levels. Persistent absence has also decreased significantly. The school has strong relationships with families, the local authority and other agencies such as the police, the educational welfare service and social services, to ensure that pupils' safety is maintained.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, in all classes and in a range of subjects including reading and writing. As a result, all pupils and groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress. In mathematics, excellent teaching over time leads to outstanding progress.
- Teachers carefully plan their lessons and set clear learning objectives which enable pupils to understand what they will learn. Pupils say this helps them check whether they are on task.
- Teachers ensure that work set for pupils is at the right level, particularly in mathematics. Effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those who attend the specialist resource provision or speak English as an additional language ensures that they all progress well in

lessons and over time.

- The teaching of reading is good throughout the school. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is good in the early years and Key Stage 1, and as result, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected standard at the end of Year 1 in this area is above average.
- The teaching of writing is supported by teachers' good questioning where pupils are challenged to explain their answers. This was seen, for example, during an English lesson in Year 6 where pupils were rewriting a scene from a different perspective. As a result of the teacher's ongoing questions, instant feedback, and the effective support of an assistant, pupils made outstanding progress in the lesson while developing highly effective writing skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective. Teachers create very well-chosen activities that place mathematics in real-life contexts, and which challenge pupils to apply their skills and knowledge to a range of different scenarios, for example, when using money. There is a strong practical element to mathematics teaching and a very brisk and effective pace to learning.
- Additional adults are deployed well by teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and progress.
- Homework is used well and regularly to consolidate and build on what pupils learn in class. However, pupils sometimes do not receive adequate feedback on their homework, and as a result, occasionally the quality of their presentation deteriorates.
- The quality of marking and feedback is good overall. It is particularly detailed and effective in mathematics, where pupils make outstanding progress, because they are exceptionally clear what their next steps are and how they can improve their work further. However, marking does not always enable the most able to develop and extend their thinking, understanding and skills. This results in fewer pupils attaining the highest levels by the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and writing.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From their generally low starting points in the early years, and their good progress there, pupils go on to make good progress overall throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. In the phonics check in Year 1, and by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils now attain average standards in National Curriculum assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In mathematics, pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points and have done consistently over time. This has placed the school in the top 10% of schools in the country for progress in mathematics for the last three years.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, those from Eastern European, Turkish, Black Caribbean or African backgrounds, and those who join the school later than usual, all make good progress throughout their time in the school. This is because teachers ensure that work is closely matched to all pupils' academic needs, irrespective of their backgrounds or when they joined the school. Pupils that are behind catch up quickly because of effective and well-targeted support.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress throughout the school, and the gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils are closing rapidly. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were just over a term behind their classmates in reading, and two and a half terms behind other pupils nationally. In writing, disadvantaged pupils were also just over a term behind others in school, and two and a half terms behind others nationally. In mathematics, they were just over a term behind others in the cohort, and just over half a term behind others nationally. Inspection evidence, alongside the school's and local authority's own assessments, shows that these gaps will be narrower this year and that disadvantaged pupils' progress will be similar to other pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who attend the specialist resource provision, achieve well and similar to their peers. This is because of effective support that is provided by teachers and other adults during lessons and small-group activities. Boys and girls both make good progress.
- The progress of the most able pupils is good overall and similar to that of their peers. However, fewer pupils in Year 6 attain the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and writing, because sometimes the marking and feedback the most able pupils receive do not always extend their thinking and learning enough.

The early years provision is good

- The effectiveness of the early years has improved considerably since the previous inspection, when it was judged as satisfactory, because of good leadership and management. The outdoor environment has been developed and enhanced significantly, including with new equipment and resources, and makes a positive contribution to children's good progress across all areas of learning.
- Children's skills and knowledge on entry are generally below the levels typically expected for their age. They go on to progress quickly and achieve well over the Nursery and Reception years because of good provision, good teaching and activities that are well thought-out and adjusted to children's interests and needs.
- Good teaching in the early years comes about because adults know the children very well. They plan work and activities that enable children to make progress quickly. They make the most of the indoor and outdoor areas so that children are engaged and learn about their environment.
- Special books and learning journals are kept very well and show the good progress that children make during their time in the early years in all areas of learning. This is well supported by detailed record-keeping and assessments, although this information is not always pulled together to give an overview of attainment and progress across the key stage.
- Staff in the early years foster strong relationships with families, which enables the school to support home effectively. Children's behaviour and safety, which are good, are very-well managed in both the indoor and outdoor areas, and children play and work together both on their own and with others. Adults supervise children well at all times and the environment is safe. Safety and safeguarding are taken very seriously by all staff.
- The early years is led and managed well by an able practitioner who has a good understanding of the main strengths and areas for development in provision. The leader, in collaboration with the senior leadership team, has secured improvements in the quality of provision, including the environment for the early years and children's progress over time. Children are now well prepared for success at school as they leave Reception and embark on Key Stage 1.

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	100251
Local authority	London Borough of Hackney
Inspection number	448188

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	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leonie Allister
Headteacher	Geraldine Fitzmaurice
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 March 2010
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