

St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School

Bonner Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 9JY

Inspection dates 28 February–1 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teachers do not always make sure that learning activities are planned well and matched closely to the needs of pupils, especially the more able.
- Marking rarely provides comments that helps pupils to understand how well they have done and how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to assess their own or each other's work so that they know how to reach their targets.
- Teachers often talk too much and so pupils have little time to complete tasks to enable them to make good progress.
- Adults are not deployed effectively to support pupils who require extra support in lessons.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is below average. There is too much inconsistency in how effectively some teachers develop pupils' literacy skills.
- Leaders do not rigorously check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in all subjects to secure improvements.
- Senior leaders and members of the governing body do not systematically analyse and use assessment information on pupils effectively to raise pupils' achievement.
- The high staff turnover over recent years has not helped to sustain the improvements in the past years.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils, and amongst pupils.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness are developed particularly well.
- Pupils feel safe because they are well looked after. They understand how to keep themselves safe from different forms of danger.
- Pupils' attendance has improved from average to above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Seven of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and a senior leader.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books and reviewed teachers' marking of pupils' work. They reviewed the different subjects that pupils learn and how teachers plan lessons.
- Inspectors held several meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body and other leaders, as well as representatives from the local authority. They held discussions with pupils about various aspects of the school and listened to pupils read in Years 2, 3, 4 and 6.
- Inspectors looked closely at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation report and development plan, pupils' achievement information, records relating to the quality of teaching and learning, safeguarding procedures, and attendance and punctuality figures. They visited school assemblies.
- Inspectors took account of responses from 22 staff questionnaires and 64 responses by parents and carers to the online Parent View survey. They met parents and carers at the start of the school day and sought their views about the school.

Inspection team

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Sara Benn	Additional inspector
Veronica Young	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Elizabeth Catholic Primary is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is the additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children of service families, is above average. There are no children of service families.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest group being of African heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average and the proportion at an early stage of speaking English is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Since the previous inspection, a large number of teachers have left the school and new ones, including some with leadership and management responsibilities, have joined.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all subjects and across the school by making sure that:
 - comments to pupils through marking are clear so that they know how well they have done, how to improve their work and have time to respond to them
 - teachers use questioning effectively to help pupils to think deeply about their work and improve on their learning so that they achieve well
 - pupils have opportunities to assess their own and each other's work so that they can learn how to reach expected targets
 - teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to complete tasks so that they acquire skills quickly and make good or better progress
 - adults are deployed effectively to support pupils who require extra support in lessons.
- Raise pupils' achievement in all subjects, especially in writing, by:
 - using assessment information about pupils to plan challenging activities that are closely matched to the learning needs of pupils, so that they make rapid progress
 - developing systematically pupils' writing skills and their understanding of text.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels, by:
 - monitoring lessons rigorously, coaching and challenging teachers to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement
 - developing the skills of all leaders and further enhancing those of governors to analyse and use assessment information to check the progress of pupils effectively and provide appropriate support to raise pupils' achievement
 - making sure that new leaders have developed the skills, knowledge and understanding to perform their roles effectively in driving up standards across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 dipped from well above average to average in English and below average in mathematics in national assessments in 2012. Some groups of pupils underachieve because they are not given enough opportunities to develop and apply their mathematical and literacy skills and to consolidate their understanding of key concepts.
- Teachers do not analyse and use assessment information they have about pupils well enough to set tasks that are at the right level. Consequently, the work set for pupils, especially the more able, is not hard enough for them to make good or better progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action do not make sufficiently rapid progress, especially in writing. This is mainly because adults are not always deployed effectively to support pupils who need help.
- The majority of children arrive at Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. Many children acquire skills quickly by the end of Reception because they are well taught through a variety of independent and adult-led activities. As a result, they make rapid progress and join Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average.
- In Year 1, pupils receive good support which enables them to make good progress. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils were supported well in developing writing skills and rehearsing letters and sounds. The school's current screening assessment shows that pupils, whatever their backgrounds, perform well in phonics (the sounds that letters make). By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average.
- In the current Year 5, many pupils are, however, making slower progress in mathematics and writing. This is mainly because, until recently, pupils' writing and calculation and problem-solving skills were not developed well enough.
- There are different one-to-one support sessions for different groups of pupils to improve their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills. The school's current information about pupils' progress shows that many pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in mathematics but those supported by the pupil premium are making slower progress in all subjects because they are at least two terms behind other pupils in the school. The information available shows that gaps in average points scores between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and all pupils nationally remains wide in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Although pupils read different books regularly in guided-reading sessions and at home, some lack strategies for reading fluently. This is because there are inconsistencies in how effectively teachers develop pupils' literacy skills. Consequently, pupils' attainment in writing is below national averages. The one-to-one support sessions for pupils who are in the early stages of speaking English as an additional language has, however, helped to improve pupils' reading skills and abilities.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are some weaknesses in the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the school. There are inconsistencies in what teachers expect pupils to achieve in lessons. Particularly, planning does not always set learning activities at the right level for pupils of different abilities, especially the more able.
- When teachers are explaining concepts to pupils, they sometimes talk too much and this prevents pupils from having sufficient time to think about what is being learnt, and complete tasks on their own or in groups so that they make rapid progress in lessons.
- Teachers do not mark pupils' work regularly. When pupils' work is marked, teachers do not always provide comments that inform pupils of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to comments from marking, so that they improve their learning and make better progress.

- Pupils are not given sufficient time to assess their own or each other's work so that they learn from each other and improve their work in order to make rapid progress to reach their targets.
- Adults are often not deployed effectively in lessons to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, the one-to-one support sessions effectively support pupils, especially those who are at the early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language, and they achieve well.
- Teachers create a positive environment for learning, and relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers listen to pupils but they do not use questioning effectively to help pupils to think deeply and to adjust tasks to help pupils to improve their learning and achieve well.
- Teaching is effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage and helps children to become confident learners, acquire skills quickly and make good progress. In Year 1, teachers choose appropriate learning resources to demonstrate activities well and create opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning.
- For example, in a good Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher used fun and imagination to engage pupils in using positional language to describe directions. As a result, pupils were fully engaged, completed tasks and achieved well.
- However, in some lessons at Key Stage 2, teachers are not always as successful in creating opportunities for pupils to take a leading role in their learning and to think more deeply to widen their knowledge and understanding of key concepts, especially in literacy.
- Teachers set homework in different subjects regularly. This encourages pupils to find things out for themselves. However, the tasks set are not always assessed to show pupils what they have done well and how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are keen to learn even when teaching is dull.
- Pupils are courteous to each other and to adults. They respond positively to teachers. They show that they are polite by listening to each other's views. Pupils accept and celebrate the differences amongst them. They play sensibly during playtime and are considerate of each other's needs.
- Staff, pupils, and parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey and those who spoke to inspectors indicated that the school deals effectively with the small number of incidents of bullying.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils have been taught effectively about safety and how to keep themselves from danger as part of the school's personal, social, health and cultural education programme.
- Pupils feel valued and they say that school leaders listen to their views. Pupils say that the school's reward system encourages them to try their best even when they are not well supported.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now above average because the school works effectively with parents and carers.
- Pupils cherish the opportunities to take up responsibilities to develop their social and academic skills. They say that roles such as monitors and school councillors build their confidence.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because of the high turnover of experienced leaders. This has not helped to sustain the improvements of past years. Teachers are not supported and challenged enough to improve their teaching skills in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- School leaders are clear about what needs to improve and these areas have been identified in

the school's improvement plan. However, some lack the experience to perform their roles effectively in driving up standards across the school.

- Although leaders are focused on improving the quality of teaching, their efforts have not been rigorous enough to see that pupils acquire skills and knowledge quickly to help them to make rapid and sustained progress.
- Teachers and other staff are set targets focused on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Staff progress through the pay scale only when the targets are achieved. All targets are reviewed and staff are expected to receive appropriate training to address weaknesses in their performance. However, a large number of staff indicated that the school does not always meet their professional development needs.
- The school makes sure that pupils develop their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills in different subjects. However, leaders have not analysed and used assessment information on pupils to raise pupils' achievement sufficiently well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed particularly well across the school through assemblies and other extended activities. The activities have helped pupils to accept and celebrate differences. There are a wide range of after-school activities and these are effectively planned to widen and enhance pupils' social and academic experiences.
- The school engages with parents and carers through a raft of activities. The school's parent-support partner offers several training sessions for parents and carers to acquire skills that help them to support their children's education. The school communicates effectively with parents and carers through newsletters.
- Although the school is committed to equality of opportunity, its efforts have not fully addressed underachievement amongst pupils who have special educational needs and are supported through school action. The school is focused fully on removing any kind of discrimination.
- The local authority has supported the school's leaders to plan and improve on the quality of teaching and raise achievement in mathematics. The school receives support to check the accuracy of its assessment information.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have received training to understand school performance and improvement so that they are beginning to be able to support and challenge school leaders. Governors have not challenged underperformance robustly enough in the past but are now challenging the headteacher effectively to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement. They check the school's self-evaluation and the development plans to see that they are robust enough and focused on driving up standards. Governors visit the school regularly to check specific aspects of its work in order to challenge underperformance and secure improvement. They review the performance management procedures and make sure pay progression is closely linked to the 'Teachers' Standards'. Governors allocate the pupil premium funding for one-to-one support for pupils who require extra help with their learning. Governors check the impact of the use of additional funding and they know that it is helping to raise the achievement of eligible pupils. All governors have received training in safeguarding, particularly safer recruitment and child protection. They have made sure that all staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

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	133288
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	403648

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	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Timothy O’Sullivan
Headteacher	David Purcell
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 January 2009
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