

St John the Baptist Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Cron dall Street, London, N1 6JG

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Their progress in English and mathematics is quickening and standards are rising rapidly by the end of Year 6.
- The school is exceptionally well led by the head of school, who, together with governors, has brought about significant improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and pupils have many opportunities to discuss their work and share ideas with each other.
- A particular strength is the high quality of marking and the way pupils are involved in responding to teachers' comments.
- Pupils are keen to learn and their outstanding behaviour contributes well to their progress in lessons and the excellent relationships across the school.
- Parents and carers say the school has greatly improved in recent years. This is a welcoming school and their children enjoy learning and are happy and safe.
- The strong leadership of the five schools in the federation ensures that training and good practice in teaching, particularly for newly qualified teachers, are shared and developed across all the schools. St John the Baptist takes a leading role in aspects of this.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Too few pupils are yet making rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always plan tasks, resources and activities that allow pupils to work independently, particularly for writing.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use their good skills in mathematics and English across other subjects.
- Parents and carers are not helped enough to become involved in supporting their children's education at home.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, visiting 22 part lessons and observed most teachers.
- Discussions were held with the head of school and the executive principal of the federation, as well as with other leaders and managers, members of the governing body, an officer from the local authority, a diocesan representative and pupils.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents, including the school’s website, the self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding arrangements and work in children’s books. They also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers at the beginning of the school day, as well as those of the 24 parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. A number reported finding it difficult to use the technology to complete the questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jennifer Barker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kewal Goel

Additional Inspector

Clementina Olufunke Aina

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is part of a federation of five schools, each with its own head of school and governing body committee, which has an overall executive principal and governing body.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which provides additional resources for children looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is well above average. There are no children who come from service families in the school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above the national average, as is the proportion at school action plus or with 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that all pupils make rapid progress in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring teachers use the information they have about pupils to provide activities and resources that challenge them to work independently, especially in writing
 - giving pupils opportunities to apply their good mathematical and English skills across the curriculum.
- Engage more effectively with parents and carers and show them how to support their children's education at home, including by using technology.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils enter school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and knowledge in all areas below national expectations. They then make good progress through the school to reach standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that are broadly in line and sometimes above national expectations in mathematics and English.
- All groups of pupils, including those from ethnic minorities and those who speak English as an additional language, make the same good progress. However, too few pupils are yet making rapid progress, particularly in writing.
- Additional funding for pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium supports a range of strategies to promote pupils' basic skills. As a result, these pupils' achievement in mathematics is in line with that of other pupils nationally and above it in English.
- Good provision and positive adult engagement in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children who start school with weaknesses in their personal and social education and in communication and literacy, make good progress and learn to cooperate well with each other. The development of phonics (the letters that sounds make) contributes well to the development of children's reading and writing.
- Literacy is taught systematically across the school and this ensures that pupils' reading is developing particularly well. By the end of Key Stage 2, nearly all pupils read fluently and with expression and are able to work out unknown words by using their phonics skills. However, older and more-able readers continue for too long with structured reading and there are not enough opportunities for them to read more widely in a range of subjects or to discuss their reading with each other.
- The school knows that pupils do not do so well in writing and new opportunities for pupils to extend their writing have meant that their progress is accelerating. However, there are still not enough planned opportunities for writing across the curriculum, especially for the higher-attaining pupils.
- A range of additional support and close working with outside agencies ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. However, in lessons teachers do not always plan additional resources and adapt tasks so that they can work independently.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers structure lessons well and ensure a good pace through effective questioning and a focus on paired discussion. From the time pupils enter the school, teachers work hard to develop their language and grammar.
- Good visual presentations engage and interest pupils. For instance, a discussion about aspects of a character in a book was enhanced by a video clip which introduced a range of words that described the character and helped the teacher explore the use of similes.
- Teaching is not outstanding as teachers do not always plan lessons using the good assessment information available. This means that tasks, resources and activities do not fully support pupils from their starting points, extend their skills and challenge them to investigate and explore ideas for themselves.
- Marking is highly effective in ensuring pupils make good progress. Books are regularly marked and pupils have opportunities to comment and reflect on their own and each other's work, for instance in working out sums in mathematics. They also have time to respond to teachers' comments, practise their spelling and improve their writing. However, sometimes pupils do not quite know what they need to do next and misconceptions are not always followed up.
- Teachers plan and use support staff well in lessons and this good teamwork helps all pupils to learn. Support staff have good subject knowledge and use questioning skilfully to guide pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their engagement in and contributions to lessons are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons, appreciate the good teaching and know that they are progressing well. This enthusiasm is demonstrated by pupils' above-average attendance.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and know that their children enjoy their experience and that their behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils have a very high regard for the behaviour policy and were very keen to show inspectors the systematic way rewards and sanctions are carried out, which they see as very fair and non-discriminatory. The very small number of pupils with challenging behaviour are supported well by a range of internal strategies and by the involvement of parents and carers and outside agencies. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions in the last two years.
- Pupils are courteous and polite and work and play exceptionally well together across their diverse cultures. Bullying and racist incidents are very rare and pupils trust staff to follow up if they have any concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and about the dangers of cyber-bullying and what to be careful of when they go on visits outside the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The dynamic drive and determination of the head of school are helping to develop a good staff team well focused on improving teaching. As a result, standards are rising rapidly.
- The challenge and leadership of the executive principal and the way that schools in the federation work together to develop the skills of staff promote the skills of even the newest teachers. Good practice is shared across a range of schools, with the developing involvement of teacher training institutions across the local authority. The school worked with the federation to develop and implement its exemplary shared teaching and learning policy, including marking.
- Prior to September 2012, the local authority was giving a higher-than-average level of support to the school. This successfully helped to raise pupils' attainment levels and the school now has monitoring visits in line with other schools in the area.
- The continuing cycle of monitoring and evaluation is closely linked to improving teaching. Teachers are set targets related to the progress of pupils and, reflecting the school's commitment to equality of opportunity, there is a focus on groups and planned interventions and support for those falling behind. Teachers are monitored through lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' books and termly meetings, with teachers focused on their targets and professional development.
- The school spends the pupil premium funding on a range of additional resources, including smaller class sizes, additional support staff, individual support programmes and laptop computers. The funding is also used for a range of additional trips, clubs and activities. Consequently eligible pupils achieve in line with their peers.
- Engagement with parents and carers is good, and parents and carers are impressed by the way their children are progressing. Nevertheless, the school could do more to help parents and carers know how to support their children's education at home, and this is an area for development.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced, with particular strengths in science. Information and communication technology is increasingly used in lessons, with pupils having access to multimedia opportunities, including laptops. There are also specific interventions to improve pupils' mental mathematics. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to apply their good skills in reading, writing and mathematics across other subjects.
- The harmonious relationships, pupils' outstanding behaviour and the opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on their work, all promote pupil's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although opportunities are sometimes missed to share the wide-ranging cultural heritage of pupils in the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is greatly enhanced by the joint governing body of the federation of five schools, with representatives who are on both the St John the Baptist's committee and the joint governing body. Governors have an accurate view of the school's performance based on an analysis of data, and are proactive in developing their role through visits closely linked to the school development plan. They recognise the need to do more to involve parents and carers in helping their children at home and have appointed a new governor from the local community. Governors' skills are wide and varied and they bring much expertise to the school, for instance in finance, technology and employment. Financial resources are well managed and linked to the progress of pupils. Governors are clear about the ways in which the pupil premium funding is spent, and know the excellent progress that this group of pupils is making. Governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements through regular visits to the school. They are involved in the performance management of the headteacher and in ensuring that teachers' performance is improving.

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	100266
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	404720

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	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hetti Jackson-Stops
Headteacher	Laura Birkett, Head of School Sian Davies, Executive Principal
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2011
Telephone number	020 7739 4902
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