

CET Primary School Tower Hamlets

The Kirtland Centre, 1–3 Coborn Street, Bow, London, E3 2AB

Inspection dates

11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	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:

- Pupils do not make good progress throughout the school. They do not make rapid enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement because work is not planned at the right level for groups of pupils, especially those who speak English as an additional language and more able pupils.
- Too few children do as well as they should in the Early Years Foundation Stage because adults do not gather or use assessment information effectively.
- School planning and monitoring systems are not fully developed. Consequently school leaders do not know whether all of their actions are improving the school's effectiveness.
- Senior leaders have introduced projects to raise achievement in mathematics, phonics and the curriculum, but it is too early to see an impact of this on improved standards.
- Governors do not carry out enough checks on the school's performance to evaluate how well it is doing.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful to one another.
- School leaders and parents and carers work effectively together to ensure that pupils' well-being and care are a high priority.
- All staff show a strong commitment to the school and work very well together across two sites.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in five lessons; all were joint observations with senior leaders. Brief visits were made to all classes.
- During these observations, the inspector assessed pupils' work, spoke with pupils about their learning, looked at teachers' planning and observed the role of additional adults in lessons.
- The inspector held discussions with senior leaders and members of the governing body.
- School documents and records were scrutinised, including information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning, the school's evidence on how well it is doing and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and spoke with some about their experiences in school. The inspector observed playtimes and she spoke informally with pupils.
- The inspector also spoke informally with parents at the beginning of the day. She considered the 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 17 responses to staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Ann Debono, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- CET Primary School Tower Hamlets, is a much smaller than average-sized infant school. It has Reception and Year 1 classes. Five Year 2 pupils are in a mixed-age Year 1 and Year 2 class.
- It opened as a free school in September 2012 as part of the Constable Education Trust.
- The school occupies two temporary sites. It plans to move to a new site in September 2014.
- The majority of pupils are from Black African, Bangladeshi, other White and other Black backgrounds.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils from service families and those in local authority care) is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Stag Lane Infant and Nursery School, a teaching school in Harrow, has begun support for the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching to consistently good by:
 - ensuring that pupils receive work that improves their learning at a faster pace, especially in mathematics
 - improving the use data about pupils' progress so that teaching is pitched at the right level, particularly for pupils who speak English as an additional language, more able pupils, and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve attendance to at least the national average by engaging more effectively with parents, carers and families of pupils who do not attend regularly enough.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching by paying greater attention to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress when observing lessons and over time
 - improving the school's action plan by including tight timescales for the completion of actions and regularly monitoring pupils' progress
 - making sure that the governing body uses accurate information to hold senior leaders and other staff to account for the rates of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching
 - making sure that leaders and governors obtain and use accurate performance information to measure the school's effectiveness in tackling its priorities for improvement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because it is not consistently good in all classes.
- Many children start school with skills that are typically well below the levels expected for their age. In 2013, outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage were below expected levels in literacy and mathematics because too many children in the Reception class did not make rapid enough progress.
- The progress of children currently in Year 1 requires improvement because many are not catching up quickly enough. Work in books shows that some pupils, especially the more able, are not given harder work, particularly in mathematics.
- The results of the screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make) in 2013, for the five pupils in Year 1 last year, were just below the national average. A new approach to phonics has been introduced in all classes. As a result, pupils' achievement in literacy is now improving at a faster rate as shown by work in pupils' books and learning seen during lesson observations.
- The school's own tracking data show that progress in Year 2 requires improvement. Girls are not achieving as well as they can in mathematics. Year 2 pupils receive weekly support in readiness for their end-of-year national tests.
- The achievement and progress of children in Reception classes require improvement. Staff do not use assessment information effectively to ensure better levels of children's development in key areas, notably literacy, mathematics, understanding of the world and technology.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified quickly. Support in small groups or on a one-to-one basis ensures they make expected progress from their starting points. Their progress in writing is stronger than in mathematics.
- Some pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make better progress than their peers because of the extra support they receive. However, they are approximately a term behind others in attainment in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been good enough over time. None of the teaching is outstanding. Teaching does not ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent even though teachers mark books regularly. Comments to help pupils know what they need to do to improve are infrequent. Too many comments are generous.
- Lesson planning does not always take into account the specific needs or abilities of pupils. Consequently, adults do not have accurate expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, activities are sometimes mismatched or incorrectly pitched which impedes pupils' learning and slows down their progress. For example, in Year 1, after an effective and practical introduction to a new letter sound, all pupils were then given the same page to complete in a workbook. This was at the correct level for some but too easy or too difficult for others.
- The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is underdeveloped. As a result, teachers do not identify and monitor the progress of specific groups of pupils at risk of underachieving, especially those who speak English as an additional language and the more able. For these pupils, teaching is not adapted enough to meet their needs or abilities which slows their learning.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, most adults make sure children undertake a range of activities that help their learning. Teaching in group work is stronger than in whole-class sessions. Children benefit from a new practical approach to mathematics which is well matched to their levels of development.

- Additional adults, known as teaching associates, show initiative when working with children. Sometimes, however, the use of closed questions means that children do not have to think hard enough because a single word answer is often accepted.
- Where teaching is good, pupils are interested in their learning and. For instance, in English, three girls used a tablet computer adeptly to rehearse and then record dialogue based on a piece of their persuasive writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They know what to do if they get stuck on a word. They enjoy visits to the library. They do not read individually to adults in school on a regular basis.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All staff consistently use school routines. Pupils know what is expected during lessons and throughout the day. They quickly respond to instructions because they understand and join in with the actions that signal what they need to do next.
- Pupils behave well around the school. At lunchtime for example, they play together amicably using the equipment they requested through the school council.
- Pupils say bullying is rare but they know who to tell if something untoward occurs. They are less certain about e-safety. Scrutiny of incident records shows that the pupils' view that poor behaviour will be dealt with fairly is correct.
- School records also indicate that vulnerable pupils with poor behaviour are managed sensitively. The school's work with parents, carers and external agencies has reduced dramatically poor behaviour. The inspector did not see any disruption to lessons during the inspection.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. This work has a high profile due to the temporary nature of the school buildings. Staff are especially vigilant about safety. All equipment, furniture and display boards for the classrooms in the halls are portable. These resources are packed away and reinstated on a daily basis because of the shared use of the premises. Risk assessments for this practice are thorough.
- Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is low. Senior leaders are working closely with the local authority to reduce absenteeism. A significant decrease in absence by pupils who have the most erratic attendance has been successful as a result of this robust monitoring approach.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not done enough to secure good teaching and achievement.
- As a small school, leadership responsibility rests with the executive headteacher and deputy headteacher. Most teachers are inexperienced and they are not able to lead key strategic areas. This limits the school's capacity to improve as rapidly as it should.
- The school has been unable to recruit experienced leaders. Governors have recruited graduate teaching associates who demonstrate leadership potential.
- The special educational needs coordinator is developing systems to identify and monitor the effectiveness of support for underperforming pupils. It is too early to see an impact of this work on better achievement of these pupils.
- Lesson observations and work scrutiny do not focus strongly enough on the learning and progress of groups of pupils. As a result, leaders are over-generous in evaluating the quality of teaching. Intensive mentoring for teachers has been a priority for the deputy headteacher. This has been effective, as most have improved their practice as a result.
- School action planning requires improvement. Timescales for actions to be completed are not urgent enough. There is insufficient focus on monitoring and evaluating the school's

performance in a systematic way, or enough focus on improving the rates of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.

- Parents, staff and pupils comment favourably on ethos of the school and the respect for different cultures and languages. One parent or carer captured this well, in saying that, 'The fabric of the school is positive. It is a caring family where all are welcomed and helped'. Other parents spontaneously agreed. The inspection findings support these views.
 - There are appropriate systems in place to manage the performance of staff. Records show a match between objectives for teachers' performance and the school's current priorities.
 - All staff responded to the questionnaire. They were unanimously positive about the leadership and management of the school.
 - The curriculum provides a good range of subjects and projects for pupils to research. It is enriched further by extra-curricular activities such as photography, cello and African drumming.
 - Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils show good attitudes to one another. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. The new school council has led initiatives for recycling and welcoming new pupils to school. The curriculum uses the resource of 'London as a Classroom'. Year 1 pupils won a national prize for a short film they directed and performed in about their local area.
 - Primary sports funding is used to enrich the sports curriculum with additional activities including yoga and ballet. Key Stage 1 pupils receive weekly swimming lessons. They all participate and most can now swim a short distance.
 - Safeguarding procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a strong commitment to the school and they expect the school to be outstanding quickly. However, they do not carry out enough checks for themselves on its progress to secure this longer-term objective. The school improvement plan is nominally monitored by governors, but they do not function strategically or swiftly enough on performance information generated by the school or externally.
 - Governors understand how pupil premium funding is being used. However, systems to monitor pupils' achievement are underdeveloped. As a result, governors are not clear enough about the impact of the school's provision and resources upon improving standards for all groups of pupils.
 - Governors are committed to the future development of the school and have a high profile in planning the building expansion projects. Governors ensure that safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
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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	138276
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	425457

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Simmons
Headteacher	Helen O'Donoghue
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 7170 4014
Email address	towerhamlets@cetps.org.uk

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