

Argyle Primary School

Tonbridge Street, London, WC1H 9EG

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Argyle Primary School continues to provide a good standard of education for its pupils and is improving further.
- Leadership and management are good at all levels. The headteacher and staff have high expectations of pupils and make sure that pupils make good progress. Leaders monitor and check the quality of teaching regularly and help teachers improve.
- Pupils behave well. They are considerate, polite and thoughtful and care for one another. The school looks after pupils well and ensures that they feel safe.
- Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress throughout the school. They attain similar results in national tests in Year 6 to most other 11 year olds in the country.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons that are lively and engaging, ask good questions and set work that helps pupils make good progress. Marking in English is strong.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. In particular, there is a focus on British values throughout the curriculum, in displays and during assemblies. As a result, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's curriculum is exciting and promotes good learning. Pupils enjoy the activities and tasks because lessons are often set in real-life contexts.
- Governors help school leaders improve the school. They visit the school regularly and ask good questions to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Children in the early years make good progress. This is because provision is good in the Nursery and Reception Year classes, and adults provide activities inside and outside that motivate and interest the children.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving in all year groups.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching over time does not always challenge the most able enough. As a result, fewer pupils than average attain the higher levels in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school's work with families has not been fully effective in the few cases where pupils are regularly absent.
- Marking is sometimes inconsistent and not all reaches the quality evident in English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 26 lessons or part-lessons in all classes and year groups. Many of these were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteachers. Inspectors also observed sessions with small groups of pupils, an assembly and break time. 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, teachers, two members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the outcomes from the most recent parent survey that the school conducted. They also spoke to parents informally.
- Inspectors considered the 47 questionnaire responses received from staff.
- The inspection team also examined a range of documentation, including those related to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the minutes of governing body meetings, information about pupils' progress and attainment, records of behaviour and attendance and records relating to the management of staff performance. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

David Thomas Hatchett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hazel Burnie, Team inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Crouch, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Argyle Primary School is much larger than most other primary schools in England. The school is located in a busy area of central London, very close to King's Cross and St Pancras stations. Children in the early years attend school full time.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. This is a much higher proportion than average. The largest group, which accounts for more than half of the school, are pupils from Asian Bangladeshi heritage. Most pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than typically found, and is nearly double 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 or those who have special educational needs is average overall at one in six pupils. The main area of need is speech, language and communication.
- More pupils than typical leave or join the school other than at the usual times.
- 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 there have been substantial changes to the staffing of the school, including a new headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the tasks that teachers set fully challenge pupils, especially the most able
 - ensuring that all marking is as good as the best seen in English and in Year 6.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils for whom it is below the national average by engaging more effectively with their families.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and her senior team have high expectations of all pupils and staff. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and their plans for improvement are good. Parents and staff are very supportive of the school's leadership. Over 90% of parents surveyed said they would recommend the school to others.
 - Leaders at all levels foster good relations, promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination effectively, so that all groups of pupils achieve well. Subject leaders carry out their responsibilities effectively. For example, they regularly check out how well pupils are learning in different subjects.
 - The school's curriculum is vibrant, exciting, broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. This ensures that teachers' approach to planning and teaching lessons results in good progress. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy across a range of subjects.
 - The curriculum promotes British values particularly well, not just in lessons, but also through assemblies, opportunities to reflect on local, national and international visits and extra-curricular opportunities outside of lesson time. This ensures that pupils learn about democracy and are aware of the importance of respecting others, tolerance, tackling discrimination and respecting the rule of law. For example, pupils visit the House of Commons to understand how the British political system works. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - The school has made good use of the additional primary sports funding to increase pupils' interest and participation in sports. For example, boys and girls both participate in fitness and football clubs during break times. The school offers a wide range of clubs and activities for pupils to participate in during lunchtimes and after school. Some of these are run by experts and specialists which the school has been able to pay for with this funding.
 - Leaders, governors and staff consider pupils' safety as their first concern. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for and record keeping is organised, detailed and kept confidentially. The school's safeguarding procedures meet minimum statutory requirements.
 - The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively. It has invested heavily in additional adults, subject experts and one-to-one and small group tuition to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and enable them to catch up. Inspection evidence shows that the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are closing quickly as a result.
 - The school manages staff performance well. Teachers and teaching assistants all have challenging targets which are linked to how well pupils make progress. Governors check that only good teaching is rewarded with increased pay. Remaining weaknesses are being tackled through training.
 - The school is developing new approaches to assessment to support the new primary curriculum, particularly in writing, which is helping teachers to identify the skills pupils have mastered and what they need to do next. The school is working with other schools to make sure that assessments are accurate and checked.
 - The school appreciates the effective support it receives from the local authority, which recognises it as a good school. The school has sourced support from the local authority to help school leaders make reliable judgements on the quality of teaching, and to help leaders improve attendance.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is well led by an experienced Chair and is highly ambitious for the school. Governors provide good support and challenge to the school's leaders, and hold them to account for how well pupils achieve. They scrutinise information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, and ask good questions to make sure that all pupils are achieving as well as they can. Governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have ensured that safeguarding procedures meet minimum statutory requirements.
 - Governors have ensured that the pupil premium and primary sports funding is used to good effect.
 - Governors take part in regular training from the local authority, which enables them to understand performance data and how well the school is doing compared to others.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, conscientious, well behaved and considerate of one another. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning in lessons, particularly where teaching is good or better. The vast majority of parents, pupils and staff agree that behaviour in and around the school is good.
- Pupils take on a range of leadership responsibilities in the school, including within the school council and through the 'Argyle Citizens'. Older pupils regularly visit Key Stage 1 classes to help pupils with their reading during guided sessions.
- For the last two years, attendance has been below average and persistent absence has been too high. As a result of the school's work, sometimes in collaboration with the local authority, attendance is improving and is now closer to the national average. Persistent absence is also reducing, but a small number of families have not understood the impact of irregular attendance on their children's progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep safe. Their good behaviour in and around school contributes to a calm and safe school environment. Pupils say that there is always someone that they could go to if they had any concerns or were worried about something. They have a good understanding of risk.
- Pupils show a good awareness of bullying and some of the different types, supported through the school's good personal, social and health education programme. They say that bullying is extremely rare, but that if it did happen, they would know what to do.
- Pupils also understand the importance of e-safety and say that they would know what to do if they experienced cyber-bullying. Pupils are regularly reminded about how to stay safe online.
- The school site is safe and secure, with appropriate procedures in place to ensure that visitors to the site are checked, vetted and welcomed correctly.
- Almost all parents, pupils and staff agree that the school keeps children safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- As a result of good teaching over time, pupils in all classes and year groups make good progress in nearly all subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. Parents and pupils also agree that teaching is good.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and other adults are strong. This creates a purposeful ethos in classrooms that promotes good progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are very clear about what they need to do in each lesson. As a result, pupils make good progress and use this information to check their learning.
- Teachers ask good questions which make sure that pupils think about their work. Activities are usually set at the right level, which enables them to make swift progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in subjects such as computing, physical education, art and design and technology, where pupils are often taught by subject experts.
- There is evidence that some of the teaching is leading to outstanding progress. For example, in Year 3 English. Here, work scrutinised and sessions observed showed that the ongoing feedback given by the teacher matched individual abilities exceptionally well, and enabled them, for instance, to write the beginning of a mystery story extremely effectively.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and reading is good overall and pupils learn well. Lessons are well planned, with each group being set work that helps them make progress. As a result, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in Year 1 has been above average for the last two years.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. These pupils are typically set work which takes into account their needs and abilities and, often with support from teaching assistants, this ensures that they learn well.
- The quality of marking in English is strong. Books are marked regularly, and teachers provide very detailed feedback, particularly in terms of what needs to improve to make their work and learning even better. Targets in English and mathematics books are used well to track progress in key skills and knowledge over

the period of a half term and keep pupils focused on their next steps. However, teachers' marking and feedback in other subjects are not as effective as in English, and sometimes pupils are not clear about how their work in these subjects could be improved.

- Sometimes teaching does not sufficiently extend and challenge the most able, for example where all pupils are set the same work as the others by the teacher, asked the same questions as the others, or where the teacher's explanation at the beginning of the lesson is not clear enough. As a result, in some subjects, fewer pupils attain the highest levels by the end of Key Stage 2.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children join the school in the Nursery and Reception classes, their skills are below those typically found, particularly in the areas of communication and number. This is because the vast majority of children are new to English when they start school. They quickly catch up in the early years, so that by the time they leave the Reception Year, they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment continues to rise and is now in line with the national average in all subjects, and slightly above in mathematics. This represents good progress.
- Bangladeshi pupils attain in line with, and sometimes above, the national average.
- Pupils who join or start school at other than the usual times also achieve well because of close tracking of their progress during their time at school.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment in national tests and assessments is similar to other 11 year olds in the country in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils that made good progress in all three subjects by the end of Year 6 was higher than the national average.
- Pupils' attainment is continuing to improve. Many pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are already working at the levels usually found at the end of the year. More are on track to reach the higher levels than last year.
- Pupils make good progress in nearly all subjects. Their progress is particularly rapid in physical education and art, because they are taught by subject experts. Work in books and on display in the school, in addition to assessment information and test results, shows that pupils' progress is good throughout the school.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make good progress. Younger pupils choose books that are at the right level, and use their good phonics skills when they are unsure of a word. As a result, more pupils than nationally meet the required standard in the phonics check by the end of Year 1 and reading results at Key Stage 1 are broadly average.
- The attainment and progress of the most able pupils in the school are improving. In 2014, too few attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics because some were not always stretched and challenged in class. This year, as a result of improvements to teaching, more are on track to attain Levels 5 and 6 in the summer.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points throughout the school. In 2014 in reading, disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind other pupils in the school, and a term and a half behind other pupils nationally. In writing, they were just over a year behind other pupils in the school, and one term behind others nationally. In mathematics, they were just over a year behind others in the school, and two terms behind others nationally. Current assessments and work in books show that disadvantaged pupils are catching up quickly, and the gap is closing, compared to last year.

The early years provision

is good

- Children settle into the Nursery and Reception classes quickly and well because of the caring work of adults and their good relationships with families. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning, especially in learning to speak English. The proportion who attain a good level of development has increased and is broadly in line with the national average. Children are well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Adults know children very well, and set up activities and tasks inside and outside which interest and stimulate children. They are asked questions that take into account children's interests and previous learning. This enables them to make good progress over time.
- Children are happy in the Nursery and Reception classes, and their behaviour is good because there are positive relationships between adults, children and their families. The setting is safe and secure. Class routines mean that children know what is expected of them, and they follow instructions from adults well. Staff make sure that activities in the indoor and outdoor areas are safe. For example, an adult kept a close

eye on children as they eagerly made rockets using scissors and glue during a Reception class activity. Risk assessments are used appropriately, for example when using outdoor apparatus and climbing frames.

- The leadership and management of the early years are effective. The leader plans activities and experiences with staff together, and tracks children's progress well over time, so that staff can create activities, intervene and ask questions that reflect children's abilities and interests.

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	100008
Local authority	London Borough of Camden
Inspection number	448184

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	429
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Gwatkin
Headteacher	Jemima Wade
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2009
Telephone number	020 7837 4590
Fax number	020 7833 1384
Email address	admin@argyle.camden.sch.uk

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