

# St Mary and St Michael Primary School

Sutton Street, Commercial Road, Shadwell, E1 0BD

**Inspection dates** 4–5 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The school’s performance declined following its last inspection because of instability caused by many staff changes.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make sustained good progress in Years 1 to 6 and so build on their excellent start in the early years.
- Teaching does not always meet the needs of the different groups of pupils in each class.
- Achievement in writing is lower than in reading or mathematics. In particular, boys make slower progress than girls in writing and their attainment is lower.
- Teachers are not doing enough to help pupils to improve their handwriting.
- Many subject leaders are new in post and inexperienced in the role they are to fulfil. They are not sufficiently involved in the drive to improve teaching and increase the pupils’ achievement.
- Teachers’ marking does not always give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve what they have written or eliminate errors in mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have reversed the decline in the school’s performance with support from governors. As a result of rigorous monitoring with sharply focused action, the quality of teaching is improving and the pupils are making better progress across Years 1 to 6.
- The effectiveness of the early years was outstanding at the last inspection. It has remained so because teaching has remained of a high quality and leadership has been relentless in driving improvement forward.
- Pupils make rapid progress in their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Behaviour has improved because staff implement the school’s established procedures consistently. Behaviour is good and, along with the pupils’ positive attitudes, contributes much to improving their learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know they can turn quickly to an adult if they are worried about anything.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, four of which were visited together with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher, and looked at work in pupils' books from the current academic year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the 99 responses to a parent questionnaire undertaken by the school last year.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
Graham Mabelson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than most primary schools.
- Three-quarters of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. This is a much higher proportion than seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well above average. A significant number join the school at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by funding through the pupil premium, about three in every five, is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked-after.
- At about one pupil in six, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The Nursery caters for 48 children on a full-time basis. Two attend part-time. Children attend the two Reception classes full-time.
- The school has experienced a number of changes of leadership over the last 18 months. The headteacher who left in July 2013 was replaced on an interim basis for one year. The new headteacher took up the post in September 2014.
- The section 48 inspection of religious education did not take place at the same time as the inspection. The school has been notified that this will take place in the near future.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, and strengthen its impact on pupils' learning by ensuring that:
  - teachers provide work that enables all pupils, including the most able, as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to make good progress
  - teachers provide more effective guidance for pupils on how to improve their work.
- Raise achievement in writing, particularly for boys by:
  - providing opportunities for pupils to plan, draft and review their written work in greater detail
  - improving the pupils' handwriting.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders in order to improve teaching and raise the achievement of pupils in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- The school's effectiveness declined following its last inspection. Many staff changes, including that of the headteacher, led to a weakening of leadership. As a result, the quality of teaching fell in Years 1 to 6, leading to a decline in pupil achievement, particularly in writing. Pupils' behaviour also deteriorated.
- The interim headteacher stabilised the school and put in place systems and actions to tackle the causes of the school's declining performance. The new headteacher has built on this in her short time in post. As a result, teaching, pupil achievement and behaviour are improving.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching regularly and set targets for pupils to make at least good progress. They provide training on an individual basis and make sure that salary progression depends on a teacher meeting these targets. The action taken by senior leaders is leading to improving teaching in Years 1 to 6 but has not eliminated all shortcomings and learning is not yet consistently good.
- Training is in place for subject leaders to support their development. Currently they are not contributing enough to improvements in teacher performance and pupil achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Effective engagement with the local authority has helped the school to navigate its way through recent difficulties. This includes support for the new headteacher, training to improve teaching, and helping to establish close links with two successful local schools.
- The focus on literacy and numeracy is supported well by new programmes linking learning in other subjects closely through topic themes. This has led to pupils being more enthusiastic to learn, as well as promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their understanding and appreciation of British values. Assemblies and the school's ethos strongly promote values of love, respect, equality and tolerance of others. Pupils also learn about democracy in a range of different ways. For example, through canvassing for elections to the school council and studying the role of suffragettes in gaining women the vote.
- The school has used additional funding well as a catalyst to transform physical education. Training for teachers, expert coaching for pupils and access to a wider range of sports such as squash and rugby are raising the self-esteem of individual pupils. This has helped to develop team building and strengthened leadership skills.
- The school had not tackled equality of opportunity or tackled discrimination well in the past, although this is another area where tangible improvement can be seen. The school adapts its use of the pupil premium to meet the differing needs of each cohort. This is leading to narrowing of gaps in attainment by comparison with others in most year groups.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are secure. Policies are in place, and implemented carefully. They are regularly monitored and updated to reflect changes in requirements. Staff are fully trained in how to spot potential concerns, and are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have supported the school well through recent difficult times. They have taken decisions about school leadership thoughtfully. Governors are increasingly able to challenge school leaders because of their ever-deepening understanding of assessment information. They question regularly school leaders about the impact of action they are taking, such as measures to improve achievement in writing. Governors are fully aware that teaching had deteriorated and have correctly recognised that it still needs to improve, in spite of recent improvements. They understand how action taken by the interim and current headteachers is leading to improvement, and make sure that pay is linked closely to performance. Governors monitor spending decisions closely, such as the use of the pupil premium and its impact.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils **are good**

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well together, making for a strong sense of the school as a happy and harmonious community. Pupils move around the school in a very orderly manner. They respond quickly to their teachers' expectations and are keen to ensure they 'stay on green'. In spite of the wide range of activities available, the boisterous play of a small number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 can make life difficult for others on the playground.
- Pupils are keen to do well and are motivated to be successful. They try hard in lessons by listening carefully to their teachers. They take notice of each other, concentrating on their work and make sure

they try hard at all times. They enjoy learning and take pride in their work. The children's exemplary attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their learning in the early years.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they generally feel safe in school, and their parents mostly agree that the school takes good care of their children. Pupils are taught how to look after themselves and stay safe through regular e-safety training and talks from safety experts such as the British Transport Police.
- Pupils say there are very occasional incidents of bullying, but they know it is not tolerated and that it will be dealt with swiftly. School records show that the perpetrators of the small number of incidents are dealt with firmly and do not offend again. If pupils have any concerns, they know they can drop a note in for a member of staff to talk to them, and are confident this will resolve their worries.

### The quality of teaching

#### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across Years 1 to 6, and its impact on the pupils' learning and progress, fell after the last inspection. Improvements are underway, although this has not yet led to consistently good teaching in all classes.
- Work is not always matched appropriately to the varying abilities of pupils. It does not always sufficiently challenge the most able pupils, and sometimes teaching and the work provided for pupils leave the less able pupils confused. This is because assessment information is not always used sharply enough to identify the next steps they need to take in learning.
- This contrasts with the outstanding teaching in the early years. Here teaching is adjusted almost daily to tackle any identified gaps in the children's learning. The areas both in the building and outside are full of stimulating and well-resourced activities that gain and hold the children's attention for long periods.
- Teaching of phonics through a structured programme to small groups is effective in helping pupils to develop their reading skills. However, pupils are too often required to produce extended pieces of writing with little chance to practise, edit or draft their work. This means they do not have the opportunity to refine each piece before moving on to the next.
- Work is set at different levels in mathematics in Years 1 to 6, but this does not always make pupils think enough. Sometimes they undertake repetitive questions, unnecessarily practising a skill which some have already mastered quickly. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their skills to problems, practical activities and investigations. This means they do not always develop a deep understanding in order to benefit fully from new concepts.
- Marking is a priority for the school and practice is changing. However, not all teachers are implementing the new policy effectively. They do not always check that pupils have followed up their guidance, and do not always correct spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

### The achievement of pupils

#### requires improvement

- The pupils' progress requires improvement. It is slower in writing than in reading or mathematics. Year 6 test results rose in 2014 in reading and writing, but were unchanged in mathematics. Results were broadly average in each subject. However, pupils made slow progress across Key Stage 2 in writing.
- The lower achievement of boys in writing is due in part to some boys not always seeing the purpose behind their writing. Consequently they do not tackle it with enthusiasm. Pupils' handwriting generally is immaturely formed and not consistently of a neat and joined style.
- Children make rapid progress in the early years in all areas of learning. Their attainment is consistently above average by the end of Reception. A significant number of children exceed levels expected for their age and work confidently within the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- As teaching improves in Years 1 to 6, so does pupils' progress. Attainment is rising in reading and mathematics, but a legacy of past slower progress has not been eliminated in all year groups.
- Pupils develop their understanding of letters and sounds rapidly. This starts in the Nursery. Pupils use their skills well to attack unfamiliar words with confidence. Pupils also enjoy reading, and talk enthusiastically about the books they are reading and their favourite authors.
- Pupils speaking English as an additional language make better progress than other pupils in their classes. Their attainment is higher and they gain higher Year 6 test results than their peers in all subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others. Gaps in attainment are minimal and much narrower

than in Year 6 in 2014. This cohort of disadvantaged pupils included a high proportion of special needs pupils, few of whom had above-average prior attainment. Their test results were lower than those of others in their year group by over five terms in mathematics, four terms in writing and two terms in reading. Their margin set against other pupils nationally was three terms in mathematics and writing, but negligible in reading.

- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also improving but is not yet consistently good. Programmes of support are varied in their impact; however, short-term intensive support for the pupils' numeracy is proving effective in supporting their understanding of number.
- The most able pupils have not been challenged enough in the past, particularly in writing. Several of those who reached Level 3 at Key Stage 1 did not go on to reach Level 5 at Key Stage 2. This is changing as teachers target these pupils through booster sessions. Considerably more of these pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach, and in several cases exceed, this level.

### The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children in the early years make outstanding progress and are very well prepared for Year 1 because teaching is consistently of the highest quality. By ensuring that all areas are rich in talk and discussion, children at early stages of learning English move on quickly in developing fluency in their speech. Children in the Nursery can access more challenging learning in Reception if they so choose. This helps to extend their learning as well as supporting their personal development.
- Activities engage the children for long periods, support all the areas of their learning, and promote writing at every opportunity. Many children can be seen writing shopping lists or a 'get well' card to a friend. Some of the more able Reception children are already writing intelligible sentences that can be readily understood, and they use their understanding of letters and sounds to make plausible attempts at spelling tricky words.
- The atmosphere is harmonious and purposeful throughout the setting. Children cooperate constructively with each other by discussing ideas and taking turns. They select the resources they need and respond instantly to their teachers when asked to tidy up those areas that they have been given responsibility for. Children confidently interact with adults, who are skilled at moving learning forward through well-chosen interventions.
- Children are highly motivated and given excellent support. This is focused sharply on their individual needs by experienced and very capable staff who are led by highly effective managers. Parents are involved at every opportunity through a number of activities that they are invited to share in. They attend phonics sessions, where they learn how to help their children at home, as well as attending cultural days, cooking and supporting reading sessions.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131936
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	448862

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	466
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Killington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Mahon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7790 4986
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7790 9343
<b>Email address</b>	office@sm-sm.co.uk



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