

Friars Primary Foundation School

Webber Street, London, SE1 0RF

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Teaching and achievement have improved since the last inspection. Expectations have risen. Pupils across the school now make much better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are beginning to rise.
- The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has improved.
- Good provision for early years children has been sustained and improved. Children make good progress because activities engage them well.
- Pupils show outstandingly positive attitudes to learning, feel extremely safe and behave exceptionally well.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Consequently, the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, are closing.
- Senior leadership is effective. Leaders have successfully improved the quality of education. The monitoring and improvement of teaching have had a positive impact.
- Governance has improved significantly. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and make a good contribution to driving improvement.
- Extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors make a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment and the richness of their education. The school encourages pupils to be ambitious in their future lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils have fluent, joined handwriting and this adversely affects the quality and pace of their work in English and in other subjects.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to write at length in a wide range of subjects.
- Not all subjects are taught in sufficient depth or detail for learning to be fully meaningful.
- Although regular information meetings are held, the school does not work hard enough to promote positive relationships with the parents and carers of some pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year. They listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, two governors, a representative from the local authority and the school's senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, two letters were received from parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered records of governing body meetings and those relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Anna Sutton

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Friars Primary Foundation School is an average-sized primary school.
- The school serves an ethnically diverse inner-urban community, including White and Black British pupils in similar proportions. No single ethnic group is predominant.
- Around half the pupils speak English as an additional language. However, very few of these are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In the early years, all Nursery children attend a morning session each day, while Reception children all attend full time. A few Nursery children attend a separate afternoon session.
- The school offers breakfast and after-school care clubs. These are managed by the governing body and formed part of the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the close relationships with parents, successfully established in the early years, are more effectively sustained as pupils grow older, so that both pupils and their parents continue to feel a high level of engagement with their school.

- Strengthen pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - pupils' handwriting is improved so that they write in a fluent, joined, legible style
 - more opportunities are planned for pupils to develop their writing skills by writing at length in subjects across the curriculum
 - subjects other than English and mathematics are taught in sufficient depth.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Following the last inspection, school leaders responded promptly, systematically addressing the weaknesses identified. As a result, there have been significant improvements in teaching, pupils' achievement and leadership, so that these aspects are now good.
 - Senior leaders demonstrate positive attitudes and strong values. Current leaders are successfully promoting a culture where teaching ensures that pupils achieve increasingly well and previously good behaviour is now outstanding.
 - There is significant strength in, for example, the leadership of the early years and of the provision to meet the needs of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Subject leaders have an accurate overview of the strengths of their subjects. They have contributed successfully to the school's efforts to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching.
 - School leaders have high expectations of all staff and this has contributed well to the improvements achieved. The leadership and monitoring of teaching are effective. Consequently, staff expectations are rising. Scope remains for the quality of pupils' work to be improved further in some subjects. Procedures for setting targets to improve teachers' practice are used well.
 - Senior leaders have put in place a new curriculum in the current year. This is aligned fully to the new National Curriculum and enables pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in depth. However, in the first year of implementation some subjects, such as history and geography, have had less coverage than others. The school has identified this and revised plans to ensure a better balance in the next school year. Other than in Years 5 and 6, pupils have not always had enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects. The extra-curricular provision is extensive. Pupils enjoy rich opportunities in the creative and performing arts.
 - The school has in place a new system evaluate pupils' progress. This new system is on track for implementation by September 2015, it is not yet possible to judge the impact of this initiative.
 - School leaders review the impact of pupil premium expenditure rigorously. Eligible pupils are now making more rapid progress than previously. Expenditure on additional teaching has been targeted well, with a particularly positive impact in the last school year.
 - The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. School leaders have correctly identified the impact of the improvements already made and know where further improvement is needed.
 - The primary sports funding is used well to access specialist sports coaching and to provide greater access to after-school sporting clubs and competitions. The school now has greater participation in after-school sports clubs, and competitive sport, than previously.
 - The local authority has provided good support to improve teaching and boost achievement.
 - The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength. The school promotes British values effectively. For example, visits by the local Member of Parliament and visits to the nearby Houses of Parliament and other landmark buildings in central London. Pupils are made aware of the rights and expectations of diverse religious and faith groups. Consequently, pupils recognise their rights and responsibilities as citizens and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination in any form is unacceptable.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
 - While links with parents are good in the early years, this is not as strong a feature further up the school. On the evidence seen, the school does not communicate with parents as effectively as it could. Relatively few parents responded to the Parent View survey and not all were pleased with what the school offers, despite the many improvements made.
 - Leadership is not yet outstanding because, despite many improvements, achievement is not rapid across all the subjects. However, the school is well placed to sustain the momentum of improvement that has been created since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governance has improved significantly. Governors have undertaken considerable reorganisation and are now a smaller and more effective team. Governors are ambitious and bring relevant expertise and skills to their work. They undertake their role with professionalism. They make the raising of achievement a priority. They undertake training to improve their skills further. Governors have good access to information about the school's performance and are well informed about the school's work. They hold school leaders to account with rigour.

- Governors understand data and the performance of all groups of pupils. They know how the school is doing in relation to schools nationally and can evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. The management of teachers' performance is effective. Pay increases are securely linked to the outcomes of this process. Governors support school leaders in tackling any underperformance.
- The governing body ensures, alongside senior leaders, that statutory duties are met, including those for keeping pupils safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils respond to stimulating lessons with great enthusiasm. When teaching is most effective, pupils show considerable commitment to learning. They concentrate exceptionally hard and are always eager to respond to questions. Around the school they behave in a consistently positive way. No time is wasted in lessons through low-level disruption and this contributes strongly to their good achievement.
- Pupils treat each other with exemplary courtesy and show tolerance to one another. They show respect for the school environment. Their good-quality written work in literacy and numeracy indicates that they almost always work hard and are very keen to do their best.
- Pupils contribute to their community in many ways. They undertake a wide variety of tasks which contribute to the smooth running of the school. Year 5 and 6 pupils act as playground monitors, leading games and activities. Existing pupils act as buddies for new pupils when they arrive. School Council members have produced a guide to support the smooth arrival of new pupils. Many pupils are involved in organising activities to support collections for local and national charities.
- The systems for the managing and monitoring of pupils' behaviour are thorough and effective. The school's increasing effectiveness in ensuring that pupils' individual needs are met has contributed significantly to the reduction in any potential behavioural issues. There have been no exclusions or reported racist incidents in the last two years.
- Attendance is broadly average. Although analysis of the school's attendance figures indicates that a small minority of pupils are persistently absent, the school has identified that virtually all relate to unavoidable long-term health issues, rather than casual absence from school. The school is working to reduce any unnecessary absence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. With the school's successful approach to managing behaviour, pupils feel extremely safe and are confident that staff will deal with any issues.
- The site is very secure. All secluded areas are monitored closely. All staff undergo full safeguarding checks prior to appointment. Health and safety procedures, and the school's day-to-day practice, are rigorous.
- Most pupils live in the very busy inner-urban neighbourhoods close to the school. The school helps pupils of all ages to protect themselves from a wide range of potential risks, including road traffic hazards. Pupils understand the risks relating to cyber-bullying, grooming and internet abuse.
- Pupils recognise that bullying occurs for a wide range of reasons and know that it can take many forms. They feel that it is simply not an issue in the school, but know what action to take if they are concerned that someone is being bullied.
- Pastoral care is very effective and case studies indicate that the school works hard to ensure that vulnerable pupils are fully supported. Case studies provide clear evidence of the way in which the school successfully enables pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Through the breakfast and after-school care clubs, the school provides very well for pupils who arrive early at school or who stay late.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are making more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and standards across the school are rising because there have been significant improvements in teaching. Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work in English and mathematics have risen, although this is not always the case in some other subjects.
- Learning is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. Year 6 pupils, for example, in an art lesson which involved

creating woven images in felt, undertook a sophisticated evaluation of how and why materials responded in different conditions. The teacher conducted the lesson with exceptional skill, allowing pupils the opportunity to explore and to create quality pieces of art work, making very creative use even of the imperfections of the material. Pupils quickly discovered that, even without a clear plan, they could create a quality piece. They were able to evaluate the work of others at a sophisticated level. The high quality of art work displayed in Year 6 suggested that pupils' learning in this subject is consistently good.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good support and guidance. Learning support staff are trained to meet a wide range of needs and are now deployed more effectively.
- The teaching of phonics has continued to improve. Older, or any, pupils who do not have sufficient understanding of sounds and letters receive additional support. The teaching of handwriting has been a significant past weakness. This has now been tackled for the younger pupils, who now have much better formed writing. However, some weaknesses in handwriting, the consequence of weaker teaching in the past, remain evident for some older pupils. The school has effective systems to check and improve pupils' progress. Staff can interpret data with ease and use the information well to plan activities. Teachers' marking is particularly thorough in Years 5 and 6, although good marking practice is now well established across the school. Pupils are told what they need to do next. Targets are generally used well to guide pupils' progress. Older pupils mostly act upon and respond to teachers' comments.
- Homework contributes well to pupils' learning. Activities are provided each week and pupils feel that their efforts are respected by teachers.

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- There have been significant improvements in pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Pupils across the school are now making much more rapid progress and standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are beginning to rise.
- Over time, children in the early years have typically achieved well, mostly entering Year 1 with above-average skills and understanding. The good provision in early years has been sustained and strengthened further.
- Until recently, progress in Years 1 and 2 had been relatively slow, so that the momentum in learning evident at the end of Reception was not built upon sufficiently. The school's records of pupils' progress and evidence from their recorded work indicate that actions taken to improve teaching are enabling pupils in Years 1 and 2 to make better progress currently. Standards at the end of Year 2, broadly average for several years, are likely to be higher at the end of the current school year.
- More effective teaching of phonics has led to increasingly good outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in 2014 was above the national average and this is likely to be the case also in 2015. Most pupils across the school are confident readers.
- The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2014 was broadly average overall, with strengths in grammar, punctuation and writing. The proportion of pupils making the expected progress in 2014 was above the national average, as was the proportion making accelerated progress, although to a greater extent in reading and writing than in mathematics.
- Pupils' written work and the consistency of good teaching indicate that current progress is good in Years 3 to 6. Particularly effective teaching in Years 5 and 6 is enabling these pupils to make even more rapid progress, thus eliminating some past deficits in learning. The school's achievement information indicates that current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain well above-average standards in 2015.
- Despite the current strengths in achievement, past weaknesses in teaching and monitoring mean that a significant number of pupils have poorly formed handwriting. Up to Year 5, some pupils do not routinely join their letters so that their ability to write confidently and rapidly is limited. While some action has been taken, this has not resolved this issue for all pupils.
- While most pupils are making expected or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics, progress is less consistently rapid in subjects such as history, geography and science. The school has been implementing a restructured curriculum in the current year. Opportunities for developing pupils' understanding, and their writing skills, in these subjects are not yet fully developed.
- The most able pupils in Year 6 in 2014 attained more highly and made more rapid progress than similar pupils nationally. However, there were very few pupils in this group. In the past year, there has been consistently good support for the most able Year 6 pupils, a much larger group, with additional teaching to enable them to tackle the more challenging Level 6 tests.
- In 2014, disadvantaged Year 6 pupils outperformed the others in the school in all subjects other than grammar, punctuation and spelling. In 2014, these pupils outperformed others in the school by around

two terms in reading and mathematics and by about half a term in writing. They were ahead of all pupils nationally by around a term. In 2014, they made more rapid progress than other pupils nationally. While the overall picture is not quite as strong in the current year, school data show that disadvantaged pupils are mostly progressing as rapidly as the others. Consequently, the gaps in attainment are narrowing year on year.

- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified and they now receive more effective support. Their progress is now at least as good as that of other pupils.
- There is no significant difference in achievement between the larger ethnic groups in the school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language often make better progress than the others and none are underperforming when compared to their peers in school

The early years provision

is good

- The good progress in the early years noted at the last inspection has been successfully sustained.
- Most children enter Nursery with skill levels below those typical for their age. Staff make the development of children's basic skills in language and mathematics and their personal and social skills priorities for learning. Effective teaching of phonics continues to ensure that children have a secure knowledge of sounds and letters, which supports their initial good progress in reading.
- Children, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well, because of consistently good teaching and are well prepared for entry to Year 1. The proportion of children reaching levels typical for their age was well above the national average in 2014. This is also likely to be the case in 2015.
- The balance between adult-led activities, such as reading, writing and mathematics, and opportunities for children to choose from a range of activities is good. Occasionally, adults could intervene more promptly in group activities to accelerate learning further – for example, in the development of writing skills.
- Children have good access to outdoor learning. The outdoor area is shared between the two year groups and offers a good range of activities to extend further children's growing knowledge of the world. Children were particularly enjoying the unusual green sand and exploring its potential as a construction material.
- Children behave very well. They show well-developed independence and positive attitudes to learning and concentrate on activities for a lengthy period. Children are safe and well looked after.
- The school works well with parents and carers. Home visits are available, prior to children entering the school. Staff support parents well once their children are in school. The regular 'open-door' sessions on Friday mornings encourage parents to stay closely involved with their child's education.
- Staff undertake detailed checks and observations about children's progress. This information is carefully recorded. Parents complete an informative home diary, sharing some of their child's most significant moments.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Staff engage readily with local authority or other outside expertise and are ever ready to introduce better practice when they see it.

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	100855
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	462138

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Shearman (Acting)
Headteacher	Justin Burt
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 June 2013
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