

Dalmain Primary School

Grove Close, Brockley Rise, London SE23 1AS

Inspection dates

15 to 16 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, well supported by the senior leadership team, has successfully transformed the culture of the school. This has resulted in the rapid improvements seen.
- High-quality professional development has challenged and supported all staff, leading to improvements in the quality of teaching, leadership and management.
- Teaching across key stages 1 and 2 is typically good, and most pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Occasionally, teaching does not meet some pupils' needs, especially the most able.
- The school's current information on pupils' progress shows a picture of improving outcomes in most year groups.
- The school's actions have resulted in significant progress for disadvantaged pupils.
- The use of specialist teachers has a positive impact on the learning of many pupils, especially in music and sport.
- Governors offer the school much expertise and knowledge. They are passionate about the school and fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils benefit from a broad, balanced and creative curriculum, but leaders know it requires further refinement.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils behave very well. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. They have positive attitudes to their learning. This helps to ensure that they make good progress in their learning by the end of key stage 2.
- The early years provision gives children a good start to their education. Staff plan activities which engage children's interests.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are robust and protect pupils from potential risks and harm. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further challenge pupils so that more most-able pupils achieve the higher standard.
- Enhance the curriculum in order to ensure that pupils achieve highly across the full range of subjects.
- Continue to develop middle leaders so that they all become effective in their respective roles.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is an excellent role model for staff. She uses their expertise and experience from other school settings to innovate and implement new ways of working. This has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The headteacher, well supported by the senior leadership team, has swiftly tackled inconsistencies in teaching. This has ensured that the quality of teaching is typically good across the school. Staff appreciate the wide range of professional development opportunities they receive to support their understanding of how pupils learn, and to develop their teaching skills. Teachers welcome the opportunity provided to attend courses, visit other schools and engage in research activities. This has had a significant impact on improving their skills and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders' regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning have ensured that school self-evaluation is accurate. The school's improvement plan clearly identifies appropriate areas in which improvements need to be made, and actions are kept under review. There is an effective cycle of monitoring the effectiveness of actions. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is strong.
- Subject leaders are committed, enthusiastic and ambitious for pupils to do well. They have very good subject knowledge. They have a good understanding of what is going on in each year group and of priorities for improvement. They have ensured that schemes of work are in place, and they support teachers in their planning. Their role has been enhanced by the headteacher and they have a growing understanding of it.
- The rationale for the use of additional funding has been reviewed because of the lack of impact in the past. Senior leaders identified the pupils, evaluated their needs, reviewed current resources, and visited other schools to view good practice. Key strategies were introduced and specific training for teaching assistants undertaken. Funding is now used effectively to provide extra support for disadvantaged pupils, including maintaining support for musical instrument lessons. Consequently, these pupils make strong progress in all areas of their learning.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with parents and external agencies to provide early help, which supports individual children well. Systems and structures have become embedded and there is greater rigour in evaluating the impact of planned interventions. Working alongside teachers has helped inform teachers of effective strategies to support identified pupils in their classrooms. Weekly training for teaching assistants is planned to maximise impact. Involvement in pupils' progress meetings ensures that provision is appropriate.
- Sports funding is used well to provide a range of additional sporting opportunities, including holiday sports camps. It is also supporting the school in the London 2019 'Close the Gap' pilot scheme.
- The school's curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. There is a strong focus on the progression of skills. However, the school recognises the opportunities available as part of the current curriculum review. Leaders are very aware of the need to have a strong rationale for what pupils learn. This

includes a greater focus on 'Equality at Dalmain' as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum (PSHE). The school's mental health and well-being programme supports both pupils and staff in developing their social, emotional and cognitive skills.

- The school provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities. There is a strong tradition of music in the school. Pupils have opportunities to learn how to play a good range of musical instruments as well as compose music. They sing very well in assemblies, as demonstrated when singing in harmony to a South African song. Pupils benefit from participation in sporting activities such as cricket, coached by specialists. They learn how to move to the right body position, keep hands together and their eye on the ball to make a good catch.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded well throughout the school's curriculum. Great emphasis is placed on environmental issues. For example, an impressive display of whales, using plastic bottle tops, emphasises saving whales and reducing the amount of plastic used. Such issues are reinforced through 'eco winner awards'. Careful consideration is given to texts which enhance pupils' awareness of other cultures, as well as providing opportunities for promoting British values. A good range of visits and visitors are planned. These include residential visits to Wales and the Isle of Wight. Consequently, pupils develop their awareness of different types of families, cultures, race, beliefs and religions represented in their community and beyond.
- The school's work to develop pupils' awareness of their place and life in modern Britain is celebrated well through the many displays. Pupils appreciate the range of opportunities to lead and contribute to their school community, for example as school councillors and members of the 'eco' council.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are extremely positive about the opportunities that the school offers their children. Typical comments include 'Leaders think about children and families in their decisions' and 'care and welfare are excellent'.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils, the improvements necessary and the next steps that need to be taken to improve the school further. They know the school well, are passionate about it, and have a strong sense of loyalty to it.
- Members of the governing body offer a wide range of skills and experience. They appreciate that pupils' outcomes have not been as they would wish. They play a strategic role in the development of the school, recently attending an 'away day' to discuss school priorities. They check on the school's performance and challenge the school's leaders as part of their meetings. This is helped by their links to specific aspects of the school's work.
- Governors monitor the school's finances closely. They ensure that these are deployed carefully and that a deficit budget is not set.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff have a deep understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and are up to date in their training. This includes understanding the 'Prevent' duty and the signs that a pupil may be at risk of female genital mutilation. Records, such as the child protection register, are meticulously organised. The school promptly refers cases that cause concern and follow these cases through carefully. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that pupils get the support they need.
- Leaders have a strong understanding of the specific needs of the community, the challenges facing families and the risks pupils might face. For example, strong messages are given to pupils on knife crime. Leaders are very aware of the need to engage with all parents, especially those of vulnerable pupils. When necessary, clear messages are given to parents. The school's curriculum supports pupils' resilience and develops their self-confidence.
- Pupils say that the school 'keeps us safe'. The school ensures that pupils know how to stay safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, teachers have remained committed to improving their skills. They have responded positively and effectively to professional development, and they value and learn from the support and guidance of the senior leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching, and pupils' learning, has improved strongly and is typically good.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of high-quality literature that extends their vocabulary and understanding of grammatical structure. They transfer and sustain this understanding in the wide range of writing seen in their literacy books and in the high-quality displays across the school. Younger pupils write with increasingly descriptive language. Older pupils are confident to write in a poem: 'You feel like a toy, abandoned on a shelf. Be patient. Your time will come.' The teaching of writing is a strength.
- This broad range of literature supports pupils' mature understanding of social issues. For example, when writing a speech, pupils are able to reflect on their position in the world. They can articulate their thinking clearly, saying, for example, 'Even if you think you are just a child, you are never too small to make a difference.'
- Teachers have high expectations. This is shown in the consistently high standard of presentation seen in books. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. They use questioning well to support pupils' mathematical understanding.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Challenge is appropriate to engage all pupils. This enables pupils to know and understand technical vocabulary and tackle unfamiliar words.
- Discussions in pupils' progress meetings and consistency in year-group planning support the improvements seen in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Teachers set tasks which meet the needs of learners. In a minority of lessons, however, most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

- The use of assessment has improved. Teachers use their knowledge of how pupils are doing to keep a check on pupils' work and engagement during lessons. Consistency in the application of the school's feedback and marking policy contributes to the strong pupil engagement seen in their learning. Comments such as, 'This is almost brilliant. Let's turn it into completely brilliant' challenge pupils to redraft their writing and improve it. This was typical of many comments to encourage improvement.
- Pupils are typically thoroughly engaged in their learning and respond well to all opportunities when asked. They work and cooperate together well. For example, in mathematics, pupils discuss the methods of subtraction and division that they use in solving a problem and why. Younger pupils are keen to listen to each other's work and readily make suggestions to improve the writing.
- Explanations from teachers are clear and allow pupils to structure and understand activities effectively. Pupils learn well because teachers and other adults providing support have clear expectations, particularly in mathematics and literacy, of what pupils can and should achieve.
- The use of specialist teachers enhances learning opportunities for pupils. For example, in music, pupils develop their understanding of rhythmic patterns when playing percussion instruments. In art, all pupils progressively develop their skills, as evidenced in their sketch books. In physical education, pupils benefit from participating in a full range of sports. Older pupils learn modern dance and perform annually at a local theatre.
- Throughout the school, the deployment of teaching assistants is effective. They have benefited from the professional development available to them. Consequently, they skilfully ask questions and/or provide explanations to support learning. Pupils taught on a one-to-one basis are supported extremely well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school strives to support pupils' well-being in a number of ways, especially through its PSHE programme. This includes a greater awareness of mental health issues and how the brain works.
- Pupils are highly motivated. They show great resilience when faced with work that challenges them. They are proud of their achievements and have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils have a strong voice in the developments in the school. This includes their roles as representatives on various bodies.
- The 'eco' council is made up of older pupils. They make decisions on how to make the school more sustainable. They have developed an 'eco code'. They learn how to make

a difference locally and globally. For example, they are learning about how they can help reduce the amount of plastic pollution and save water.

- The school council has a voice in improving the school. It has developed pupils' understanding of democracy. This was supported by the council's visit to the Houses of Parliament.
- Undertaking these varied roles teaches pupils leadership skills and how to take responsibility, as well as increasing their self-confidence. It prepares them very well for secondary education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils fully understand the school's high expectations for their behaviour. Consequently, there has been a big improvement from previous years. Rigorous monitoring ensures that behaviour remains very strong. Pupils' conduct is often impeccable. They are very polite, courteous and respectful. They have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils spoken to feel safe and comfortable. They love their school and their behaviour reflects this.
- The school stresses anti-bullying. There is a 'bullying box' and pupils say it is 'not a popular box, as there is no bullying'.
- The school has put in place very strong systems for checking and promoting high attendance. Attendance is above the national average and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is low.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Strong direction from the headteacher, coupled with the good work of other members of the senior leadership team, has continued to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This results in pupils' good progress and strong outcomes across the curriculum. Although progress is stronger than others in some year groups, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- All adults are held to account for the achievement of groups of learners. This has led to improved progress for the school's most vulnerable pupils and those groups, in each year group, identified as being at risk of falling behind. Consequently, any differences identified between the achievement of different groups of pupils are swiftly closed.
- Attainment at the end of Years 2 is above average, but not at the end of Year 6. Progress at the end of key stage 2 is above the national averages for reading, in line for mathematics and below for writing.
- In 2018, progress for disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's most recent assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there are inconsistencies, but the school speedily addresses any

underachievement. For example, Year 6 pupils identified as making less than expected progress in reading have received daily one-to-one support.

- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above the national average.
- Pupils heard read in Years 2 and 6 do so with increasing confidence and fluency. They can explain the plot of stories, while older pupils discuss characters with increasingly sophisticated language. Pupils enjoy reading, especially at home. They are excited by the greater range of new books recently purchased for them. They demonstrate a range of strategies when reading and very well-developed decoding skills when confronting new words.
- There is strong provision for pupils with (SEND). Consequently, these pupils continue to progress well from their various and, often, complex starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age, especially in speech and language. They make good progress because of the quality of experiences provided for them. They are confident children and keen to share their learning. Nevertheless, on entry to the Reception Year, children still have skills and knowledge which are typically below those seen nationally. All staff know the children well. As a result of good teaching and, where necessary, bespoke programmes to meet the needs of individuals, children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Most children reached the standard expected by the end of the Reception Year. Outcomes were broadly in line with the national average in the 2018 assessments. However, there were gaps in the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others, especially in reading and writing. The percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development has remained static each year since 2016.
- The early years leader is new to the role and has been well supported by the deputy headteacher. Leaders have a good understanding of the main strengths and areas to develop. For example, both are aware of the need to further develop the outside area to support children's learning experiences. They know the importance of effective transition arrangements both into and out of the early years. This is very well planned from the Reception Year to Year 1.
- Adults plan well for the range of needs. Leaders identify differences in learning and ways to diminish them. They pay particular attention to language and communication and the personal and social aspects of learning. For example, children in the Reception Year experiment as scientists and write a menu. In the Nursery, children enjoy a wide range of activities. They learn to make paper aeroplanes and find more about worms in a wormery. Great emphasis is placed on developing children's fine motor skills, for example using scissors to cut out shapes and the use of pipettes to fill test tubes with dyes. Such activities are helping to improve their handwriting. Throughout such activities, adults are constantly engaging children in discussions and questioning them so they can better express themselves.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent, however. Where teaching is good, teachers ensure that all children are listening to the sounds, are fully engaged and are keen to

do their best. When children are insufficiently challenged in their phonics, they make less progress. Evidence from children's learning journals identifies the confident application of phonics knowledge in writing as a future focus.

- Staff ensure that children's literacy skills are well promoted. A recently introduced programme encourages teaching to a text. Children now have increasing opportunities to share their knowledge and understanding of stories.
- Teachers have high expectations. They assess children's progress accurately through observations and discussions about their work. Their work is very well presented and all children make good progress. For example, most-able disadvantaged children can write increasingly complex sentences. Teachers provide exciting choices for writing. Teacher-led activities enable good progress to be made, particularly in reading, writing and handwriting.
- Children behave well. They demonstrate increasing confidence, independence and perseverance, building stamina and resilience in the activities in which they are engaged. They listen well and take part cooperatively in all areas of learning.
- Parental engagement is an area that leaders are continuing to improve. They have introduced a story time strategy and will provide more information for parents to support their children at home.

School details

Unique reference number	100677
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10088889

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Hogarth
Headteacher	Erika Eisele
Telephone number	020 8699 2675
Website	www.dalmain.lewisham.sch.uk
Email address	info@dalmain.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Dalmain Primary School was judged as good in January 2014.
- This is a two-form entry primary school. The early years consists of a Nursery class and two Reception classes.
- The largest group of pupils are White British. A large proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and is in the top 20% nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is high and in the top 20% nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Most observations were undertaken with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, as they moved around the building, and in the playground.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their work and experiences at school. Inspectors talked to staff on duty in the lunch hall and in the playground.
- Inspectors met with the attendance officer and staff who oversee the single central record of staff suitability checks.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including: information on pupils' progress and outcomes across the school; improvement plans; curriculum plans; and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to governance, safeguarding, behaviour, complaints, pupils' attendance and welfare.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of books to check the progress pupils make over time.
- Inspectors took account of the 88 responses to the most recent pupils' survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 50 responses to the most recent survey for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection, and the 150 responses to the most recent parents' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rick Barnes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Margaret Warner	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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