

Brecknock Primary School

Cliff Villas, London, NW1 9AL

Inspection dates 19–20 November 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.

- The headteacher, backed by her highly skilled team of senior leaders, governors, teachers and support staff, are working effectively to raise standards.
- Pupils achieve well from low starting points to reach above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching throughout the school is good and some is outstanding.
- High quality teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables a high proportion of children to reach a good level of development by the time they leave Reception.
- Support staff, who work with pupils in need of extra help, make a strong contribution to pupils' successful learning.
- The school is committed to encouraging pupils and their families to learn together and this is supporting their faster progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety both inside and outside the classroom are good because they follow the 'Brecknock Way' and this contributes to their good learning.
- The governing body effectively holds the school to account for its performance and the management of its finances.
- The range of themes and activities provided by the school ensures that pupils develop skills in a wide range of subjects, including the arts and sports, alongside lessons which encourage pupils to explore different faiths and cultures, and this supports their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Though rising, standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are not as high as that seen nationally.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure pupils maximise their achievement, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to respond to their teachers' marking and to assess their own and each other's work.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, in order to set harder work for them as soon as they are ready.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, 12 of which were joint observations carried out with the headteacher and two deputy headteachers. Inspectors also carried out a series of short visits to other lessons across the school, observed two assemblies and listened to children read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors took account of the 34 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, two letters from parents, as well as the views of the parents they met. Inspectors also considered the 26 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 performance management.

Inspection team

Lesley Leak, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michelle Thomas

Additional Inspector

Avtar Sherri

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average size primary school which has two forms of entry.
- A significant number of pupils join and leave the school part way through their primary education.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for certain groups, including children in the care of the local authority, those from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic families.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well above the national average. Very few of these are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- 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?

- Raise standards and achievement throughout Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils who join the school at non-standard times have their needs assessed quickly and benefit from accelerated learning programmes
 - promoting pupils' reading and writing skills at every opportunity
 - checking that new programmes to increase pupils' attainment in mathematics are consistently applied to the advantage of all learners.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress throughout the school by ensuring that:
 - all teachers systematically check their pupils' understanding throughout lessons, providing them with more demanding work as soon as they are ready
 - pupils are regularly given time to respond to teachers' comments in marking and to correct their mistakes
 - pupils are taught to assess their own and each other's work, to find things out for themselves and to work independently
 - pupils develop a love of reading and as soon as they are ready, are encouraged to become independent readers, who are familiar with a wide range of different authors and genres.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enter Nursery with skills and knowledge significantly lower than expected for their age. Children learn extremely well as a result of the consistently good teaching, and by the end of Reception, the majority achieve a good level of development. Over the course of Years 1 and 2, many pupils continue to make good progress in English and mathematics securing attainment which is almost in line with that seen nationally.
- Pupils build well on earlier learning and make rapid progress in Key Stage 2. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils reach standards which are well above the national average.
- The attainment of the most able pupils is improving over time and this is reflected in the increasing proportion reaching the highest levels in the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6. The strong focus on promoting good speaking and listening skills helps pupils, especially those who are learning English as an additional language or who join late, to become confident learners who respond readily to questions and show positive attitudes to the challenges they are set.
- The results of the national phonics check (sounds and letters) for six-year-olds in 2012 were below average. This situation was fully rectified in the most recent check as a result of effective intervention strategies and improved teaching in reading. Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 have good competence in reading unfamiliar words and enjoy choosing a new book when they have successfully understood the last one. However, there is insufficient attention paid to promoting independent reading further up the school, where many readers, especially the most able, have limited exposure to a wide range of authors as well as genres.
- Writing standards are improving and pupils take pride in presenting their ideas in various ways and for different audiences in a range of subjects. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to promote shared writing, where pupils can learn from each other how to improve their work.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6, they have reached standards which are higher than those seen nationally. However, the school's new mathematics programmes are not yet consistently applied in Years 1 and 2, where less able mathematicians need to make faster progress to reach national expectations.
- Regular checks on pupils' progress mean that anyone in danger of underachieving is identified quickly and provided with specific support to move their learning on. Consequently, most pupils who are disabled, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they benefit from extra help to achieve well.
- There is no gap in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium funding and other pupils in English and mathematics by the time pupils reach Year 6. Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding make similar progress in English and mathematics as their peers and pupils nationally. This is because funding has been effectively spent on meeting the needs of identified pupils through additional support and other small group activities to accelerate their progress in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and other adults create a calm, welcoming and extremely positive environment which fosters good relationships and promotes high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Teachers know their classes well and are committed to doing their best for everyone.
- Good teaching is enabling successful learning in English and mathematics but not enough is outstanding to maximise all pupils' achievement, especially those pupils who join the school part way through, and in Key Stage 1.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, where staff provide a stimulating and caring environment, inside and outside, children's learning and development are extended through high quality interactions and well-planned experiences. Adults challenge children well, enabling them to

make good progress in their early reading, writing, numeracy, physical and social skills.

- Adults who support pupils in need of additional help, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or who are eligible for funding through the pupil premium, are making a strong contribution to their rapid progress because work is well matched to each individual's needs. Staff are well trained and briefed on how best to support those pupils and as a result they become successful learners.
- Evidence in pupils' books shows that writing standards are improving, particularly where opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects. Some especially successful writing was seen in Year 3 where pupils had written a non-fiction account about the Rain Forest.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is rising because teachers encourage their pupils to discuss the relative merits of using certain mathematical strategies to solve problems before choosing which ones are best. This is having a particularly positive impact on the proportions of pupils securing the higher levels in mathematics at both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Most work is set at the right level for each pupil and learning moves at a fast pace when teaching is challenging and inspiring. In one particularly successful Year 2 writing lesson, pupils eagerly and confidently described an imaginary habitat for their chosen alien, in response to their teacher's skilful questioning. Their learning was carefully structured to support their progress. Higher ability children were expected to use similes and others came up with exciting alliterative descriptions such as 'in a dark, damp crater...'
- Sometimes when the pace of learning slows it is because teachers have not checked pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, anticipating where to intervene and to set harder work for pupils as soon as they are ready.
- Teachers' marking and assessment of pupils' work are regular. Teachers frequently provide useful guidance about how pupils can improve their work but sometimes this is not responded to by pupils. Pupils are not experienced at assessing their own or others' work, or finding things out for themselves and working independently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are thoughtful and caring towards each other. Occasionally, their attention wanes when work is not quite hard enough or teachers do not move them on quickly enough.
- Pupils are encouraged to be responsible citizens through the 'Rights Respecting School' initiative and they adhere to teachers' high expectations established through the 'Brecknock Way' behaviour code, and consequently exclusions are very infrequent.
- The playgrounds are well organised with an exciting range of equipment, where pupils manage their own risk well. Sports coaches organise sports activities during lunchtime and the playgrounds are well supervised at all times.
- Pupils value the many opportunities to take on important roles and responsibilities, such as having a role in the school council, being a playground buddy, a library ambassador or a 'Rights Respecting' ambassador.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Their understanding of the different types of bullying is secure and they say that bullying rarely happens, but when it does, the school deals with it swiftly.
- Assemblies are used effectively by the school to encourage reflection on moral, cultural and spiritual issues. During the inspection and using the art of magic, a highly successful Key Stage 2 assembly inspired pupils to reflect on believing in themselves and to grow in self-confidence.
- Attendance is below the national average but is improving throughout the school as a consequence of the school's concerted efforts to work with parents and target pupils whose absence causes concern. In partnership with Camden Local Authority, the school is taking strong action against the families of persistent absentees.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, including the governing body, have a clear view of the school's areas for development, which they have tackled with determination to secure good teaching and good achievement. Almost all parents who responded to the online Parent View survey, or who spoke to inspectors, agree that the school is well led and managed and they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The school's systems for managing staff performance are highly effective in ensuring that teaching is of a consistently good quality. Senior staff have placed a strong emphasis on developing assessment practice and lesson planning. Consequently, teachers always ensure that they share the success criteria with pupils so they are very clear about what they must know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson.
- Middle leaders have provided valuable guidance to teachers about how best to teach different subjects and this has led to positive developments. For example, they use the school's assessment information to ensure that all curriculum activities, across all year groups, support accelerated progress for every pupil. Building on this foundation, the school has plans to train middle leaders to undertake key roles in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality and to hold those staff they manage to account for their impact in the classroom.
- The curriculum provides an exciting range of opportunities to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the pupils. It is of high quality for the youngest learners and broadened by a variety of enrichment activities and clubs, including music, art, sports, drama, cooking, French, digital learning, debating and code club (computer programming.) New approaches in mathematics are assisting pupils to learn more effectively than previously.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in activities that promote their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development and, for example, the school arranges visits to a range of religious buildings and ensures they understand and respect each other's faiths. The school works closely with national operatic and theatrical companies which expose pupils to a wide range of cultural themes and activities.
- The school makes good use of the government additional funding for sport through its investment in two sports coaches from a specialist 'Sports in Education' company. Pupils are learning new competitive sports such as dodge ball and basketball and enhancing their physical fitness. Through their continued involvement in pupils' physical education lessons, staff are benefiting from the coaching themselves, which ensures that development will be ongoing.
- The school engages well with parents. Parents from a wide range of cultural backgrounds take full advantage of 'family learning' support provided by the school to help their children at home. The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress. A strong community 'feel' is promoted. For example, children, along with their parents, enjoy the school's weekly social event, 'Friday Tea' and the annual 'family supper celebration', where families bring a dish prepared at home to share with others.
- The school works positively with Camden Local Authority and has always welcomed the useful advice and support it receives to support improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes an effective contribution to the quality of education the school provides. Its members receive regular and accurate evaluations of the school's performance and know precisely where it is doing well and its shortcomings because they have a comprehensive understanding of the school and national data. Governors understand how the pupil premium is being used and check whether it is being used to improve the progress of those pupils entitled to it. Governors receive relevant training and hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance and the management of its finances. The governing body has recently agreed to establish a clearer link between the quality of teaching and the salaries staff receive, over this academic year. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet

statutory requirements and seeks out parents' views of important aspects of the school.

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	100010
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	425590

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	381
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Smith
Headteacher	Susan Ladipo
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 November 2008
Telephone number	020 7485 6334
Fax number	020 7424 0110
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