

Grinling Gibbons Primary School

Clyde Street, Deptford, London SE8 5LW

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils receive a good and improving education. The new senior leaders' swift and decisive actions have led to the school being transformed. They have stopped the decline in standards.
- The executive headteacher and head of school work very well together to provide excellent leadership. Together they work well with other staff to ensure that they have the highest aspirations for pupils. Staff respond well to the headteacher's openness, and morale is high.
- Leaders at all levels, including the governors, have the highest expectations for pupils regardless of their backgrounds. Pupils know this and they are, in turn, highly ambitious.
- The school's attention to safeguarding pupils is effective. Staff are alert to pupils' needs and do not allow potential barriers to affect pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. The art of teaching, which places pupils at the centre of planning, is now at the heart of teachers' work.
- Leaders and teachers analyse assessment information well to identify the progress of different groups. They select interventions carefully that will improve outcomes. The school's assessment system is under review.
- Governors hold leaders to account rigorously for their work. Under the new culture, accountability is strong at every level of management.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful. They feel safe in their school and have very trusting relationships with staff.
- Pupils reach average standards and make good progress in literacy, mathematics and other subjects.
- In-school assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make similarly good progress as others nationally.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress as others. Leaders recognise that some pupils' needs are not identified early enough.
- The most able pupils are now making good progress, but teachers do not consistently challenge them sufficiently to apply their knowledge.
- Standards in key stage 1, early years and the phonics screening check are consistently above average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the teachers provide sufficient challenge and stretch for all groups of pupils by:
 - developing and embedding skills and knowledge taught in a range of subjects
 - developing and using a more effective whole-school assessment system that will provide useful information and feedback to improve planning and learning.
- Develop the leadership skills of middle leaders so they are well equipped to implement and develop strategic plans to drive school improvement.
- Improve the early identification and assessment of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that they can access the right support early.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is no longer outstanding and is now good. Over the last three academic years, the high standards achieved were not sustained in all key stages. The reality of declining standards was not identified quickly and clear systems to counter the falling standards were not in place. For example, accountability was not strong and when the 2014 key stage 2 results were annulled, the school was unable to recover its achievements.
- Following the low results in 2016, the governors appointed a new leader. The executive headteacher leads with energy and determination and receives very good support from the head of school and other leaders. The current senior leaders have developed a culture where pupils are now at the centre of teaching and learning.
- The new leadership team has acted swiftly to make key changes that have improved the fortunes of the school. The decline in standards is no longer evident and leaders expect staff to give pupils their best to ensure that they can fulfil their ambitions. As a result, pupils make good progress. A new school has emerged and the difference is noticeable in pupils' better rates of progress.
- The executive headteacher is measured in her approach. She plans very well with other leaders, governors and staff to consider the actions needed to raise standards. Her way of working has led staff to say, 'There is a fresh perspective that makes us want to work at the school.' Within this new culture, there is openness; according to staff, there is autonomy, and, 'We are putting children at the centre of what we do.'
- Leaders have increased accountability for the work that their staff do. They link teachers' effectiveness to pupils' rates of progress, and to the school and subject development plans. This has led middle leaders to say, 'There is no hiding place for us.' This is because pupils' progress is everyone's responsibility.
- The leadership of teaching is robust. Senior and middle leaders use focused observations and in-depth scrutiny of a range of information to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning. They provide helpful guidance to staff on how they could improve their work. Middle leaders make a considerable contribution to working with staff to refine their skills through coaching and identified training. Training is available for all staff; it is continuous and linked carefully to their personal targets and the school's priorities for improvement. Middle leaders state that professional development has contributed to their development of their role. However, senior leaders have rightly identified that middle leaders require more training to reinforce newly acquired leadership and management skills.
- Leaders ensure that staff use the links within the federation and the network of local schools to observe and use effective practice. Opportunities to network have led to staff recognising what they need to do to ensure that the school is 'good' or 'outstanding'. As a result, the staff have raised the bar in relation to their practice.

- Leaders meet regularly with staff to check and analyse pupils' progress. They use the assessment information to review the school's effectiveness and review how well different groups are performing. This enables them to identify emerging strengths and areas for development and to make sure that all groups receive equal access to support.
- The school's assessment system for tracking pupils' progress is under review. Although it provides useful information, leaders plan to develop a more robust approach that is similar to those used in the other federated schools. This will enable them to track pupils' progress in other subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with exciting opportunities to explore all subjects in the national curriculum. It is enriched with a range of reading texts to stimulate pupils' writing and knowledge and to give breadth across the different subjects. Leaders have taken steps to emphasise the development of literacy and numeracy skills to improve outcomes at key stage 2. In addition, focused topic work across the school broadens pupils' research skills. For example, the school uses 'application focus week', linked to safeguarding and British values, to develop pupils' aspirations, self-worth and their understanding of keeping safe. Pupils are rightly proud of the in-depth studies each year group carries out and presents to others. These topics give them insight into world events, for example, world policy on migration. Enrichment activities, such as trips and different clubs, extend pupils' experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school's work. Staff establish an environment in which pupils value their environment, express awe and wonder, and understanding of different faith systems. Pupils cooperate well with adults and show respect for each other. Pupils understand right from wrong, and indicate that they can behave fairly. The school supports British values very well. Pupils understand the importance of rules and the meaning of democracy and liberty in modern Britain. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote, 'As long as we don't break the law we can have our own opinion', and on defining democracy, 'We can have a say.' Coverage of this work is relevant and appropriate to different year groups. Work on British values underpins the curriculum very well.
- Leaders use the additional funding very well to remove barriers that would prevent disadvantaged pupils achieving well. The grant provides a wide range of interventions that develop pupils' cultural awareness of their surroundings and of the arts. Pupils also access tuition in literacy and mathematics. These interventions have a bearing on pupils' learning and help them to keep up with the work. Similarly, there is effective use of the physical education (PE) and sport funding to increase pupils' participation in PE clubs and competitive sports. Pupils have opportunities to develop leadership skills and learn more about staying fit and healthy.
- Leaders use the funding for special educational needs and inclusion effectively. They ensure that resources meet the needs of pupils and they receive the right support that moves their learning on quickly. However, leaders are aware that some pupils requiring additional support are not identified early enough, and plans are in place to change this next academic year.

- The school maintains regular contact with the alternative provision, which provides part-time placements for a small number of pupils. Senior leaders monitor these pupils' attendance and progress. They make regular visits to the provision to ensure that these pupils are responding positively, and plan for a full reintegration to the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a wealth of experience to the school to provide strategic direction for senior leaders. They benefit from the educational experience that some members bring to the board. As a result, they are able to raise significant questions about the performance of different pupil groups when challenging and holding staff to account for the school's work. Governors also ensure that they have an accurate overview of the finances and manage them efficiently.
- Governors are very much aware of how the recent past affected staff morale, but recognise that changes during the current academic year have helped the school to move forward. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and their assessment of the school's current performance is accurate.
- Members of the governing body regularly check that the correct safeguarding procedures are in place. They also ensure that the school maintains its effective culture of keeping pupils safe.
- Having a joint governing body within the federated schools has increased the pace of change in the school. The schools share and develop effective practice, including the development of leaders. Close links ensure that governors have a clear overview of how they will work with leaders to develop the vision of high achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a good understanding of pupils' circumstances. The very good use of early help services ensures that families know that children will not be troubled by their situations; pupils get support to settle quickly in school. Partnership work with a range of services is very good.
- Leaders have established thorough methods for reporting, referring and recording concerns that lead to pupils receiving the right help and support. Staff are alert and use robust systems to follow up signs that suggest pupils require help. Regular training and briefings lead to them developing a vigilant safeguarding culture. Leaders ensure that staff complete training on national issues such as female genital mutilation, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. Local concerns receive good coverage during training for staff and in the curriculum so that pupils know how to stay safe. Leaders work closely with the local community to ensure that pupils are safe when in the immediate neighbourhood.
- The thorough attendance systems used to support pupils and families ensure that almost all pupils are in school learning. Transition work with secondary schools focuses on keeping the very few persistent absentees safe when they transfer.
- Checks made when appointing staff and governors are fully in place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good because of the new approach to placing the needs of pupils at the centre of planning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use information about pupils' learning to set activities that meet pupils' differing needs. This leads to pupils becoming confident learners who are resilient when faced with challenging work. Pupils recognise that teachers focus on making sure that their learning needs are met. For example, they said, 'Teachers set separate work and sit with those who do not understand.'
- Teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour result in pupils concentrating well. Lessons take place in a calm atmosphere, and pupils enjoy learning, which they describe as 'fun because teachers model and give clear explanations'.
- Staff record and assess what pupils are able to do during lessons. They take into consideration misconceptions and provide pupils with helpful feedback, verbally and in writing, about how to improve their work. The school's advocates report that they learn well because teachers ensure that they can explain their understanding of the work.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain concepts, which makes it easier for pupils to understand the work. Pupils report that teachers use 'guided sessions which put them on the right track'. Typically, teachers use questions effectively to push pupils to think deeply about their learning. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils considered the style, language and meaning of Corbett's poem, 'If I Had Wings'. Pupils found the work provocative when talking about the literary images, before they successfully used descriptive language to write their own version.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils support learning. Teachers regularly use well-timed, short, oral feedback and ask quick and probing questions to find out how well pupils are learning. Direct intervention leads to teachers dealing with misunderstandings quickly and to pupils completing their work successfully.
- Teachers are at the initial stage of improving the new practices to teaching introduced at the start of the academic year. Teachers do not always move pupils' learning on quickly. Additionally, not all teaching assistants are carefully deployed and neither do teachers always set challenging work for all pupils.
- The teaching of literacy and mathematics meets the needs of all pupils well. This is because there is a sharper focus this academic year on teachers maintaining a relentless focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils speak with confidence and articulate their ideas clearly. They enjoy reading, make inferences and deduction, and argue their points well. However, they do not draw on a wide vocabulary to contextualise unknown words. This was evident in, for example, their work on the poem, 'The Highway Man'. Scrutiny of work shows that pupils' writing improves over time. Pupils show that they can learn from their mistakes and use the process of writing to plan, edit and re-draft their work. Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils always transfer accurate writing skills to other subjects. Leaders have correctly identified writing as a focus area for development.

- The teaching of mathematics ensures that pupils can apply the taught skills to problem solving and explain their answers. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson on completing graphs and asking questions about the survey responses. Pupils say that mathematics is their favourite subject because they 'use the skills every day and they are easy to learn'. Pupils set out their workings neatly and know that they need to develop their understanding of the subject to reach a high standard. A pupil in Year 1 told an inspector, 'I am trying to get to greater depth in mathematics.' There is, however, a tendency for teachers to place more emphasis on written explanation in the subject, which can lessen the time to work through more problem-solving tasks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils know the importance of having a good education, and are ambitious about their future. They concentrate well and do their best. The school fosters pupils' aspirations with enrichment activities, and uses different professionals to talk to pupils about a range of careers.
- Pupils are well mannered and polite. All those who join the school at different times of the school year settle in quickly and are made welcome.
- Like their teachers, pupils talked about the positive changes made under the new leadership team. Pupils believe that lessons are more interesting and fun, which helps them to engage more in their learning. However, pupils say that the school does not have enough books and basic resources in classrooms. Inspectors' observations and discussions with senior leaders confirmed that this is correct.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They know about the safety measures in place to make them safe. The visibility of staff throughout the school day assures them of their safety. Pupils are aware of potential dangers around them and know how to keep themselves safe when, for example, using the internet.
- Pupils willingly serve each other as advocates and monitors with responsibilities for specific duties. They are proud of their contributions to local charities and to national charitable trusts. Pupils' involvement in community events leads to them understanding a number of concepts such as tolerance, democracy, respect and fair play and to addressing classes before the vote for members of the school council. For instance, pupils say that they have a sound grasp of fair play when interviewing and selecting candidates for the school council. They clearly enjoy the process of helping to select senior leaders.
- The attendance of pupils is consistently high. This is because pupils enjoy learning in school. The school works very closely with the few families whose children do not attend regularly. The school's use of penalty notices and regular monitoring of absence has had a direct impact on higher rates of attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well during lessons, on the playground and as they move around the school building.
- Pupils gain insight into different types of bullying because the curriculum, assemblies and the focus weeks provide extensive coverage of topics on, for example, prejudice-based behaviours. Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare in the school. They say that everyone is kind to each other, and the school is 'calm and settled'. Pupils are confident that if bullying were to occur, adults would deal with it quickly.
- Exclusions are rare. The school has not had any permanent exclusions since the last inspection.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their differing starting points. The school's current assessments are reliable. This information indicates that standards are in line with and sometimes above those expected nationally. Throughout this academic year, books and teachers' assessments show that pupils make good progress.
- Standards in the 2016 national tests indicate that children sustained above-average performance in early years, and in the phonics screening check and in Year 2. Test results in Year 6 did not replicate the above-average standards of previous years. While pupils achieved average standards in mathematics, they were significantly below average in reading and low in writing. With the exception of 2014 when the key stage 2 results were annulled, historical results show that standards were consistently above or better than the national average. These low results in 2016 were unexpected. Since then, leaders have done much to ensure that pupils make far better progress. Current assessment information and scrutiny of pupils' books confirm this.
- Pupils now make significantly better progress because learning is focused on pupils understanding concepts and applying taught skills accurately. Teachers have moved away from passing on educational information mechanically.
- Pupils do not always receive enough guidance to ensure that they select the right level of text that can support the development of their reading. Weaker readers struggle to blend the sounds of letters accurately and do not readily notice repetitive patterns to support their pronunciation of words. In contrast, stronger readers in both key stages read fluently and accurately, and quickly make deductions about an author's choice of words. For example, Year 5 pupils could explain J K Rowling's term, 'undursleyish' in the Harry Potter series. Pupils are clear about why they choose to read certain genres. The following comment sums up the view of pupils who enjoy reading, 'You'll never catch me without a book!'

- The most able pupils did not achieve well in 2016. However, work seen in books and teachers' assessments indicate that the current cohort is making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment records and pupils' books show that Year 5 pupils are above the targets set for them. Discussion with the most able pupils and scrutiny of books across different subjects indicate that they work hard. In mathematics, pupils without fail correct their calculations in relation to questions on reasoning. In English, they accurately apply taught language skills to extended pieces of writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are responsive to the range of activities used to develop their engagement in their learning. Planned activities and increased understanding of how pupils learn help to ensure that this group makes better progress, particularly at the end of key stage 2. A scrutiny of their work and assessment information indicate that pupils' rates of progress increase each term in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are on course to exceed the targets set by the school. Assessment information indicates that, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils are making very good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress. Regular recording of pupils' progress each week and carefully considered planning between teachers and support staff ensure that interventions are targeted and appropriate to pupils' needs. Assessment records and scrutiny of pupils' books confirm that most pupils are making typically good progress, in line with the school's target.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is good. The range of curriculum experiences covered provides children with opportunities and excitement to explore the different organised work areas. For example, children's work on mini-beasts (insects) led to them carrying out investigative work linked to many areas of learning. In some instances, children entered into role play as scientists and began thinking about cause and effect. For example, they discussed how snails would respond to the rain while another explained, 'their shells will crumble if they get too dry'.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is consistently well above the national average in all areas of learning. This level of attainment gives them a solid start for key stage 1.
- The range of activities stimulates children across Nursery and Reception well. Children's conversations with adults show that they are thinking, and independently extending their knowledge. An inspector was invited to a 'bug party', with a follow-up question to find out whether the host should know about any allergies the inspector might have.
- Most children are confident writers, as is evident in their letters and work on mini-beasts and instructional writing. Children read and made notes to describe different insects before drawing them. Similarly, children in Reception show that they can quickly master concepts such as doubling numbers. Children stay on set tasks and use different resources to work out the sums quickly. They can quickly spot and correct errors in their work.

- Teachers and other staff seek to develop children’s communication and language and numeracy skills, but do not all consistently use the rich learning environment to ensure that they are extending and modelling speaking and number skills. Teachers check and annotate learning journals to ensure good coverage of all areas of learning. However, annotations are not consistently evaluative and nor are next steps always identified. Leaders recognise that there is still more work to do ensure that staff develop a more inquisitive approach when interacting with children in all areas of their work.
- Children are sociable and show care and consideration for each other. They extended gentleness to the ‘mini-beast’ that they had found and wanted to make sure that they returned it to ‘its mum and dad’. Across the setting, children get on very well together. Skills of cooperation and enjoyment are expressed when they work with each other.
- Partnership work with parents is strong. Parents have opportunities to attend workshops, and take part in school trips to find out how they can contribute to their children’s learning.
- Leaders work closely with other partners across the federation to moderate children’s work, and share and develop effective practice. Staff have benefited from training received from the teaching school and partner federation schools to develop the curriculum, and teaching and learning.
- Safeguarding systems are thorough and effective in the early years. The setting is appropriately led. Forward planning between the current coordinator and newly appointed leader has emphasised the next steps to develop further the early years provision.

School details

Unique reference number	100685
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10031859

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Smith
Executive Headteacher	Jeanette Brumby
Head of School	Dean Gordon
Telephone number	0208 692 4907
Website	www.gglvfederation.org
Email address	admin@ggibbons.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2010

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school makes provision for 80 children in early years, of which 50 attend part time in Nursery.
- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school works with New Woodlands, an alternative provision. A few pupils attend part time and are dual registered.
- More pupils than usual join the school at different times during the academic year.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school clubs.
- Since the last inspection, the school has federated with Lucas Vale Primary School in September 2016. The schools are part of a larger federation with two other primary schools, Fairlawn and Haseltine primary schools. Grinling Gibbons and Lucas Vale have a joint governing body. A head of school is responsible for the day-to-day management of Grinling Gibbons. The executive headteacher works across all four schools.
- Following the retirement of the former executive headteacher, the executive headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in September 2016. Phase one of a staffing restructure started in the autumn term and phase two will begin in the summer term.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 part-lessons, some with senior leaders. Very short visits were also made to four lessons in key stages 1 and 2.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and head of school, other senior and middle leaders, and the chair of the governing body. The inspectors held discussions with three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 20 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. With so few responses, the school's own survey results were also taken into consideration.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records and assessment information on pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the curriculum, and reports sent to parents.

Inspection team

Carmen Rodney, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lou Anderson	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Keith Tysoe	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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