

English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School

Flint Street, London, SE17 1QD

Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

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		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Changes staffing over the past two years have been challenging and time consuming. Many improvements which current leaders, including governors, have made, are at relatively early stages and have not yet had sufficient impact on teaching or achievement.
- Achievement requires improvement. Progress in writing is far slower than in most other schools and attainment has been lower than the national average for the past three years.
- There is not enough good or better teaching to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils sometimes find that the work is either too hard or too easy for them and their misunderstandings are not always picked up quickly.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because pupils are not always attentive. Policies are not always followed when dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour.
- Adequate systems are in place to keep pupils safe, but record keeping requires improvement in order to keep a closer check on behaviour and make improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the school. Their well-considered actions are starting to have a positive impact on improving performance, especially in reading, which is now good.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is positive. Spirituality and prayer are central to the school.
- The school environment is orderly and well kept. Attractive displays of pupils' work celebrate and inspire positive attitudes towards learning.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are friendly, helpful and courteous. Parents and carers are positive about their children's learning. Relationships are supportive among pupils and staff and rates of attendance are better than in most other schools.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 25 lessons or part-lessons were observed. Two of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited all the classes and observed all 18 class teachers. Most of these shorter visits were with a senior leader. Discussions were held with pupils, governors, a representative from the local authority, a representative from the diocese, senior leaders and staff.
- Inspectors received the views of parents and carers through 22 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff, through the 34 responses to the Ofsted inspection questionnaire and discussions.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s information on pupils’ current progress, pupils’ work, school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, checks on the quality of teaching and pupils’ achievement, local authority reports, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional inspector
Mark Wilson	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is bigger than most primary schools. It is based on two sites.
- There have been several changes in staff and senior leaders over the past two years. The headteacher was appointed less than a year and a half ago. The deputy headteacher and inclusion manager joined the school in August 2013. Over this time, six teachers have had maternity leave and three new teachers have filled other vacancies.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Almost three quarters have Black African heritage. The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. A small proportion of these are at early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, supported at the level of school action, is lower than in most other schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who are supported at the level of school action plus or have statements, is higher than in most other schools. Some of these have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for additional pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional funding provided in this case for looked-after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement by making sure that:
 - work for all pupils is suitably challenging
 - pupils' misunderstandings and errors in their work are identified and dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Improve behaviour by making sure that:
 - all pupils are interested and engaged in their work
 - the behaviour policy and advice from leaders and other professionals are fully implemented.
- Improve the way leaders and managers keep records such as behaviour logs and risk assessments, so that they can be used effectively to check patterns of behaviour and pupils' safety to drive further improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress of almost all groups of pupils in writing, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language, has been much slower than in most other schools.
- Attainment in writing has also been far lower than the national average for the past three years. Until recently, standards have not risen sufficiently well because teaching has been weak and pupils have not had enough opportunities to learn about or use a wide range of different writing in their work.
- There are times when pupils' work is either too hard or too easy and their mistakes are not picked up sufficiently quickly. For example, some Year 1 pupils did not understand a multiplication task and continued to make mistakes because these were not noticed and corrected quickly.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Children benefit from the wide range of well-planned activities that are available but staff are not always sufficiently well focused to help them all achieve well. For example, progress in writing is slower than it should be because the way children form their letters is not corrected as quickly as it should be.
- The school puts equal opportunities at the heart of its work; there is no discrimination.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding achieve the same as, and sometimes better than, other pupils in their class. At the end of Year 6 in 2013 their attainment was in line with other pupils' in reading, writing and mathematics. However, their achievement requires improvement because, along with others, some progress has been too slow.
- The achievement of more able pupils requires improvement because some tasks are too easy. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils working at Levels 5 and 6 were given a calculation which was too easy and consequently did not help them progress.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, requires improvement. Although some of these pupils progress well because they settle and are supported effectively by well-trained support workers, some tasks are too difficult and some misunderstandings are not addressed effectively.
- There has been a steady improvement in standards attained by pupils in mathematics at the end of Year 6. Opportunities for learning in mathematics and especially writing have improved over the last six months with recent improvements in teaching, but it is too early to see the full impact of this on raising pupils' achievement.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The proportion of pupils who did well in the phonics check for six-year-olds, rose dramatically from 22% in 2012 to 75% in 2013. This latter proportion is better than in most other schools. Pupils enjoy and are inspired by attractive reading areas in all classrooms. They read widely and often for pleasure and information.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not helped pupils achieve well enough over time, especially in writing. Teachers' understanding of writing, and opportunities for learning, have not been good enough to help pupils progress well. These areas are being addressed through training and external advice, and consequently achievement is now rising.
- Errors in writing sentences or forming letters are not always noticed or corrected. This means that pupils repeat their mistakes rather than learn from them and this limits their progress and achievement.
- Although checks on pupils' learning have improved since the previous inspection, checks are still not careful enough to ensure that activities are suitably challenging for all pupils. For example,

the progress of some more able pupils in a Year 3 English class was limited because too much time was spent going over things these pupils already knew and not enough time was left for them to practise and develop their skills.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because adults do not use their time sufficiently well to help all children progress. They plan and prepare a wide range of suitable activities for children but do not always focus their input carefully to ensure children's learning moves on.
- Teaching assistants are well organised to help those who need support. This support is vital as activities are sometimes too difficult for less able pupils, including some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Reading is taught well. Younger children are taught daily in ability-based groups and pupils throughout the school read frequently in a range of subjects throughout the day.
- Marking has improved since the previous inspection. It is generally up to date and helpful, asking pupils to develop their work as well as showing them how they can improve.
- Parents and carers are engaged well in pupils' learning. There is a high turn-out at parents' evenings, where teachers discuss pupils' achievements and offer workshops about how to help pupils' learning at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A few pupils lose interest and 'day dream' in class because activities are sometimes too easy or difficult. In a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 1, less able pupils lost interest in a mathematical problem because it was too difficult for them.
- The behaviour of a small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties does not improve quickly enough because staff do not follow the school's policies or advice sufficiently well. Pupils report that learning is sometimes disrupted by the behaviour of a few.
- There is marked improvement in the behaviour of most pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils who found it difficult to settle now spend more time learning in class or with a support assistant and calm more quickly if they are frustrated or anxious.
- Most pupils behave well in and out of class. They are friendly, courteous and helpful. They eagerly help staff and each other, as well as respond immediately to teachers' requests.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. They develop pride in their school and work through praise from staff and certificates for achievement, behaviour and positive, helpful attitudes.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is positive. Pupils learn about a range of cultures and faiths, often visit theatres and galleries, get on well together and have a clear sense of right and wrong.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Although pupils are safe because staff discuss procedures and because adequate systems are in place, record keeping requires improvement. Behaviour logs and risk assessments are not recorded sufficiently well, and this limits the extent to which leaders can check for patterns and make improvements.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber, physical and verbal. They feel safe because these incidents are rare and dealt with well and because they know that friends and adults will help them whenever they need it.
- Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the parent survey were positive about behaviour and safety. The vast majority of staff who expressed their views during the inspection were also positive about safety, but about a quarter of these expressed some concerns about behaviour.

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because much of their effective work is at relatively early stages. Strategic decisions and actions are beginning to show a positive impact on aspects of teaching and achievement, which are now developing well.
- The roles of other leaders, including subject leaders, have developed since the previous inspection. However, some of these middle leaders are new to their roles and the impact of some work is at relatively early stages.
- Requirements for safeguarding are met and effective systems are in place. However, written records, especially those on behaviour and risk assessments, require improvement. This is because their detail and rigour are limited, reducing the way leaders can check, analyse and use them to make further improvements.
- The headteacher is resilient and determined. She has changed the culture of leadership in the school, extended and strengthened aspects of the leadership team and drawn upon the advice and expertise of other schools and professionals. This is now beginning to have a positive impact on aspects of teaching and achievement, especially in writing.
- Senior and middle leaders are developing teaching. They observe classes and check planning, as well as pupils' work. Their findings, confirmed during the inspection, are that teaching is improving. A greater proportion of current teaching is effective and inadequacies are being eradicated. This is beginning to impact on achievement, and current assessments are far more positive than before.
- Until recently, some opportunities for learning were too narrow and impeded achievement, particularly in writing. Leaders have extended what pupils learn and subjects are now becoming richer and more effective. Opportunities in class are extended through clubs and visits to church, theatres and art galleries. These help enjoyment, achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Primary sports funding is used well to widen opportunities for sport and to develop staff skills alongside specialist sports coaches. Pupils' fitness, health and skills are improved as more sports are taught in lessons and classes offered such as 'Active Me', specifically for pupils who need further help with health and well-being.
- Good support by officers from the local authority is helping the school to improve and develop effectively. Through joint observations they have helped leaders identify and address some weaknesses in teaching and helped establish helpful links with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors challenge the school and take a central role in school development, celebrating improvements as well as identifying and tackling any underperformance. They are well trained and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including those in teaching and achievement.
 - They meet all their statutory duties for safeguarding as they check recruitment procedures, have frequent discussions about systems with staff and see summary documents. However, they do not always check the detail and rigour of all records.
 - They manage finances well and allocate funds to ensure that the buildings are maintained, attractive and suitable. They know how pupil premium and primary sports funding are used and the positive impact these have on pupils. They understand about the management of teachers' performance and how it must be used to improve the quality of teaching if pay rises are to be awarded.

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	100824
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	431308

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Gillespie
Headteacher	Hyacinth Appah
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2009
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