

Inspection of Harbinger Primary School

Cahir Street, London, E14 3QP

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have developed a welcoming culture in the school. Staff know their pupils extremely well. Working relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils feel a strong sense of community. They are happy, safe and feel valued.

There are high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes in early years where there are no limits or barriers to children's achievements. Pupils are enthusiastic, kind and enjoy learning.

Pupils are well behaved during lessons and around the school site. They help to support positive behaviour in the school through roles including anti-bullying ambassadors and playground buddies. In early years, children are highly motivated and demonstrate high levels of self-control.

All pupils in the school attend a range of outings every year which help to widen pupils' cultural experiences. These include visits to museums, galleries and places of worship. Pupils also have the opportunities to develop their leadership skills through groups including the student council, eco leaders and writing for the school paper, the 'Harbinger Chronicle'.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is designed to build pupils' knowledge over time. In early years, leaders have a sharp focus on ensuring children develop their language and communication skills highly effectively. Leaders' curricular thinking has improved considerably, including in mathematics. This means that pupils' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum is strong.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present information clearly. They make adaptations to ensure pupils with SEND are supported to access the ambitious curriculum. Some pupils with more complex needs have a bespoke curriculum which is well suited to their individual needs.

Sometimes, staff do not address misconceptions that pupils have. This means that, on occasion, pupils do not commit knowledge to their long-term memories. In early years, staff are highly effective at identifying any misconceptions. This includes checking and developing children's use of vocabulary regularly.

Leaders have a strong focus on pupils learning to read from when they first enter Reception. Staff are confident teaching phonics. They are trained to be able to identify and support pupils who fall behind the pace of the phonics programme. Effective support is put in place for pupils to ensure that they catch up and keep up.

Pupils are passionate about reading, which takes place every day in school. They read a wide range of books. Leaders have delivered workshops for parents to support them with strategies for reading with their children at home.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Systems to support behaviour are carefully designed to support pupils in the school. They are clear and followed consistently by all staff. Leaders ensure that attendance is high. They have robust procedures in place and work closely with parents to support pupils to attend school regularly. Children in early years are very motivated to learn. They are extremely engaged and sustain high levels of concentration.

Leaders have developed a carefully designed personal development programme. They teach pupils how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils can take part in a range of clubs in the school. These include chess, computing and a variety of sports clubs. External speakers regularly come to the school to deliver presentations on a range of topics. These include sessions about financial literacy, engineering and road safety.

Leaders prioritise the health and welfare of staff. Staff appreciate how leaders explore strategies to manage their workload. Leaders have worked extremely effectively to develop strong relationships with parents and the local community. The governing body understands the strengths and priorities of the school and carries out its role effectively. It has a clear strategic vision and provides appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teaching does not consistently check pupils' understanding and identify misconceptions. This means that sometimes pupils are not fully ready to learn new content and commit knowledge, including subject-specific vocabulary, to their long-term memory. The school should develop the expertise of all teachers so that any gaps in pupils' understanding are identified and addressed in a timely way.

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	100904
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10289797
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Young
Headteacher	Nimesha Nagahawatte
Website	www.harbinger.org.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, and a range of staff. They also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and computing. For each deep dive inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, discussed with

pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The curriculum in other subjects was also considered.

- 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, pupils, and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

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