

Cubitt Town Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100898
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	395407
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Peter McGregor

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Caldwell
Headteacher	Robyn Bruce
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2007
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Age group	7–11
Inspection date(s)	20–21 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Peter McGregor

Additional Inspector

Liz Kissane

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Graham Lee

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching in 27 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by 14 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, and governors. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at evidence of pupils' work, planning documents, tracking data, and safeguarding records. Inspectors analysed and considered questionnaire responses from pupils, staff, and 70 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Cubitt Town Junior is a larger-than-average primary school. The pupil population is very stable, with a lower-than-average number joining or leaving the school other than at the start of the year. Since the previous inspection, senior leadership staffing has undergone a period of significant change, including extended acting headship. The present headteacher took up the permanent post in September 2011.

Proportions are above average for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for those for whom English is believed not to be their first language, and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. A broadly average proportion of pupils is supported at school action plus, or has a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, mainly Asian or Asian British; the largest groups in the school are from either Bangladeshi or White British backgrounds. The school has Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because initiatives to improve teaching, learning, and the curriculum further are not fully implemented across the school.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils with greatly varying abilities and backgrounds make good progress from their starting points. Achievement in mathematics has improved substantially in the past year and is now as good as in English.
- Pupils are taught well. Knowledgeable, enthusiastic teachers use questioning successfully to enable pupils to build on prior learning and make very good use of support staff. At times, however, pupils are not engaged fully in their learning. Marking of pupils' work is variable, with too little guidance in some books. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully and effective intervention is provided when any pupil falls behind.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school, feeling entirely safe. They are usually lively and enthusiastic learners. Occasional bullying incidents are dealt with rigorously and with good response. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good indeed.
- Leadership of teaching and management of performance are good. Rigorous monitoring means that senior leaders are aware of strengths and areas for improvement. Staff development has a high priority. Staff understand and value the school's vision and priorities. Clearer roles and responsibilities have been introduced for middle leaders, but not all yet carry these out with the best efficiency and success. The governing body knows the school well and holds leaders to account for all that takes place. The promotion of pupils' personal development is strong; the school is developing a harmonious, academic learning environment. The curriculum for English and mathematics is good, but, in some subjects, it does not have a good balance between the weight given to knowledge, understanding, and skills.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of July 2013:
 - increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, with effective marking and full engagement of pupils in their learning
 - replicate strengths in the curriculum for English and mathematics in other subjects, to achieve a balance of knowledge, understanding and skills
 - ensure that all middle leaders fulfil their roles and responsibilities well so that pupils' achievement is high in their subject areas.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make good progress, building on broadly average attainment overall on entry to the school. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn. They work well together and with their teachers, which generates a good pace and enjoyable learning. They settle quickly to work. Some outstanding learning was apparent in both English and mathematics lessons. In several classes arranged by ability, the most capable are achieving standards well in excess of those expected for pupils of their ages. Correct pronunciation is expected and achieved, for example, when pupils read newspaper articles aloud. Pupils respond to 'why' questions with confident, extended answers and, when carrying out a longer piece of writing, they do so with pride and obvious interest in the selected topic. A high-ability class, enthusiastically preparing a response to an informal letter in role, prompted by the poem *The Highwayman*, produced interesting creative writing. Standards of writing are relatively higher than in reading, where attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6. Although achievement in reading is good overall, the rate of progress for lower attainers is not yet as rapid as other groups. Pupils achieve well in developing number skills as a result of a rigorous approach to driving up standards. Older pupils have a good understanding of mathematical language such as scalene, triangle and parallel. They know how to structure their approach to solve word number problems successfully.

Attainment in recent years has been broadly average. It dipped in mathematics in 2011, but progress data and lesson observations indicate a substantial improvement for current Year 6 pupils, in both English and mathematics. Detailed tracking data for each pupil show that pupils for whom English is an additional language do well. Disabled pupils and those that have special educational needs make good progress; several are recorded as having been removed from the school action list as a result of the successful support they receive. Pupils of broadly average ability, identified as underachieving in the previous academic year, have made clear progress as a result of focused guidance. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have been less successful than their peers in the past, particularly in mathematics. Intervention following the identification of needs has resulted in a substantial narrowing of the gap in their achievements compared with other pupils.

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Pupils are confident users of modern technology and have good skill levels. Science skills are good and secure as a result of an investigative approach. Knowledge and understanding of science are not as strong, as too little time is currently allocated to those aspects.

Quality of teaching

Teaching promotes learning and good progress through high expectations and detailed knowledge of pupils' wide-ranging needs. Teachers communicate very well, both one-to-one with pupils and to the whole class. The positive school ethos is clear in the way cooperative work and reflection are promoted in lessons. Teaching is planned well, including clear learning intentions and success criteria, based on good subject knowledge. Targets are set which challenge the pupils to achieve their best. Behaviour management strategies are applied consistently and pupils are praised for their efforts. The contribution of support staff to small group work is of high quality, following guidance from class teachers. Most parents and carers and almost all pupils in their inspection questionnaire responses remarked how pleased they were with the quality of teaching. Where pupils are set by ability for English and mathematics in Years 4 to 6, teaching works well in providing the right degree of challenge for different groups of pupils. A lower-attaining Year 6 pupil remarked, 'I like being in a lower group, the teaching assistants help me to do better,' and a very high-attaining pupil referred to his excitement at being given some Level 6 and 7 mathematics work to do. Those are levels above the expectations for Year 9. Those two pupils remarked also on how well they got on in other lessons, when they worked together sometimes.

Teaching was outstanding in a Year 4 literacy lesson, when pupils learned how to improve their persuasive writing skills. Excellent subject knowledge and modelling by the teacher, such as exemplification of powerful verbs and rhetorical questioning, motivated pupils to maximise their achievement. In a Year 6 science lesson, when pupils considered how to design a rocket to fly as high as possible, they learnt about air resistance through the teacher's good analogies – such as walking through water – to suggest the idea of pushing particles out of the way. Clear, helpful responses were provided to pupils' questions. Teaching was less effective in a few lessons, when pupils were expected to sit passively for too long. When pupils were asked to speak in talk-partner groups, some did not engage with each other, content to listen rather than speak. Work is generally marked, but practice is inconsistent. Some marking provides a detailed commentary, indicating strengths and ways to improve, whereas some, although correcting errors, does not indicate how work could be improved. Homework is set regularly to reinforce key ideas in English and mathematics and it is marked carefully.

In all lessons, teachers used information on pupils' disabilities and special educational needs and language needs to give the right work, so that these pupils make effective progress. Teaching focuses well on the school's drive to improve reading standards, including strategies such as reading aloud, individual reading sessions, with an appropriate focus on phonics (the sounds letters make), and guided reading for all

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classes each day.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good in lessons, during breaks, and before and after the school day. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well because they are aware that disrupted learning would restrict their success. Occasional loss of concentration or minor misbehaviour in lessons usually results from teaching that has not succeeded in engaging pupils in learning. Pupils are courteous and polite to one another and adults. Racist comments are very rare and, if made, are followed through with great rigour to identify the cause and to try to prevent any recurrence. The school's praise system and the sanctions that can be applied are well known and valued by pupils. Most parents and carers agree behaviour is good. Pupils identified with behavioural needs are cared for and supported very well. The school adopts a highly inclusive approach in accepting pupils from other schools where they have struggled to fit in; at Cubitt Town Junior, they often settle into the routines, which they find helpful. Exclusion is applied hardly ever, as a final sanction when there is no alternative.

Almost all pupils and their parents and carers reported in their inspection questionnaire responses that pupils feel entirely safe at school. Cyber bullying has been stopped through the instigation of a ban on mobile telephones in school, a rule which pleases the pupils. Occasional bullying incidents do take place, both physical and oral. However, once the school identifies the problem everything possible is done to resolve the situation. Pupils and their parents and carers know that and appreciate what the school does.

Attendance is improving and above average. The headteacher and governing body have set clear targets and work extremely hard to minimise disruptions to pupils' education caused by extended term-time holidays abroad. Pupils value the school's mechanisms for praising regular attendance. Some pupils find it difficult to get to school on time, partly because the location of the school on the Isle of Dogs means that, when bridges close to traffic, pupils are late to school.

Leadership and management

With the full support of the governing body and staff, the headteacher has made a significant positive impact on improving pupils' progress and raising attainment in the short time since her appointment. Development planning is detailed and thorough, with clear success criteria. It builds on rigorous and accurate monitoring of provision and outcomes and has resulted in improvements, apparent in the good teaching and learning observed and in tracking data that show pupils' good achievements. Middle managers understand their roles, but some are demonstrating more effective skills than others. For example, not all are monitoring achievement and teaching rigorously in their areas. The school's continuing professional development is well placed to support middle managers' further improvement. Staff development responds to individual needs and those identified through performance management. It has focused successfully on effective teaching of mathematics, including planning lessons

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which challenge boys and girls of all abilities. Support staff have been trained in responding to the varying needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, which is having a positive impact on their progress. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are entirely appropriate. It is clear from the substantial progress made already that the school has capacity to sustain improvement.

The curriculum focus on reading, writing, and mathematics is substantial and appropriate, as is the emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Facilities for developing pupils' computer skills are good and used well. Several other subjects are taught through an integrated curriculum and, although pupils find this work interesting and very enjoyable, a balance has yet to be achieved in terms of providing pupils with the right factual knowledge and a good understanding, as well as strong subject skills across these areas. The school has a very good range of extra-curricular activities including sports, music, art and craft, and French, which the pupils enjoy greatly. The Healthy Schools status the school has achieved reflects the nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and break-time fruit available daily and the good physical education opportunities, including swimming at the local pool.

Links with parents and carers are outstanding. Staff make frequent contacts with pupils' homes about work and behaviour and the school provides parenting and GCSE English and mathematics courses for parents, so that they can give greater support to their children's academic and personal development at home. Providing equality of opportunity and tackling all forms of discrimination are at the heart of the work of the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cubitt Town Junior School, London E14 3NE

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and learning your views in discussion and through your questionnaire responses, as well as watching you play and learn. This letter is to let you know our judgements about the school.

Cubitt Town is a good school, where you behave well and make good progress in your work. You have great pride in your school. Your attendance has improved this year and is now above average. You get on well together and with the staff. You feel safe at school and are taught well by enthusiastic, knowledgeable teachers. They have high expectations of you and you all get on very well together. The staff track your individual progress and provide you with very good additional help if you start to fall behind. Your headteacher is leading the school very well, making improvements, so that you are more successful.

To help you do even better, we have asked the teachers to tell you areas to work on when they mark your work, and to keep you fully involved in lessons. We have also asked the teachers who look after subjects to make sure you have every opportunity to do well in all your subjects. You can help by attending school regularly, always behaving well and continuing to work to the best of your ability.

Yours sincerely

Peter McGregor
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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