

St Dominic's Catholic Primary School

Ballance Road, Hackney, London, E9 5SR

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have worked together with a common goal to secure improvements across the school.
- Pupils achieve well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well cared for and learn well.
- Teaching has improved and is now at least good because of rigorous checks made to make sure that pupils are motivated by and enjoy their learning.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning accurately and provide detailed feedback on what pupils have to do to improve. Pupils have good opportunities to respond to teachers' comments.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because teachers' expectations are clear. Pupils relate well to adults and with each other. They feel safe and thrive at school.
- Pupils' enjoy coming to school and their attendance is well above average because the school works well with parents and carers to ensure their children attend school regularly.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and closely linked to plans for making improvements which focus on the right areas that need to be improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a few lessons where the learning activities are not closely matched to the needs of all pupils, especially the more-able pupils.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is lower than in reading and writing because they do not always have regular opportunities to use their calculation and problem-solving skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Twelve lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work on the walls, listened to pupils reading and looked at teachers' marking of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held several meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and senior and middle leaders. Meetings were also held with a group of teachers and a group of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes was observed.
- Inspectors looked closely at a number of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and monitoring records relating to the quality of teaching and learning. They looked at other records including students' achievement over the past three years, governing body minutes, safeguarding records, attendance figures and records of students' behaviour.
- Since there were no responses from parents or carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View), inspectors took account of the findings of the school's own parent and carer survey.

Inspection team

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Dominic's is much larger than the average sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The highest proportion of pupils comes from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, the additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action because they need extra support is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Since the previous inspection, a large number of teachers have left the school and new ones have joined.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure that a greater proportion is outstanding by:
 - matching learning activities in lessons to the needs of all pupils, especially the more able
 - providing pupils with more opportunities for extended writing in different subjects
 - ensuring teachers talk less in lessons and provide more opportunities for pupils to work by themselves.
- Raise achievement in mathematics across the school so that more pupils make rapid progress by:
 - encouraging pupils to use suitable mathematical strategies to tackle demanding calculations and more challenging questions
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills that are below expectations for their age with specific weaknesses in their social development. Teachers provide outstanding care and support for all children through daily structured reading, writing and speaking using phonics (the sounds that letters make) and other practical activities so that they make good progress by the time they join Year 1.
- In Years 1 and 2, good teaching helps pupils to making good progress in their basic skills so that their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 has risen from below average to broadly average.
- The attainment on entry for the current Years 5 and 6 was below expectations but these pupils are on course to attain average standards in reading, above average standards in writing, but below average attainment in mathematics. Many of the pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making very good progress and are currently on course to exceed the levels expected for their age.
- Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 has been raised over the last three years because of the school's efforts to further develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils achieve Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher Levels 5 and 6 are increasing each year because of the opportunities provided for pupils to apply their basic skills in different subjects.
- Efforts to address underachievement through one-to-one reading support and number-count programmes have helped to address gaps in some pupils' prior knowledge and skills. As a result, all groups of pupils, including pupils from different minority ethnic groups, those who speak English as additional language, those supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well. The quality of work produced by pupils confirms that they make good progress. The school ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Well-planned activities for developing pupils' writing and oral communication skills have helped pupils to express their views well and weaknesses in writing have been addressed. Pupils use different vocabulary very well in different subjects. However, opportunities for extended writing in different subjects are not as numerous.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are well structured so that teachers are able to engage pupils in their own learning through effective questioning that helps them to reflect on their learning. Almost always, pupils respond and participate well in lessons with enthusiasm. Classroom environments are stimulating and help pupils to achieve well.
- In a well-planned and outstanding Year 2 mathematics lesson, very high teacher expectations and a high level of challenge helped pupils to think and use their skills to complete tasks well. All pupils made excellent progress because the class was extremely well managed and there was effective support from other adults.
- In most lessons, teachers skilfully ask questions to check on pupils' understanding and provide them with suitable support so that they are able to improve their work. Teachers continuously observe pupils' at work in lessons and, where necessary, reshape the activities to meet the learning needs of pupils so that they achieve well.
- Teachers use many different teaching strategies to make lessons fun and interesting so that pupils can remain engaged and make good progress. Teachers often give pupils the opportunity to learn on their own rather than continually direct their learning. They use a range of resources highly effectively to make sure that pupils have maximum opportunities for learning.

- The frequent opportunities provided across the subjects and the support given to pupils who speak English as an additional language help them to acquire reading, writing and mathematics skills quickly. Homework club sessions held in school are used to help pupils who have particular difficulties with their learning so that they achieve well.
- The school uses rigorous procedures to check on teachers' performance that are closely linked to the Teachers' Standards (the level of teachers' performance required by the government) to ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good. Although most lessons are good there are some inconsistencies in the level of challenge provided for more-able pupils.
- Effective management of pupils' behaviour, which involves rewards for responding positively to teachers' instructions, ensures that lessons proceed smoothly without interruption. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils so that teaching supports pupils' learning in a thriving and purposeful environment.
- In a minority of lessons, some activities are not well matched to pupils' different needs and the pace of the learning slows. This happens when teachers talk for too long with pupils sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher. On these occasions, pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning sometimes lead to a loss of concentration and limit the time available for pupils to work by themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and in the playground is good. Pupils show a positive attitude to learning and they respond well to each other and adults. Pupils are polite as shown, for example, by the confident way in which they speak to visitors. There is a generally positive ethos in the school and pupils demonstrate good manners.
- Pupils fully understand and respond well to the clear expectations about the way they should behave. Teachers and other adults consistently apply suitable rewards and sanctions to ensure that behaviour reaches high standards. The vast majority of parents and carers and pupils told inspectors that behaviour is good in the school.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying including cyber-bullying. They indicate that bullying such as name-calling is rare and that when incidents happen teachers and other adults deal with them quickly and fairly. Pupils say that they feel safe and are happy at school because they are well cared for by teachers.
- Pupils, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are adamant that they receive good pastoral support so that they improve on their behaviour. A scrutiny of the school's behaviour logs shows that all kinds of behavioural incidents are effectively managed.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now above average. All pupils are punctual to school and lessons because the school has worked very well with parents and carers to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully worked with senior leaders to challenge and support teachers to raise pupils' achievement. One teacher commented, 'My voice is listened to and I feel supported.' The support provided to teachers to further develop their teaching skills has ensured that the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- The school has accurately and rigorously evaluated its performance and plans for further improvement are precise, with clear success criteria and lines of accountability. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and has already identified and begun to address weaknesses in order to provide an even better education for its pupils.
- The school collects and uses information on all pupils to track their progress and check that the teaching they receive supports pupils' learning. The consistent monitoring of teachers' performance through lesson observations has helped to eradicate inadequate teaching. The improvements in teaching have helped to address any underachievement.

- The school operates an effective equal opportunities policy that tracks pupils' progress to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well. Senior leaders hold teachers to account for any underachievement and tackle any inconsistencies within and between groups through closely tailored support in class and intervention sessions so that all groups of pupils achieve as well as their peers.
 - The school creates opportunities for pupils to discuss national and international events that deepen their moral understanding. There is a wide range of extra activities such as sports, music and arts which widen pupils' learning experiences. These activities make a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The school works closely with representatives from the local authority to collect and make good use of data on pupils to improve the quality of teaching and their learning. The partnership with the local authority has helped the school to creatively revise the subjects so that pupils can develop even better writing, reading and communication skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements, including child protection procedures, fully meet the statutory requirements. They effectively monitor the school's work through visits to lessons, and participation in staff recruitment processes. Each governor has 'adopted' a class which they visit to ensure that the quality of teaching has improved. Governors ask challenging questions to ensure that the school's plans can bring about further improvements. Governors scrutinise teachers' performance to ensure that their teaching and other work is good before they approve any pay increases. The governing body has used the pupil premium funding well, for example, in recruiting additional staff to give one-to-one tuition in reading, writing and mathematics to those pupils who require extra support.
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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	133669
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	406543

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	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Wayne Brennan
Headteacher	Ms Deirdre Finan
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2010
Telephone number	020 8985 0995
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