

Notre Dame Catholic Primary School

169 Eglinton Road, London, SE18 3SJ

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
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

- Frequent changes in the teaching staff have affected the continuity of pupils' learning, particularly in Years 1 to 3.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not always provide lesson activities that sufficiently challenge the full range of pupils.
- The progress of the younger pupils, those most affected by staff changes, is slower than those in Year 4 and above and they do not achieve as well.
- Progress in mathematics across the school is not as rapid as in reading or writing.
- Although some marking of pupils' work is thorough, only a few teachers implement the school's policies as consistently as they should. There are examples of unmarked work across the school.
- Due to changes at middle leadership level, not all staff have been fully trained in their roles.

The school has the following strengths

- There have been good improvements in early years provision. Activities engage children's interest and enable them to make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has improved and is now effective.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, feel safe and behave well. Attendance is above average.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly good progress. Consequently, the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, are closing.
- The school provides good-quality care, particularly in supporting vulnerable pupils.
- Senior leadership is now a significant strength. Leaders, managers and governors constantly seek to improve the quality of education provided. Actions taken are contributing to improved teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors are well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They actively challenge the school's leaders to increase the rate of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 12 lessons, 10 of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year. They listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, a representative of the local authority, the school's senior and subject leaders, and a group of parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 19 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered records of governing body meetings and those relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Notre Dame Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- This is an ethnically diverse community. Black-African pupils, two thirds of those on roll, constitute the largest group. Around one in 14 pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- Two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language. Relatively few, however, are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In the early years, Reception children all attend full time.
- The previous headteacher left the school in July 2014. In September 2014, Notre Dame entered into an informal collaboration with Eglinton Primary School. The two schools currently share an executive headteacher. Cardwell Primary School, Woolwich, provides additional support for the improvement of teaching and learning and the further development of middle leadership capacity.
- There have been significant changes in staffing in the last year. Only two of the current class teachers were in post prior to September 2014. There have been additional staff changes during the course of the current year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good, so that pupils make more rapid and sustained progress across the school and standards are raised further by the end of Years 2 and 6, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - securing greater continuity and stability in teaching, thus avoiding fragmented learning by pupils
 - establishing consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve by setting challenging work for all groups of pupils
 - enabling pupils across the school to build effectively upon the good skills and knowledge they now have when they enter Year 1
 - developing existing good practice in marking to ensure that all pupils receive detailed, timely guidance on their written work, with clear indications as to what they need to do to improve.
- Build upon recent initiatives to boost even more leadership capacity at subject leader level.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Parents, pupils and governors all speak affirmatively about the substantial impact of the current leaders in the last two terms. Despite the departure of most of the teaching team at the end of the previous school year, and further turbulence in staffing during the current year, several historic weaknesses have been tackled robustly. Significant improvements in, for example, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and in the quality of the learning environment, are already evident. The pace of change has accelerated considerably. The morale of current staff is high.
- The executive headteacher, who has extensive experience of school improvement, is uncompromising in her aspirations for the school community. Senior leaders promote positive behaviour, attitudes and strong values. The culture established by current leaders is promoting increasingly effective teaching, higher achievement and is ensuring that pupils behave well. All members of the staff work hard for the pupils.
- Staff changes have had an adverse impact upon the availability of experienced teachers to fill key subject leader posts. The leadership of both the early years and of the provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is already good. While new to post, additional subject leaders, who are enthusiastic and committed, and the most effective current teachers, have had initial leadership training. External support to ensure that their leadership skills are effectively developed is being provided. Information about pupils' performance is now rigorously analysed, so that school leaders have comprehensive information about how well pupils are progressing.
- The leadership and monitoring of teaching is robust and is contributing to the emerging improvements in achievement. Although there is some variability, the quality of work in pupils' books is improving.
- The curriculum (the subjects taught) is well organised and imaginative. The school has made rapid progress in implementing the new National Curriculum. The topic-based approach captures pupils' interest well and provides them with a broad range of imaginatively developed learning opportunities. Pupils' writing skills are well developed across a range of subjects, particularly religious education and history.
- In a year of rapid change, the school has continued to use its existing assessment system to provide information about pupils' progress. It has identified a manageable approach to evaluating pupils' progress, to be implemented by the beginning of the next school year.
- School leaders review the impact of pupil premium expenditure closely. They are aware that eligible pupils are now making increasingly rapid progress across the school. Gaps in attainment are narrowing.
- The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is honest and accurate. School leaders are very clear as to where further improvement is needed.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used well to improve staff training and specialist sports coaching. The school has greater participation in competitive sport than before. Opportunities for swimming have increased. More pupils are involved in after-school sports clubs.
- The local authority has provided good support to improve teaching and boost achievement. Significant benefits have come through the current school-to-school partnership support. One partner school, for example, is providing specific professional support for new teachers and emerging middle leaders.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school promotes British values effectively through, for example, many visits locally to promote awareness of local history and the cultural diversity of communities, and involvement with charitable activities. School leaders are attentive to pupils' views. As a result, pupils begin to understand their rights and responsibilities as British citizens and are prepared increasingly well for life in modern Britain.
- The school endeavours to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination of any type is not condoned.
- The school has established good links with parents. Home visits are made when new pupils enter at any age. Parents are highly supportive of recent improvements. Good links with other schools allow the sharing of good practice and promote smooth transition as pupils move between schools.
- Statutory safeguarding arrangements are up to date, meet requirements and are effective. All staff are trained to the appropriate levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are experienced and bring a range of professional expertise to their work. They are highly supportive and challenging and have not hesitated to take difficult decisions when they judged that improvement was not sufficiently rapid. They readily undertake training to enhance their skills in evaluating teaching and achievement. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's work. They are

- closely involved in school improvement, monitor progress carefully and hold school leaders to account.
- Governors evaluate the school's performance in relation to schools nationally and have a detailed understanding of the quality and impact of teaching. They are knowledgeable about the data relating to the performance of all groups of pupils. The management of teachers' performance is thorough. Underperformance is not tolerated. Governors ensure that pay increases are securely linked to the outcomes of this process. The high proportion of new appointments has helped to ensure that salary levels and teachers' impact on achievement are now closely aligned.
 - The governing body and senior leaders, together, ensure that statutory duties are met, including those for keeping pupils safe.

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

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their behaviour around the school is generally orderly and responsible. They deal well with the limitations of the available outdoor space. Pupils enjoy their learning, have very positive attitudes and mostly work hard. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed. Adults and pupils, together, negotiated the current behaviour policy earlier in the year. The school's records show that there are few significant behavioural incidents and no recent exclusions. Incidents of racist behaviour are rare. No bullying incidents have been recorded this year. The playground is effectively supervised.
- Pupils are keen to take on duties in the dining hall, playground and classrooms.
- Occasionally, when tasks are not fully understood, or the level of challenge is insufficient, some pupils find it difficult to sustain attention and this adversely affects their learning.
- Attendance has improved further and is above average. Persistent absence is low.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and are very confident that staff will act upon their concerns quickly. Staff are fully checked prior to appointment.
- The school helps pupils to protect themselves from a range of risks. Staff ensure that pupils are alert to road safety and to the risk of fire. They give frequent attention to the potential risks relating to internet abuse and cyber-bullying.
- Pupils are aware that bullying may take many different forms. However, they feel that instances are rare but are confident that staff will always respond decisively were issues to arise.
- The quality of pastoral care is a strength. Case studies confirm the considerable efforts made by the school to ensure that vulnerable pupils, often with complex needs, are supported appropriately.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because frequent changes in staffing have had an adverse effect upon pupils' achievement. There has not been good enough teaching of reading, writing and mathematics over time, or sufficient stability, for pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Teachers, particularly those who are relatively new to the school, do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and work is not always challenging enough. The pace of learning sometimes loses momentum, particularly when new teachers join the school and pupils do not always build rapidly enough on their existing skills and knowledge.
- There are weaknesses in the marking of pupils' work. Not all teachers adhere fully, or at times, at all, to the school's marking policy. They do not always give pupils clear guidance as to what they need to do to improve, or check that pupils have responded to any advice given to them. There are examples of unmarked work, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Despite significant difficulties in staffing, in part because of the raised expectations and higher levels of accountability demanded by the current senior leaders, some teaching has become increasingly effective in promoting pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There are now significant strengths in the teaching of early years children, of phonics and early reading skills, and of older pupils in Key Stage 2. School leaders have brokered a high-quality support package to assist new, less-experienced staff to accelerate the development of their teaching skills.

- Teaching assistants and support staff have provided continuity and stability, despite many changes among the teaching staff. Their commitment, and their close knowledge of the pupils, has enabled learning to be sustained, in a time of rapid change.
- With strong and effective leadership, the support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils is good. These pupils make progress at least in line with their classmates. Learning support staff are effectively deployed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly develop confidence in the use of English. This allows them to access the rest of the curriculum and to achieve as well as the others.
- Pupils thrive on challenge. Pupils in a Year 4 mathematics lesson were learning about the presentation of negative numbers on a scale. This produced stimulating questioning and discussion around the apparent increasing size of numbers in the negative domain actually reflecting a lower value. The strong subject knowledge of the teacher steered the discussion well and successfully extended pupils' learning. This successfully sustained pupils' interest, enthusiasm and learning. This level of challenge is not, however, consistently evident in other year groups.
- Homework contributes well to pupils' learning. Tasks set extend pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The lack of continuity in teaching has had an adverse impact upon pupils' achievement in the current year. Despite the school's efforts to compensate for those periods where teaching has been less effective, through additional teaching input, progress continues to be more rapid in those classes in Key Stage 2 where there has been sustained good teaching than elsewhere. This is reflected in pupils' written work.
- Progress in mathematics is typically less rapid than in reading or writing. This was the case in the last school year and is also true of pupils' progress in the current year.
- Achievement, particularly in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, has improved in the early years and is now significantly above the national average. Until 2013, most cohorts, with the exception of the current Year 6, entered Year 1 with below average skills and knowledge.
- Until recently, pupils typically made good progress in Years 1 and 2, from below average starting points, to reach at least average standards by the end of Year 2. While attainment in 2015 is likely to be marginally higher, although still broadly average, recent progress has been more erratic, although close, over time, to what is expected.
- Effective teaching of phonics in the early years has supported better outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in 2014 was well above the national average. Pupils across the school have increasingly secure skills in reading.
- The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2014 was broadly average overall, with strengths in writing. Progress in mathematics was the weakest element. While the proportion of pupils making the expected progress in 2014 was mostly above the national average, the proportion making accelerated progress was below average, other than in writing.
- Pupils' written work suggests that current progress is best from Year 4 on. Writing is a particular strength. Pupils in Year 6 have been an able group throughout their time in school. Current Year 6 are making mostly expected, but not consistently good, progress.
- Across the school, Black African pupils, the majority, achieve at least as well as the others and sometimes better than similar pupils nationally. The proportion of White British pupils in any cohort is too low to make a valid judgement on their achievement.
- The most-able pupils, although not usually a large group, have typically achieved well. Able pupils in Year 6 in 2014 attained more highly and made more rapid progress than similar pupils nationally. While the level of challenge in some lessons currently is variable, there has been significant specialist support for able Year 6 pupils who are attempting the challenging Level 6 mathematics test in the current year.
- In 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged Year 6 pupils and others in the school was around one term in reading and writing, but two terms in mathematics. They were two terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, but only half a term in reading. They were ahead of all pupils nationally in writing by around half a term. In 2014, they made slightly more rapid progress than other pupils nationally. School data show that most disadvantaged pupils are currently making similarly rapid progress to the others, so that the gaps in attainment are narrowing year-on-year.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified. Many of those pupils have complex social and educational needs. They receive high-quality support, so that their progress is similar to that of other pupils.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, the majority of those on roll, make similar progress to the others.

The early years provision

is good

- The quality of early years practice has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Most children enter Reception with skill levels below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. Staff focus initially on key basic skills, including language and mathematics, and on the development of children's personal and social skills. Improvements in phonics teaching ensure that children soon establish a secure knowledge of sounds and letters and initial skills in reading.
- Children, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. Consistently effective teaching ensures that children now make more rapid progress. On leaving Reception, they are now well prepared for entry to Year 1. The proportion of children reaching levels typical for their age improved to be above average in 2013. The proportion was well above the national average in 2014. Groups of children, for example, for those who need more support with speech and language or with reading, benefit from specific additional support.
- There is a good balance between activities taught by adults, such as reading, writing and mathematics, and periods when children choose from a wide range of activities. Two children, appropriately dressed in white coats and goggles, were captivated by the discovery of new 'minibeasts' in a garden tray. Occasionally, in taught activities, children who grasp a concept quickly are not challenged and have to wait for others to finish. This affects the pace of their progress.
- Probing questioning by the teacher when introducing books ensured that children understood concepts such as 'author' and 'non-fiction' and could explain their ideas.
- Children have regular access to outdoor learning. Although space is limited, this offers the expected range of activities and contributes to children's growing knowledge of the world.
- Children behave well. They have positive attitudes to learning. They select resources confidently and show good independence.
- Children are safe and well looked after. The school works co-operatively with parents prior to their children joining the school, and encourages their subsequent engagement in their children's learning.
- Staff undertake detailed checks and observations so that they have accurate information about children's progress.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Children's learning has improved as a result of recent training in, for example, the teaching of phonics.

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	100179
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	462167

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Peach
Executive Headteacher	Margaret Carney
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2013
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