

St John's Church of England Primary School

Peel Grove, London, E2 9LR

Inspection dates

11-12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Not enough teaching is good or better.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 does not prepare pupils for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils' progress has been erratic over time. Writing is still not good enough in some classes.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not make as much progress as other pupils.
- Teaching in some year groups does not build strongly on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding.
- It is too early for new leaders to demonstrate an impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment to consistently good.
- Pupils do not develop a deep knowledge in some curriculum subjects.

The school has the following strengths:

- Senior leaders have taken effective action to tackle the school's previous weaknesses. They have the skills and determination to sustain the recent strong trajectory of improvement.
- Attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good. More pupils now exceed national expectations in English and mathematics.
- The school's marking policy is highly effective. In many classes, pupils and teachers use feedback very well to improve pieces of work.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They enjoy school, feel safe and they attend regularly. Systems to keep pupils safe are robust.
- A strong external partnership between the interim executive board (IEB), the local authority and the diocese has provided a robust framework for continued school improvement. The new federated governing body has made a strong start to continue this work.

Information about this inspection

- This school was inspected in September 2012 and was judged to require special measures because the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. After the inspection, an executive headteacher and an interim executive board (IEB) were appointed to lead improvements. Since September 2012 the school received five monitoring inspections, the fifth being this inspection. This fifth monitoring inspection began under section 8 and during the first day, it converted to become an inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Evidence from the previous four monitoring visits was used to inform the judgements on this inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons, including short visits to classes. All observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher or head of school.
- During visits to classrooms, inspectors assessed pupils' work in a range of subjects and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, pupils, parents and carers, members of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority and diocese. Inspectors spoke with a group of staff to evaluate teaching and the school's work.
- School documents and records were scrutinised, including information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding, school improvement planning and records of interim executive board and governing body meetings.
- Inspectors observed playtimes.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. They considered the 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ann Debono, Lead inspector Her Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Davies Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- St John's Church of England Primary School is an average-sized school.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding. The funding is for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals at any time during the last six years.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is above average. The highest percentage of ethnic groups is equally White British and Bengali pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs pupils is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Children attend the Early Years Foundation Stage classes full time.
- Since the school was deemed to require special measures there have been significant staff changes. In June 2014, a new head of school was appointed. The leadership structure of the school has been reorganised.
- Since the end of September 2014, a hard federation with St Pauls School, Whitechapel, has been established, with whom the school shares the governing body and the executive headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring adults assess learning and adapt teaching accordingly so that all pupils are appropriately challenged
 - making sure pupils know what to do if they get stuck or find their work too easy
 - using pupil performance information to plan work that quickly builds on pupils' previous knowledge and skills
 - making sure levels of progress in Year 5 and Year 6 are accelerated further.

■ Improve leadership by:

- ensuring middle leaders' action plans are sharply focused on monitoring teaching and achievement
- evaluating the teaching of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs to ensure they make good progress
- implementing strategies to raise pupils' attainment and progress in writing
- assessing the school's curriculum to ensure pupils deepen their knowledge and skills in a wider range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The executive headteacher's conscientious and considered approach has been pivotal in the school's removal from special measures. Staff and the local community were fully involved to create shared commitment and pride in this achievement. Staff and governors know these improvements must continue.
- In June, the appointment of a permanent head of school created additional capacity. For example, she introduced new systems to track pupil performance linked to teaching. Consequently, staff and governors have a clearer understanding about pupils' achievement across the school.
- Middle leaders are keen in their new roles. They undertake effective work scrutiny, lead training and manage resources well. Action plans, however, lack sharp monitoring activity with tight timescales. Some leaders are not yet confident to evaluate teaching and record their judgements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual and moral development is promoted strongly through school assemblies, visits to places of worship and through religious education. All pupils regardless of faith and ethnicity work and play together well. Discrimination is not tolerated. Bilingual staff welcome parents and carers daily and help them with any queries or concerns. The curriculum promotes cultural appreciation of art, music and drama. 'Prevent' training alerts staff to potential signs of extremism.
- The curriculum has memorable experiences to engage pupils. For example, studies about ancient Greece include pottery, drama and making models of the Parthenon. Older pupils visit the Member of Parliament and local businesses to research democracy and enterprise. They have a good understanding of life in modern Britain and learn about laws governing England. However, some units of work move on too quickly, which prevents pupils acquiring deeper knowledge and developing discreet skills in each subject.
- Primary PE and sports funding is used effectively to develop the school's offer and widen pupils' participation. Specialist coaching occurs in different sports such as javelin, judo and cross-country. Pupils' engagement has increased in borough competitions and after-school clubs.
- Pupil premium funding is allocated to a range of achievement projects. Expenditure is well planned and carefully scrutinised by governors. The achievement gap between pupils in receipt of funding and their peers has closed and frequently exceeds their peers in English and mathematics.
- During the last two years, senior leaders improved checks of the school's work. Reliance on external support declined. Self-evaluation is accurate. Significant improvement is evident in pupils' books and around the school, showing increased attainment and better progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Parents and carers contribute to school initiatives through the parents' forum. They are positive about the school's work. Staff are too, as demonstrated by comments such as 'The school is clearly going forward quickly in every aspect; systems are in place to succeed.' Inspectors confirm this is so.
- Local authority and diocesan support and challenge have been high calibre and intensive. Strategic partnership work coupled with robust challenge for both IEB and school leaders has been significant in the removal of special measures.

■ The governance of the school:

- The IEB members provided good challenge and support. They prioritised finding out first-hand about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visited frequently to assess progress, scrutinised the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and sought views of staff and parents and carers. They responded quickly to issues arising from inspection monitoring visits. They know where weaknesses remain because of this robust approach. Governors have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and they understand that it is steadily improving. Since September, rigour and continuity are sustained because IEB representatives attend governing body meetings.
- New governors are determined to eradicate the vestiges of poor performance in the school. They have already carried out focused visits to assess the impact of group interventions for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They challenge leaders about the attainment of Year 6. They are experienced at performance management and understand the links between pay and progression on the salary scale. The Chair of the Governing Body prioritised a school visit to check safeguarding procedures.
- Processes for safe recruitment and the vetting of staff are robust. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. Throughout the school, pupils get on well together. They want to learn. Inspectors saw no poor behaviour in lessons or around school.
- Staff acknowledge and reward pupils for good behaviour and good effort. This is in keeping with the school's spiritual, moral practice and Christian ethos. School assemblies and personal curriculum goals, such as cooperation and respect, promote these values.
- Pupils are encouraged to say how they feel and how to help others by conflict resolution through the class 'Circle of Friends' and 'I messages'. No exclusions have occurred. School behaviour logs are closely monitored and appropriate support is in place for pupils who feel unhappy or unsettled. These clear routines support pupils' views that bullying has reduced and it is addressed successfully.
- Pupils reflect and show responsibility for themselves and others. Spiritually, they consider issues in class reflection areas. Academically, pupils self-assess and sensitively review peers' achievements through the school's marking policy. This contributes to pupils' good personal development.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand safety in school and at home. For example, they know about e-safety and follow clear routines to move around the premises, particularly to access the separate junior playground.
- Risk assessments are thorough. The IEB and governing body ensure all statutory policies and health and safety procedures are implemented and reviewed regularly. Accident logs are assessed and analysed. Potential hazards are rectified ensuring a safer school environment for pupils, staff and visitors.
- The school premises are maintained to a high standard of repair, however playgrounds have insufficient shade and lack seating for pupils to relax comfortably and socialise between lessons.
- Attendance to school remains consistently above average. Most pupils arrive on time. Absence is monitored rigorously to ensure the safety of vulnerable pupils. Strong links with the London Muslim Centre have facilitated an increase in attendance of Bengali pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in all classes. Too much still requires improvement and none is outstanding.
- Teachers have worked hard to develop their skills. They receive intensive support to improve their practice. Most planning shows clear learning intentions to challenge pupils' abilities. Adults' questioning is now more open so pupils have to think deeply before answering. Teachers use pupil performance information to check their expectations are high enough. These elements of stronger practice are not yet fully embedded throughout school.
- When teaching is good, adults effectively address gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils are assessed and specifically grouped according to their understanding, sometimes in pairs for example. Adults have good subject knowledge and work capably with pupils to work through misconceptions. This approach is stronger in mathematics than in English.
- Teaching is less effective when pupils have to listen for too long and teachers' explanations are unclear or too laboured. As a result, pupils get bored when they are ready to get on with their work because they know what to do. This approach hinders pupils' progress, particularly for the most able.
- Classes are well supported by adults. They provide effective support for pupils, however they need to step back to allow pupils to think for themselves. The pace of learning slows when pupils have their hands up waiting for an adult's help.
- Teaching in intervention groups is strong. Adults deliver carefully chosen programmes so pupils make enhanced progress in basic skills. Work scrutiny of underperforming pupils and those with English as an additional language show that they are indeed catching up quickly because of this work.
- Since the last inspection, marking has improved significantly. In most books, pupils respond to teachers' short questions or moving on comments. Pupils understand the green and pink pen system and they provide useful feedback to peers.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end Key Stage 2 in 2014 is too low compared with their starting points. It is below national average in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress in reading is not good enough. As a result, too many Year 6 pupils were ill-prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 have a long way to catch up this year because of a legacy of poor teaching. Although a majority are now working at or above the level expected for their age, a third of pupils are behind national expectations. Leaders closely scrutinise their achievement to ensure challenging yearend targets are met. Assessment of pupils' work indicates they are on track to do so.
- Progress has improved for most pupils in other year groups since the previous inspection.

 Disadvantaged pupils and those who have English as an additional language now achieve the same standard as their peers and frequently higher.
- Progress in writing is a whole-school priority because pupils do not achieve as well as in reading and mathematics. Leaders ensure consistent expectations between standards of writing in pupils' English books and those in other subjects but more needs to be done to encourage pupils to write to a higher standard.
- Work in pupils' books and pupil performance information show a clear improvement in pupils' achievement since September. Teachers' expectations are higher and the challenge for different abilities is established. The majority of pupils are working at expected levels. This is a much-improved picture compared with the same time last year.
- Children join Year 1 with higher attainment than a year ago because the Early Years Foundation Stage is stronger. Pupils are ready for challenges in Key Stage 1. Some pupils, particularly some of the most able, are not building on the strong start they make in Reception because work is too easy.
- Reading has a high priority in school. Early reading skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are more effective. In 2014 results in the phonics screening check increased by 15% compared to 2013. Pupils read fluently using their phonics knowledge. Pupil premium funding is used for specialist group reading programmes and to employ a librarian who holds story sessions and assists in book choices.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, standards have improved. Pupils are now attaining above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Significant gains have been made by the most able pupils reaching higher levels in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not achieving as well as their peers. The new inclusion leader tracks interventions but teaching is not robustly monitored. The engagement and deployment of additional adults in lessons vary from very strong to less effective.

The early years provision

is good

- Teaching, achievement and children's attitudes in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Adults confidently meet children's needs. This reflects positive partnership work and effective coaching provided by leaders from St Paul's School and the local authority.
- Many children enter the nursery with skills below levels found nationally, some are broadly in line. The majority make good progress to reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception, and an increasing number exceed this standard. A speech and language programme has promoted an increase in the number of children meeting and exceeding expectations in speaking and oral skills.
- Children's learning in both inside and outside environments is stimulating. Adults encourage children to explore and develop their skills further. For example, an open tray of thick cornflour paste with teaspoons allowed children to strengthen their pincer grip, in readiness for writing, while making trails in the paste.
- Adults know how to guide children's enquiry effectively; they use open questions and help children to select materials to achieve a task. Children chose which shape to represent the Gruffalo's spikes on a collage for example and decided which photographs should be included in their profile.
- Assessment of learning is effective. Adults observe children and select evidence of their achievements to demonstrate gains in their learning. These are assessed accurately using the early learning goals.

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	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.
		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.

School details

Unique reference number 100953

Local authority Tower Hamlets

Inspection number 441508

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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 220

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair Ian Graham

Executive Headteacher Terry Bennett

Date of previous school inspection 11–12 September 2012

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