

Inspection of Dalmain Primary School

Grove Close, Brockley Rise, London SE23 1AS

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this warm and welcoming school. The school's values of adventure, acceptance and teamwork are demonstrated in the positive relationships between pupils and staff. As soon as children start in Nursery, they learn how to take care of themselves and work well with others.

The school has faced several challenges recently. Leaders at all levels have shown great resilience in facing those challenges. They have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, published outcomes show that pupils achieve well in English and mathematics.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school site. They follow the school's three key behaviour rules and show enthusiasm for their learning. They know who to talk to if they are worried about anything. As a result, they feel happy and safe.

A wide variety of high-quality clubs are available. Examples include karate, coding, board games and performing arts. Leadership responsibilities also include joining the eco-council, the student council, or becoming young leaders. Pupils also take part in an equality project. They appreciate these roles, which encourage them to become active citizens in their school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has created an engaging and exciting curriculum. Reading and language development are given high priority. Children gain a love of language in Nursery through regular exposure to rhyme and songs. Well-targeted phonics teaching begins straight away for children in Reception. The school promotes a wider love of reading, for example, through regular parent reading cafes and the well-stocked school library. Pupils also make strong progress in writing. They develop from simple mark making in Nursery to accurate sentences and paragraphs in Years 1 and 2. In Years 5 and 6, pupils learn to create more complex texts crafted for purpose and audience, with a clear writer's voice.

The school has carefully selected and sequenced the key knowledge it wants pupils to learn, as well as the activities to embed that knowledge. For example, in art, pupils study and create a wide range of paintings, drawings and sculptures. Pupils in Year 5 visit an artist's workshop. They also receive visits from architects as part of their project to design sustainable buildings for a local park. As part of their physical education course, all Year 5 pupils take part in an annual dance show. Pupils also study Latin and philosophy.

Typically, the curriculum is effective in supporting pupils' learning across the broad range of subjects. However, there are instances when curriculum expectations in the classroom do not match up with the school's expectations. Sometimes, teaching does not factor in fully what pupils already know and can do. Checks on pupils' learning of the curriculum are not used as well as they could be to ensure that teaching builds pupils' knowledge. This means that, while pupils often acquire knowledge, the curriculum is not consistently supporting them to deepen their understanding.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly and supported well through adaptations to the teaching of the curriculum. In early years, the planned learning and resources promote children's social, emotional and physical development well, with hands-on activities that engage children in meaningful ways. However, the curriculum in the early years is not yet fully developed across all areas of learning. As a result, children's learning and development is not as broad as it might be.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm, caring and harmonious. Pupils learn how to recognise and manage their emotions. They are independent, resilient and highly enthusiastic about their learning. Most pupils have good attendance. There is effective support in place for those whose attendance needs to improve.

Pupils visit places of worship, local museums, London landmarks and residential activity centres. They represent the school in sport, music and debating competitions. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are well represented in these activities. As part of the school's 150th anniversary last year, pupils created 'The Dalmainian' newspaper and designed a whole-school artwork. Pupils learn about democracy by voting for their class names and participate in a project to develop their entrepreneurial skills. They are currently writing the school's 'smartphone free pledge'. Pupils leave the school well rounded and very prepared for the future.

Leaders at all levels are highly ambitious for the school's future. However, some staff do not have the full knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their roles with the ambition that the school intends. Staff appreciate leaders' concern for their well-being and workload. Parents and carers value the school's community focus and appreciate the improvements that have taken place over recent years.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- In some subjects, teaching does not check accurately enough what pupils already know. Some teaching does not build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge, and pupils do not deepen their understanding sufficiently well. The school should strengthen teaching expertise so that what pupils know and understand is determined accurately and this leads to appropriate adaptations to what pupils are taught.
- Some staff do not have the full knowledge and skills they need to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is implemented with the high quality and ambition that the school intends. The school needs to ensure that all staff receive the required training and development in both subject teaching and wider leadership, to implement the curriculum fully as intended across all year groups.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	100677
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10345674
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catriona Scott
Headteacher	Erika Eisele
Website	www.dalmain.lewisham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 May 2019 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the school's senior leadership team, and a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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