

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

297 Westferry Road, Poplar, London, E14 3RS

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's strong leadership is the key to the school's continuing improvement. She has built a strong staff team and governors who are working together to improve teaching and, with it, the progress of all pupils.
- Almost all teaching is good and some is outstanding. This is leading to pupils making good progress and reaching above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils develop enquiring minds because many lessons include practical activities and investigations.
- The Nursery and Reception provide children with an exciting start to their school life. Their independence starts here and develops at pace across the rest of the school.
- The pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils feel extremely safe. This contributes significantly to their good progress and the harmonious atmosphere prevalent in the school.
- All adults show how much they care for the welfare of the pupils. This is reflected in pupils showing great care and concern for others.
- Pupils really enjoy learning through activities they work on with others. This helps them to learn from each other, become increasingly independent and able to follow their own lines of enquiry. They are very comfortable taking risks and learning from their mistakes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to real-life problems.
- Pupils are not always given time to respond to their teacher's marking about how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 10 were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, parents and a member of the governing body. Telephone discussions were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- As there were only nine responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), inspectors took account of a recent survey of parents undertaken by the school and held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Ritchie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is average in size.
- Two-thirds of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is well above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium (which is extra money given to schools for pupils in local authority care, from Forces families and who are known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and a Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school does not provide or have access to any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems and to undertake mathematical investigations.
- Ensure that pupils can improve their work by providing time for them to respond to their teacher's written comments in their marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills lower than expected for their age. They settle in quickly because of the care and support shown by staff. They make rapid progress in all areas of their learning. Their attainment is broadly average by the end of Reception.
- Good progress continues across the rest of the school. Attainment is above average and rising, particularly by Year 2. This gives a firmer platform for teachers to build on at Key Stage 2. Year 6 test results fell slightly in 2012 but remained above average and represented good progress for the pupils.
- Younger pupils make good progress in developing early reading skills through well-taught phonic sessions (linking letters and sounds) and regular opportunities to read to an adult in school or at home. More advanced reading skills develop well across the school and 'reading buddies' from an international bank help those falling behind to catch up.
- Basic skills in mathematics and the accuracy of pupils' calculation develop well. Pupils find a tried and tested method to fall back on that they can repeat with confidence. However, this repetition can be at the expense of solving problems or undertaking mathematical investigations. By contrast, pupils develop refined investigational skills in science following the push in this area over the last year.
- Many children enter the Nursery speaking limited English. The focus on language acquisition starts immediately and continues across the school. By providing many opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas together and providing sessions to develop vocabulary, teachers support their language development very well. Once fluent the attainment of pupils speaking English as an additional language is at least at the same level as others in their class. Pupils from the wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds that are represented in the school achieve as well as other groups in the school.
- The leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is particularly strong and effective. Pupils also make at least good progress because their needs are quickly identified, speedy action taken and its impact checked. Pupils attracting the pupil premium funding make similarly good progress. The gap between their attainment and national expectations is closing rapidly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The headteacher has a clear view of how she wants pupils to learn and how they should become more independent. She has successfully conveyed this to the teachers. Activities are designed so that pupils can investigate and explore ideas together, including selecting resources or using laptop computers for research.
- Teachers have high expectations, particularly that pupils should be able to work on tasks together. Lessons are full of interesting activities that capture and engage the pupils' attention so they rarely lose interest. These features were central to an outstanding science lesson in Year 6 as pupils investigated the properties of materials. The teacher challenged the pupils and they challenged themselves. Pupils came up with their own ideas to explore and were able to describe clearly what they needed to do.
- Teaching is very effective in the Nursery and Reception classes because each child is known as an individual so that provision can be tailored to meet their particular needs. The classroom and outside area are full of exciting activities that attract the children and hold their attention. Teachers and support staff skilfully lead sessions and balance this well with letting the children have a go at developing activities themselves.
- The learning of individuals and groups of pupils benefits considerably from the large group of skilled support staff. They are carefully deployed to support learning in lessons and contribute significantly when leading tailored programmes for individual pupils. This includes support for a

special educational need or when a pupil requires help to catch up with the rest of the class.

- Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not provide enough time for pupils to investigate and explore their ideas, particularly in mathematics.
- Rigorous and frequent marking indicates clearly where pupils have been successful and where they can make improvements. Occasionally, pupils respond to their teacher's suggestions but this is not consistent across all classes because sufficient response time is not always afforded to the pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and have excellent attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the buzz of activity in lessons and rising levels of attendance. Rarely are lessons disturbed, because pupils understand and follow routines and rules and behave in an outstanding fashion in class and around the school.
- Social development begins in the Nursery where children learn how to work together, plan activities themselves, select resources, take turns and clear away. These skills become more refined as pupils move through the school. Learning together and from each other is a major reason for their progress and ability to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils share tasks, discussing their ideas and taking on different roles without fuss.
- Pupils are very kind and happily support each other's learning. Their constructive and often excellent assessment of others' work is received positively and used to bring about improvements. Pupils are extremely polite, courteous and respectful of everyone they come into contact with. Incidents of poor behaviour, bullying or racism are very rare. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and are adamant that should any bullying occur it would be dealt with swiftly and sensitively.
- Pupils say how very safe they feel in school. This is a view supported by their parents. All of the staff team show how much they value each pupil and give them confidence by praising and celebrating their achievements. This builds their self-esteem. One nice touch is that art work on display around the school includes a picture of the pupil who created it.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's vision for the school is shared by staff because she takes a 'hands-on' approach to planning how learning is organised and checks that her high expectations are being met. Ably supported by the deputy headteacher, she has driven forward improvements to teaching, the pupils' achievement, their behaviour and attendance.
- The headteacher knows the quality of her staff team and where improvements can be made. She is relentless in checking on teaching and its impact including using formal arrangements for managing the performance of teachers to drive teaching quality upwards. Teachers are only rewarded if pupils in their class make good progress.
- All teachers make a major contribution to school improvement. Planning developments jointly in teams brings all staff together and generates considerable consistency of approach. Teachers also benefit by observing expert teaching and then being coached to meet their individual targets.
- The headteacher does all she can to help pupils who might struggle with their learning. Pupil premium funding is carefully targeted to provide additional individual tuition for pupils in both English and mathematics. This is being extended this year with increased funding. Places in clubs and on school trips are also subsidised.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and does not tolerate discrimination. It fosters good relationships with outside agencies, such as a privately run counselling service, and works effectively with parents.
- The school's engagement with the local authority has been appropriately 'light touch'. Further

effective guidance has come from working with the diocesan board and in partnership with other schools in the area.

- Pupils enjoy exciting experiences which the school uses well to promote learning and their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. They contribute to topic planning by asking questions they want answered at the start of each new topic. Teachers plan carefully with guidance from the headteacher to ensure that skills develop from topic to topic and from year to year. Each topic is based on producing writing in a different genre. Pupils also learn about other faiths and customs to give them a greater understanding of the wider world. They learn about festivals of light in different cultures and through art they have found out about the Kingdom of Benin.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a clear picture of the school's strengths through regular formal and informal visits to see pupils at work. It is quite clear about the quality of teaching, pupil achievement and the way the headteacher sets targets for teachers and rewards good performance. Governors have undertaken appropriate training including how to evaluate the school's assessment data so they can compare its performance with other schools. The governing body is closely involved in financial decisions such as the allocation of pupil premium funding. The governing body makes sure that procedures for safeguarding pupils are implemented rigorously.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100951
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	402838

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charlotte Butler
Headteacher	Gail O'Flaherty
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 July 2008
Telephone number	020 7987 2546
Fax number	020 7538 0332
Email address	admin@st-edmunds.towerhamlets.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012