

St Joan of Arc Catholic Primary School

Northolme Road, Highbury Park, London, N5 2UX

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 achieve well. By the end of Key Stage 2, they reach standards that are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders, managers and governors have successfully maintained the quality of teaching since the previous inspection despite a number of staff changes.
- Leaders provide teachers, particularly those at the start of their careers, with really beneficial training and support to improve their performance.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and are always keen and eager to learn.
- Systems for checking and improving the quality of teaching are effective and involve leaders at all levels. This gives the school good capacity to continue to improve.
- Pupils feel happy and safe and enjoy coming to school, as demonstrated by the school's high attendance figures.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The school is known for its prize-winning sports teams and highly skilled choir.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils make rapid and sustained progress across a wide range of subjects in all year groups.
- The development points pupils are given to help them improve their work are not always effective and this can limit rapid progress.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to think deeply or justify their opinions. This means their knowledge is not always deepened sufficiently to secure rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons and small groups, including the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they make), mathematics and writing. Two of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked carefully at pupils' work in lessons as well as the work they have completed over time in their books. English, mathematics and books covering a range of other topics were scrutinised from across the school, including records of observations from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body and the local authority. Inspectors also heard pupils reading, briefly listened to the choir and saw snippets from the rehearsal of the Year 6 end-of-year drama show.
- The views of the 87 parents who responded to the online Parent View survey were taken into account, as was the view of one parent who phoned in and a number who spoke to inspectors in the playground during the inspection. A recent parent survey commissioned by the school was also considered, as were the 14 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked carefully at a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding and child protection, attendance figures and logs of behavioural incidents, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, checks made on the quality of teaching and information regarding pupils' academic performance.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Morris	Additional Inspector
Susan Vale	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than national. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just under the national figure.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children or those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- More than half of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, with at least 11 different groups represented. This proportion is double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than national. Some of these pupils join the school at an early stage of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been some staff changes since the previous inspection. The school has employed four newly qualified teachers this year and many of the middle leaders are new to post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more teaching is outstanding in order that pupils make rapid and sustained progress in all year groups across a range of subjects by:
 - providing pupils with clear, precise development points that outline the steps they need to take in order to improve and make rapid progress
 - helping pupils to develop thinking skills and use evidence from what they have learned to justify their answers to problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The majority of children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are close to the level of development typical for their age in most, but not all, areas of learning. In particular, an increasing proportion starts school with limited mathematical and communication and language skills.
- More pupils than is the case nationally make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage 2. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 6 are higher than average. For example, in the new grammar and spelling test introduced in 2013, far more pupils reached the higher level (Level 5) than in most schools.
- Reading is promoted well in school. From the minute children start in Nursery, they are helped to know what sounds different letters make. By the time they get to Year 1, they are very confident in using this knowledge to read words. The school's results in the phonics check are higher than average so pupils are well prepared for reading increasingly complex texts.
- Pupils understand the importance of reading regularly. They read a range of texts in class to help them with their learning. Pupils say they enjoy reading and this is reflected in their rapid progress and significantly higher than average results at all levels by the end of Year 6.
- The school rightly identified that achievement in writing was not as strong as that in reading and mathematics. Consequently, there has been a strong focus on raising attainment and improving progress, which is having a good impact.
- The most able pupils achieve well because work is matched to their ability levels, and their positive attitudes ensure they make the most of the challenges presented to them. For example, in 2013, a far greater proportion than average made rapid progress to reach the very highest level (Level 6) in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well because their needs are carefully identified and they receive high quality support from skilful teachers and teaching assistants.
- Leaders and governors are using the pupil premium funding increasingly well. They have ensured that gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and other groups in school have narrowed year on year. For example, in test results at the end of Year 6 in 2013, eligible pupils were approximately one term behind their peers in writing, and two and a half terms behind in reading and mathematics. This showed considerable improvement on the previous year and gaps are narrower still for pupils currently in the school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those at the early stages of learning English, make rapid progress to achieve well because there is a strong emphasis on the correct use of grammar and acquiring a broad vocabulary.
- The school ensures that pupils from different ethnic groups achieve equally well, proving its commitment to promoting equal opportunities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is exemplary. There is a strong focus on helping children understand the importance of reading and writing and every opportunity is taken to reinforce these skills. For example, children tidy away the resources they have played with and then take turns to be the 'tidy inspector', checking how neat each area is and making notes accordingly in their notebook.
- The teaching of phonics is carefully organised to ensure that all pupils are given work that is at the right level for them. This ensures they make rapid progress, developing an expanding range of strategies to understand what they are reading. They can then practise and strengthen these skills in lessons where they have to read to complete tasks in a range of subjects.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to write at length, often related to topics they are

studying or books they know. Teachers give clear guidelines as to what features they expect to see in the finished product and check pupils' work as lessons proceed to make sure they understand. Teachers discuss pupils' progress with leaders regularly. During these discussions, any pupils in danger of falling behind are identified and suitable provision is arranged for them. Teaching in this provision is highly effective. For example, pupils whose phonics skills are behind those of their classmates make rapid progress because the quick fire tasks keep interest levels high.

- Teaching has improved for the more able since the previous inspection. For example, pupils working at the higher levels in mathematics are involved in solving complex problems that really challenge their mathematical understanding. Pupils are totally absorbed in these tasks and their work shows that they make rapid progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, highlighting what pupils have done well. Pupils are keen to respond to comments made by teachers because they know their responses help teachers to gauge what work they need next. Teachers then use this information to plan the next lesson, ensuring that pupils have work that is appropriate for them.
- Teachers set pupils development points to work towards over time. However, these are not always effective in ensuring pupils make rapid progress because they are too general to give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. Development points are not linked to tasks closely enough to ensure that pupils can practise the required skills.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to think deeply or analyse what they are learning in order to justify their opinions or suggest why something happened. This limits the rate of their progress, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They behave impeccably in and around the school, thoroughly enjoy playtimes and are respectful and courteous. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are exceptionally considerate for their age. Comments such as 'Would you like to go first?' and 'Should I shut the door?' are heard regularly.
- Behaviour is managed exceptionally well. Staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour in the school. At playtimes, pupils enjoy the range of activities which keep them active. They look after themselves and each other well. For example, they know not to overexert themselves in the heat, stopping to sit in the shade and chat amicably.
- Pupils with particular behavioural difficulties make outstanding progress in overcoming those difficulties because the school provides them with highly effective support. There have been no exclusions for at least eight years.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate and work at a good pace so that they complete a high volume of work in the time given. They are considerate of others, listen to teachers' instructions and take pride in the presentation of their work and the neatness of their classroom.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils state unanimously that they feel safe and can cite the many ways the school ensures they know how to stay safe. During the inspection, older pupils were being taught how to stay safe while cycling. There are posters evident on display, designed by pupils of all ages, on how to stay safe on the internet. Parents confirm that their children feel safe.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of what bullying entails. They state categorically that no bullying occurs at school. The steps the school takes to foster harmonious relationships, tackle discrimination and create a strong community ethos are clearly effective. This is reflected in the well-kept logs which show a very low rate of unkind comments of any sort.
- Leaders have worked effectively to ensure families understand the importance of regular attendance. This has reduced absence levels to well below average.

The leadership and management are good

- Governors, leaders and managers have maintained strong values and high expectations which all staff work towards. Leaders make effective use of national teachers' standards to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers strive to meet challenging targets linked to high expectations for pupils' progress. Teachers are highly positive about the training and support they receive. Support for teachers at the start of their career is particularly helpful.
- The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate and leads to appropriate issues being identified for improvement. Increases in attainment in writing and narrowing the gap for pupils supported by additional funding are two examples of where this approach has been successful.
- The school has designed its curriculum around themes. This ensures strong links between subjects and creates many opportunities for developing reading and writing skills. Provision for music is of particularly high calibre. The choir regularly performs at prestigious venues.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of the school. Pupils are taught to respect one another and be fair and considerate. The school's sporting teams are regularly praised for their sense of fair play, winning several awards, including at one London-wide event.
- The primary sports funding has been used well to provide an even wider range of activities, increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. Teachers' skills have been further enhanced. Sport is high on the agenda and pupils are proud to have won local championships in various team events.
- Although several middle leaders are relatively new, they are already making a good contribution to improving the quality of teaching. They conduct lesson observations, look at work in pupils' books and give helpful feedback to staff to improve their performance.
- The local authority provides light-touch support as appropriate to this good school. There is a positive, forward-looking relationship which promotes the sharing of good practice among local schools to the advantage of all.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly effective in providing both support and challenge to senior leaders. They know the school well and contribute to the school's accurately prioritised improvement plans. They have been instrumental in maintaining the quality of teaching since the previous inspection because they challenge senior leaders well about the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make and the standards they reach. The targets governors set the headteacher clearly show that they understand what the school's key priorities are. Governors are fully aware of the new pay and performance systems the school has introduced. They know that staff who do not meet their targets will not receive a pay rise. Equally, they are keen to reward exceptional performance. Governors use a range of information to ensure they know how well pupils are performing academically and how their school compares to schools nationally. They use available training well to enhance their skills and understanding and ensure they are up to date with all statutory requirements. Governors take safeguarding exceptionally seriously. The governing body ensures finances are spent to get the best outcomes for pupils. For example, it checks how the additional pupil premium funding is used and expects to see strong results in terms of rapidly accelerated progress.

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	100449
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	439484

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beccy Mackinney
Headteacher	Clare Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 July 2009
Telephone number	020 7226 3920
Fax number	020 7704 9220
Email address	office@st-joanofarc.islington.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 and 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 2014

