

The Clara Grant Primary School

Knapp Road, London, E3 4BU

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 make good progress because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupil’s behaviour is outstanding and they feel very safe. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes and are very keen to learn.
- The headteacher’s persistent and skilful leadership has maintained much of the best practice from the last inspection.
- Consistent and effective day-to-day running of the school create a very positive climate.
- Improvements in the teaching of writing, and the way the school promotes pupils’ English language skills are extremely well led. The impact of this work is very clear in lessons and in pupils’ books.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children make excellent progress.
- There are clear systems for checking pupils’ progress so that the right support is given at the right time.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not check that pupils have acted on their guidance to improve their work.
- The new middle leadership team is developing its role well but more time is needed for its actions to impact fully on pupils’ achievements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons or part lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons, observed teaching of reading, listened to pupils read and attended assemblies and after-school clubs.
- They held discussions with the headteacher and other senior leaders, subject leaders, pupils and governors. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school improvement plan, information on pupils' current progress, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' work and looked in their exercise books.
- The inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, received two calls from parents and analysed 47 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gill Walley	Additional Inspector
Clementina Olufunke Aina	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Clara Grant is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A little less than three quarters of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is higher than found nationally. This is additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are in care. In this school, it applies to pupils eligible for free school meals
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below the national average.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils do not speak English as their first language.
- Pupils are mainly from Bangladeshi backgrounds, with a small proportion from African and British heritages.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has experienced a significant turnover of staff in the last two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching so that it raises the achievement of all groups of pupils by:
 - checking that pupils act on teachers' comments in their marking and written feedback and are given time to make the improvements to their work
 - ensuring that subject leaders continue to develop their role in improving teaching and learning in their subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin school with language skills that are significantly below those expected for their age and social skills that are well below. However, by the time they move into Year 1, children have made outstanding progress to reach the levels expected for their age, although some still find English difficult.
- As pupils move through the school, they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This has not always been the case in the recent past. Currently, the high quality teaching of reading, an emphasis on writing and accurate checks on pupils' progress have improved achievement. This includes the progress of all groups of pupils, the majority of whom speak English as an additional language.
- In the 2013 Year 6 tests, pupils' achievements in writing were below expectations. Senior leaders introduced a wide range of strategies to improve writing and these are having the desired impact. Evidence from pupils' work shows progress in writing across the school is now good. Many Year 6 pupils are already exceeding the levels reached at the same time last year.
- There were some notable successes in the 2013 tests. The proportion of pupils making good progress in the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests was significantly above average. This is reflected in the work seen by inspectors in pupils' books and shows that these high standards are being maintained.
- The attainment of pupils supported by additional funding is a little above that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics but not in writing, where it is lower. However, the school is using the funding well to provide a wide range of extra support for pupils. This includes learning mentors, a speech therapist and a breakfast club as well as music and support for families. The evidence shows that the gap between these pupils and their peers is narrowing as a result.
- The additional funding for physical education is used well and pupils enjoy the wide range of sports activities it helps to provide. For example, pupils attend swimming classes at the local sports centre and the results of a first fitness test have been recorded to provide a baseline for measuring improvement. Lunchtime and after-school sports activities are well attended.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, as do the most and least able. This is because the school's systems for checking pupils' progress help teachers give well-matched support.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is over time is typically good. Staffing issues last year had an adverse impact on pupil outcomes in 2013. However, leaders tackled the identified weaknesses successfully. As a result, the teaching of writing has improved significantly and is now good across the school.
- Reading and mathematics are also taught well. The focused teaching of reading is especially effective and has a notable impact on pupils' reading skills. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils read out loud fluently and with meaning from the book, *War Horse*.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers have excellent subject knowledge that they use very effectively to provide interesting and exciting work. As a result, pupils learn extremely well.
- One of the notable strengths of teaching is the high quality relationships that teachers have with their pupils. These have an extremely strong impact on pupils' attitudes and their willingness to respond positively to the work they are given. Pupils enjoy learning, are eager for new knowledge and consequently achieve well.
- These good relationships mean that teachers are able to manage behaviour very successfully so that there is little, if any, disruption to pupils' learning. Teachers are excellent role models and this fosters pupils' personal development most effectively.

- In the Nursery and Reception classes, there is a good range of different learning activities. These help children to develop their capabilities well, especially their language and social skills. Teachers' good subject knowledge means that children are very well provided for.
- Marking is mostly regular and frequent. There is a strong focus in the marking on correcting spelling, grammar and punctuation, and praise is used well to encourage pupils. Often, teachers provide helpful comments about what pupils should do next, for example use capital letters and full stops. However, teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on the comments or give them the time to do so. As a result, pupils make the same mistakes and do not always make use of the support to improve their work and reach the next level.
- Teaching assistants and other adults contribute effectively to pupils' learning, especially where they provide well-targeted support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils are not only polite and well mannered, they are also inquisitive and interested in the views of others. They work together extremely well, sharing their thoughts and ideas and helping each other to do their work. A very large majority of parents agree.
- Pupils are especially respectful of each other and of their teachers. They play together well in the playground and resolve any minor disagreements amicably.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are extremely positive. They are often highly motivated in lessons because they are so enthusiastic about learning. They listen carefully, persevere when the work is difficult and are extremely keen to achieve well.
- Attendance has improved significantly over the past few years and is now above average. This illustrates how much pupils enjoy school. Many of those spoken to said without hesitation that they 'loved school'. They particularly enjoy being able to play the violin and cello in Years 3 and 4. Others pick the opportunities for sport, after-school activities such as pottery, choir and design and technology and trips out. Pupils also made it very clear that one of the main reasons that school is so enjoyable is the way their teachers make learning fun.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils said firmly that they feel 'very safe' at school. They are extremely clear that bullying is rare and that if it does happen, the school deals with it very well. They know about different forms of bullying and whom to turn to if they have a problem. As well as teaching assistants and teachers, they include in this those pupils who are members of the school council because they get things changed. As one pupil put it, 'they are like the voice of the pupils.'

The leadership and management are good

- Persistent and rigorous leadership by the headteacher has maintained the school's effectiveness during a difficult stage in which staff turnover was high. Many of the strengths identified in the last inspection have been sustained, especially the school's very strong climate for learning and pupils' excellent attitudes. This is reflected in the good results in the grammar, spelling and punctuation tests.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a very clear agenda for improving teaching further and raising achievement. The school development plan accurately identifies the main priorities for improvement. Over the past two years, leaders have focused successfully on improving the teaching of writing. Although this has taken longer than expected, pupils across the school are now making good progress.
- Regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' work carried out by senior leaders have ensured that concerns are picked up quickly. Strategies, including professional development where needed, are put in place to deal with weaknesses. Previously, improvement was not as swift as intended because the high turnover of staff, and the need to work intensively with some teachers, blunted the impact of this work in the early stages. However, the improvements are

now evident in the good and sometimes outstanding teaching and improved pupil progress.

- There are well-structured procedures for managing staff performance. Teachers have clear targets, linked to pupils' progress and outcomes, and these are reviewed thoroughly by senior leaders. Training is linked effectively to the school's priorities, and newly qualified teachers, and those in training, are supported well.
- Subject leaders are developing their role effectively. They have received good support from senior leaders, including well-received professional development. They are often experienced but many are new to the school or to the position. Consequently, they have not yet had sufficient impact on improving teaching and learning in their subject areas.
- Pupils learn a range of subjects extended well by many extra-curricular activities such as music, art and sport. This meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented. Personal, social and health education lessons contribute well to pupils' very good personal development, including their understanding of internet safety. There is a clear commitment to equality of opportunity, illustrated by the school's success in improving pupils' English language skills.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given the chance to reflect on a range of issues. For example, in singing, the teacher used the death of a well-known cancer sufferer most effectively to get pupils to reflect on the importance of one's actions.
- The school has a range of initiatives to involve and engage parents in the life of the school. Parental engagement has improved over the past few years and most are now happy with the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are strong and the school has effective procedures to ensure that recruitment practices are safe and secure.
- The local authority offers light-touch support to the school in recognition of its overall performance. The headteacher is used by the local authority to provide support for other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body uses a range of reliable information about the school's performance compared to that of other schools nationally to develop an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors hold the school to account robustly and meet their statutory obligations well. They have an accurate understanding of teaching quality and how this is linked to teachers' pay and make maintaining high professional standards one of the main focuses of their work. Governors have played a full part in helping the school to tackle previous underperformance. Governors are linked to specific areas and visit the school regularly so that they have first-hand experience of the work of the school. As a result, governors challenge the school with confidence and balance this effectively with support and encouragement.

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	100901
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	444276

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	497
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Taylorson
Headteacher	Susan Ward
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 November 2008
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