

St James the Great RC Primary School

Peckham Road, London, SE15 5LP

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Notice to improve	4
	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 school is vibrant and welcoming which encourages pupils to become enthusiastic learners.
- The Nursery and Reception classes give children a good start. Staff know children and families well and plan carefully to meet children's individual needs.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well, particularly in reading. Pupils are doing better than those in similar schools.
- Teaching is good and lessons are well planned. The marking of pupils' work has improved considerably and pupils receive good guidance on what they need to do to improve their performance.
- Pupils who find learning difficult, or who are starting to learn English, are well supported and often make better progress than other pupils.
- Pupils join enthusiastically in activities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and outstanding in some aspects, because of the range of activities and experiences that are provided for them.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are happy and feel safe in school and their attendance is well above average.
- The school has improved significantly under the dynamic leadership of the executive headteacher. She is strongly supported by the leadership team and governors, and they are relentless in their drive to continue the improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and this means that achievement is not outstanding.
- Achievement in writing and mathematics is not yet outstanding and has not improved quite as much as achievement in reading.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons or part lessons, including two joint observations and a series of short visits to classrooms with school staff. They listened to pupils reading, attended assembly and visited the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a range of staff, including senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety, attendance, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as safeguarding documents and other school policies. Questionnaires returned by 20 staff were considered.
- Parental views were sought at the start of the school day and from the school's own records of work with parents. Too few parents had recorded their views through the on-line survey, Parent View, to enable inspectors to take these into consideration.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Jude

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with a Nursery.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is slightly below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. There is, however, considerable variation between year groups.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is additional money provided for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. There are currently no children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language is above average.
- The school manages the on-site breakfast club. It does not manage the after-school club, so it was not included in this inspection. The latest report for the after-school club can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The executive headteacher is new in post since the previous inspection. She has been in post for a year. There have also been some changes to the responsibilities of the leadership team since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that lessons are always well paced and that pupils are always moved on to more challenging work the moment they are ready for it
 - making sure that all teachers accept only the highest standards of handwriting and presentation.
- Raise achievement further in writing and mathematics by:
 - increasing pupils' confidence in writing at length and for a variety of purposes
 - developing pupils' confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge and understanding to problem solving activities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Nursery or Reception classes with skills that are well below the expectations for their age, particularly in speech and language. They leave in Year 6 having made good progress and working at least at the levels expected for their age.
- In the Nursery and Reception, children make good progress in all the areas of learning. Visits to children's homes before they start school help staff to get to know them well and enable the children to settle quickly. Children learn to be independent as well as to share and play well with other children. Although they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by Year 1 they are still below the expectations for their age.
- Children's skills, by the end of Year 1, in phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make) have improved considerably this year. In the Year 2 assessments in 2012, all pupils achieved the standard expected of seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics. This year, the overall results are very similar, although with fewer higher attainers than previously. This is still good progress because these pupils started from a much lower base than the 2012 year group. While progress in all three areas is good, it is better in reading than in writing or mathematics.
- Results in the Year 6 tests in 2012 were in line with the national average in terms of the proportion of children achieving Level 4 or better in both English and mathematics, and almost all pupils made expected progress. Pupils supported by the pupil premium all made at least expected progress and the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing. The gap was the equivalent of about a term in mathematics and slightly more in English.
- Results of the 2013 Year 6 tests are not yet available but the teacher assessments, which have been validated by the local authority, show that this year group has also made at least expected progress and many, including those pupils with special educational needs, have made more than expected progress.
- Standards in mathematics are not quite as good as in reading. About half the pupils in Year 6 are working at the higher Level 5 in reading, compared with about a third in mathematics. Pupils really enjoy the practical aspects of mathematics, for example following the Mathematics Trail around the school, but they are not always confident in applying what they know to solving problems. Teachers are increasing the emphasis on practical mathematics, and progress in this aspect of mathematics is picking up.
- Pupils are now making good progress across the school and they know they are being challenged to do better. As one pupil said of the headteacher, 'She pushes you to your limits.' Leaders know, however, that there are still some variations between classes, but their effective support for teachers is succeeding in reducing the differences and minimising their impact. Pupils with special educational need are often making better progress than other pupils because they receive well-targeted support individually and in small groups, particularly in reading.
- In the school as a whole, pupils read confidently, expressively and with evident enjoyment. This starts from a very young age. Attainment in writing has been below that in reading, but pupils are being given more opportunities to use their writing skills in a range of subjects and this is helping them to improve their standard of work. However, they still have too few opportunities to write at length and for a range of different purposes and this restricts some pupils' confidence.

The quality of teaching is good

- At all stages in the school, teaching is nearly always good and some is outstanding. This much improved quality of teaching is ensuring that, across the school, pupils now make securely good progress.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes staff track children's progress very carefully. They use the information gained to plan activities which develop children's skills in reading, writing and

counting well. For example, the current topic of Minibeasts has stimulated a wide range of writing, drawing, painting and counting activities. Children were fascinated by the different insects and keen to find out as much as they could about them. Younger children were making models of insects and counting the number of legs and spots. The older children in Reception were able to write simple sentences about ladybirds. In all these activities, children's skills have developed well from their starting points.

- Teaching is good, but it is not yet outstanding overall. Where it is outstanding, for example in an English lesson observed in Year 6, the pace and challenge helped pupils to make rapid progress. The teacher's skilful questioning encouraged them to think in depth and extended their understanding of the characters in *War Horse*, and how to write well about the story. In the good lessons observed, teachers knew how well pupils were doing, matched the work well to their needs and planned interesting activities. They were not, though, as skilful at moving pupils on rapidly or in raising the level of challenge as the lesson developed. Very occasionally, teachers do not make full use of the time available and, for example, introductions to lessons last too long so that pupils became restless.
- Pupils enjoy books and can talk about their likes and dislikes. In a good guided reading session in Year 2, the teacher matched the level of challenge and difficulty well to the needs of different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils made good progress in their comprehension as well as their reading accuracy.
- Writing and mathematics are identified by the school as current priorities because attainment in these subjects has been lower than in reading. Teachers are providing more good opportunities for pupils to practise skills in literacy across different subjects. Pupils are being successfully encouraged to use their mathematical skills to solve problems. Such activities are already having a positive impact on the standards, although the school agrees that further work is necessary. Work in books also shows that there is too much variation in the quality of handwriting and presentation because not all teachers insist on the highest standards in these areas.
- The improvement in teachers' assessment and marking has had a major impact on the quality of pupils' work. Teachers and pupils have a real dialogue about pupils' work and marking is now much more focused on key points for improvement. Teachers have access to good reliable data and the information gained from marking and other checks on pupils' progress is now used more consistently to set appropriate work and give pupils clear direction and targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond very positively. The routines used in class and around the school are understood. Pupils know what is expected of them and good behaviour and positive attitudes are typical.
- The good levels of concentration and the productive working atmosphere in classes contribute strongly to pupils' learning and achievement. From the Nursery onwards, children develop good social skills and learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. Pupils conscientiously undertake duties in their classes and older pupils willingly take on wider responsibilities around the school.
- Relationships in the school are good at all levels. Pupils are polite to adults and there are clearly high levels of trust. The very good relationships between adults and pupils help them to feel safe in school and they have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils know that there are adults to whom they can turn if there are problems.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying and of its various forms, such as cyber bullying, and know why it is important to use the internet safely. They say that bullying is rare but, if it happens, they know what to do about it and are confident that it will be dealt with.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has brought about rapid improvement and the school can show real

and secure progress on all of the issues raised in the previous inspection. Building very well on the existing strengths, she has systematically tackled the school's weaknesses. Staff and governors have confidence in her leadership and share her vision.

- The headteacher and leadership team have high aspirations for the school. They are aiming for nothing less than outstanding and are prepared to take tough decisions. Self-evaluation is robust and very accurate and the development plans highlight key objectives needed to move the school forward rapidly. The school has good capacity to continue to improve.
- The introduction of rigorous monitoring of teaching has increased the amount of good or better teaching, and eliminated inadequate teaching. Staff are clear that they are accountable for their pupils' progress and attainment through the performance management systems.
- Making sure that all pupils are treated equally and encouraged to succeed are central to the school's ethos. The pupil premium funding is being used well to provide a variety of additional support and also to give these pupils experiences that raise their aspirations for what they can achieve.
- The breakfast club is well managed and gives the children who attend a good start to the day. As well as having a healthy breakfast, they are encouraged to read and play games. A group of older children, for example, were observed enjoying and learning from the times tables challenge they had initiated.
- Parents are positive about the school. They commented on how quickly their children settle when they start in the Nursery and how much they appreciate the chance to spend some time each day with their children helping them to practise their writing. Other parents also said that it was easy to talk to teachers about any concerns they might have. The school's parent liaison worker works closely to support families experiencing difficulties. Attendance at parents' evenings is high.
- The school effectively meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with some examples of outstanding provision as shown in the respect pupils have for each other's cultures. The ethos of the school and the good curriculum provide a wide range of activities and experiences both in and outside lessons, sometimes in unusual ways such as the cooperation with the local allotment society. These opportunities help pupils to grow into confident young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The local authority provides very good support for the school. Training and support have strengthened the effectiveness of leadership and management and improved the quality of teaching. The local authority has helped the school to improve rapidly and implement secure and sustainable changes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has risen successfully to the challenge of improving the school. The changes the governors have implemented have been carefully thought through. These have brought about rapid improvement but are in no sense 'quick fixes' or short term solutions. Governors have put systems in place which enable them both to support the school and hold the leadership team to account. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and have been prepared to take difficult decisions in relation to staffing. They scrutinise information about pupils' progress and check carefully the impact of action taken to improve teaching. They know how the performance management system is used and its relationship to salaries and promotion. Governors monitor the budget carefully. They have started to check on the effectiveness of the use of the pupil premium funding but are aware that they still have more to do in this area.

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	100825
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	408890

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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Cutting
Headteacher	Janice Babb
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 June 2012
Telephone number	020 7703 5870
Fax number	020 7277 1491
Email address	office@stjamesthegreat.southwark.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 2013

