

Inspection of Harbinger Primary School

Cahir Street, London E14 3QP

Inspection dates:

6–7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils were very polite and welcoming to us. They were keen to tell us what they like best about the school. They enjoy the weekly sharing assembly, where their work and behaviour are rewarded. They were enthusiastic about their celebrations of a wide range of religious and cultural events such as Eid al-Fitr, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Pupils have a strong sense of fairness and equality. They are confident that they can express their views and that their differences will be respected by others.

Many pupils feel that teachers deal well with pupils' poor behaviour, including bullying. Generally, pupils feel safe and happy in school. However, a few say that bullying takes too long to stop. Some parents told us that they are not confident that leaders will deal with their concerns effectively. Staff have recently started a new approach to managing behaviour, enabling pupils to think carefully about their actions. Through reflective conversations with staff, pupils heal relationships with their peers and make better choices in future so that their behaviour and attitudes improve.

Leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Children have a strong start in the early years. Leaders do not ensure that pupils build on this and achieve as well as they can as they move up the school.

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

Pupils achieve well in the early years and Years 1 and 2. Early years leaders enable children to develop their language skills swiftly. Children express their thoughts clearly and communicate with each other enthusiastically as they learn. Early years children were keen to tell us how their activities linked with what they had done the previous day.

The development of reading skills is a priority for leaders. Children are enthralled when adults routinely read to them, enjoying stories as they unfold. As a result, children acquire a love for reading. They handle books carefully and with interest. Adults make sure that children can practise their skills by reading books that match their knowledge of letter sounds.

Pupils are therefore well prepared to succeed in key stage 1. However, this is not built upon well in Years 3 to 6. Pupils do not benefit from lessons that link together logically, so they lack opportunities to reinforce and build upon secure knowledge and skills. Leaders' plans do not take into account the key facts that pupils need before moving on to more challenging work.

Leaders do not plan effectively how teachers will identify pupils in Years 3 to 6 who are falling behind with their reading and give them the help they need to catch up. Strategies to enable pupils to learn new vocabulary do not work well. Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, do not pick up new words quickly. Leaders do not ensure that pupils learn and remember enough to be well prepared for secondary school.

Generally, pupils are settled in class. On occasions, pupils become distracted and their behaviour interrupts lessons. Poor behaviour tends to occur when pupils do not have the background knowledge they need to learn something new. When learning builds well on what pupils already know, they are usually settled and attentive.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about what is right and wrong. For example, we heard pupils explain that Rosa Parks helped change unfair rules about race. However, too few pupils know about democracy and other key ideas that shape the way we live in modern Britain. Pupils have opportunities to learn how to keep a healthy body. They have less opportunity to learn about maintaining good mental health.

Leaders take pupils' welfare seriously and know about risks to pupils. Safeguarding is effective in the school. However, pupils have not learned enough about what can harm them and how to stay safe. For example, pupils do not have an age-appropriate understanding of the dangers of drugs, alcohol, or knife crime. Likewise, they have only a vague understanding of e-safety.

Leaders know the general and individual needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They design learning which meets these needs. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well. For example, some pupils have difficulty recognising how others are feeling. Pupils learn to identify people's emotions and how to respond appropriately.

Governors have clear aims for the school. However, they do not look closely at what pupils learn and achieve through the school. They do not have sufficient knowledge of what the school does well to enable them to ask leaders the right questions about what needs to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are alert to safeguarding concerns. Leaders have recently introduced systems which have improved the way that staff record safeguarding concerns, including bullying. Staff have been trained to use these systems and leaders are able to respond swiftly, identifying any patterns and trends. They use this information sensibly to decide what action to take to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that the required checks are carried out before new staff start work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- To enhance the impact of the curriculum leaders and governors should:
 - ensure that learning is sufficiently demanding and equips pupils with the knowledge they need for the next stage of their education

- provide additional support to those adults that support the weakest readers, so strong teaching enables them to catch up quickly
- ensure that pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, gain a wider and more secure vocabulary and strengthen their comprehension of text.
- Leaders must embed the new systems to ensure that there are speedy and effective responses to any concerns, including those about bullying and behaviour. Staff, leaders and governors should ensure that parents and pupils feel that when they raise concerns, the school will deal with them well.
- Governors should receive the training and information they need to gain a comprehensive understanding of the work of the school. They need to ensure that they have an accurate view of the school's strengths. This will equip them to hold leaders to account for improvements in the school.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	100904
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10121546
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	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Young
Headteacher	Andy Smith
Website	www.harbingerschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 April 2016

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with: the headteacher; the deputy headteacher; special educational needs coordinator (SENCo); phase leaders; governors including the chair of governors; and a representative from the local authority.
- We reviewed documentation related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff. We spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- We spoke with parents before the start of the school day, and considered the 35 responses to Parent View, the online survey, including 26 written comments. We also considered seven responses to the survey for staff. We spoke with pupils and staff inside and outside of lessons.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, and history. We met with the leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, talked to pupils and staff, and looked at pupils' work. We listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

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