

St. James's CofE Junior School

Tower Hamlets Road, London E79DA

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a school that caters for pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups as well as ability groups and ensures that all these different groups achieve well.
- Good teaching with examples of outstanding practice is typical and contributes significantly to the good progress made by pupils. Many pupils state that learning is fun but challenging and keeps them on their toes.
- Pupils play a major role in helping the school to be a success. They behave well, show a thirst for new knowledge and skills, and thrive on the opportunities provided to make the school a harmonious and respectful learning community.
- Pupils feel safe and valued in the school. Attendance rates are currently average and continuing on a speedy upward trend.
- The improvements in teaching and pupil achievement owe much to the highly effective leadership of the headteacher. She is supported very well by the deputy headteacher and, together with other leaders and governors, shares a vision and determined ambition to make the school an even better place for pupils to learn.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some inconsistencies in how well teaching challenges all pupils, provides high quality feedback and manages the learning behaviour of a minority of pupils.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are not always put to best use or tested out across different subjects of the curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of these were joint observations with the deputy headteacher. All teachers and support staff were observed
- The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at a wide range of pupils' books and other samples of their work.
- The inspectors looked at numerous school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, policies, evaluation of teaching files, curriculum information, and safeguarding information and carried out a rigorous analysis of the school's test and assessment data relating to pupils' attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the school council, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors considered the four responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke individually with several parents during the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Martin Newell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elaine Hamilton, Team inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized school.
- Almost 98% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. This is significantly above the national average. The largest groups are Bangladeshi, African, any other White and any other Black.
- Approximately 80% of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or armed service families, is well above the picture found nationally. The local authority operates a policy of providing free school meals for all pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is a little below the national average.
- There is higher level of pupil mobility than usually found in schools nationally.
- The level of deprivation in the area that the school serves is considerably higher than found nationally.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils.
- The school runs after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.
- There is no alternative provision for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically outstanding by:
 - ensuring all teachers consistently provide a high level of challenge for all pupils
 - making sure that the marking of pupils' work always provides clear guidance on what constitutes a good piece of work and what is needed to improve
 - encouraging pupils to enter into dialogue about their work and consistently take responsibility for acting on the comments made
 - ensuring that all teachers manage the behaviour of pupils in a highly effective manner so that learning consistently moves forward at a rapid pace.
- Provide well-planned, regular and meaningful opportunities for pupils to utilise and extend their mathematical skills and knowledge across different subjects of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well from broadly average starting points, although attainment on entry has improved over the last couple of years. Good and better teaching, aligned with rigorous checking and tracking of pupils' progress, are major factors in the good progress of pupils as they move up through the school. Pupils say that good teaching is helping them to achieve well, and their parents agree.
- Attainment is improving at a faster rate than found nationally. The proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress was higher than the picture nationally in 2012. The school reached its best results in recent years, English and mathematics attainment having moved up to become broadly average. The school's accurate data, pupils' books and lesson observations all indicate that attainment is set to rise to above average in 2013.
- Rigorous and effective support and intervention strategies for pupils with English as an additional language help them to acquire the English language quickly and make rapid strides in their learning. For some of these pupils, progress is outstanding.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding achieve particularly well because the school directs the funding towards providing strategies that have rapidly reduced achievement gaps with other pupils. Pupils' average points scores (APS) have risen and are close to, and in some instances higher than, the APS of non-free school meals pupils. Initiatives include a targeted reading and phonics programme, additional group tuition for more able mathematicians, additional team teaching, a learning mentor, and home support.
- Reading skills are developed well as pupils move up through the school. A strong emphasis is given to the continued development of pupils' phonic skills and this reaps rewards, as any gaps in early reading skills are quickly plugged. Many pupils leave school as confident readers and writers, able to express their views and opinions articulately and maturely.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because their needs are quickly identified and strategies put in place to address gaps in their learning. Teaching and learning assistants often make a telling contribution to how well pupils learn and achieve.

The quality of teaching

is good

- School leaders have played a pivotal role in improving teaching to its current good level, with evidence of an increasing incidence of outstanding teaching.
- In the vast majority of classrooms, an effective learning environment enables pupils to participate actively in their own learning. In many lessons, there is a real purpose to learning, and teaching ensures that all pupils are attentive, focused and on board. Lessons typically have a good pace and structure, and pupils complete a good amount of work. On occasion, however, teaching fails to attract the full attention of the pupils, and as a result the learning of a minority of pupils slows.
- Excellent relationships encourage a high level of pupil contribution to discussions. Pupils readily participate because they know their views and opinions are valued and respected by staff and classmates.
- Teachers plan lessons well to meet the differing needs and abilities of pupils. In English and mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are grouped by ability, and even in these lessons, work is still differentiated to more closely match work to the attainment level of pupils. However, occasionally, work across the school is not challenging enough, which prevents learning from moving at a more accelerated pace.
- Examples of teaching at its best, with a range of different teaching strategies and activities to captivate the interest of pupils, opportunities being fully used to develop pupils' literacy skills,

and a high level of challenge being maintained, were observed in Years 3 and 6.

- Reading and writing are generally taught well across the school. This is because of a focused approach on developing both phonic and higher-order reading skills and on developing skills that enable pupils to write well for a wide range of audiences and purposes, with good use of vocabulary and accurate spelling and grammar.
- Marking has improved significantly since the last inspection, the best practice making clear why a piece of work is good and providing concise comments as to what is needed for improvement. In a number of classes, pupils enter into dialogue with the teacher and there is a high expectation that pupils will take on the responsibility for improving their own work. This excellent practice is not yet embedded in all classes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught and supported well. Good quality intervention work by learning support staff is often key to pupils' progress by helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding benefit from well-planned and well-taught reading and phonics programmes and additional in-class support and tuition that enable their progress to match, and at times exceed, that of their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are polite and courteous and many are keen and eager to learn and achieve well. On occasions, a minority of pupils are not as switched on to their learning as they should be.
- Pupils readily take on responsibility and contribute towards helping the school become a thriving community. Through the school council, school buddies, school assistants and peer mediators, pupils relish responsibility. They are given a genuine voice in the life of the school and have helped to bring about improvements in keeping healthy, playground resources, and the environment, all of which have helped to make the school a better place to learn.
- Pupils are adamant that behaviour observed during the inspection is typical of behaviour over time. They say that they feel very safe in school and that bullying is rare. Pupils play their part to the full in helping to create a harmonious community where different views, beliefs and traditions are both celebrated and respected.
- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and show a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and when they are out and about in the local community. Pupils show high levels of respect for adults and know that there is always someone to turn to if they have any concerns. Parents also speak highly of pupil behaviour and safety in school.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school because, they say, 'teachers go out of their way to make learning fun each and every day'. The after-school clubs are well attended and much appreciated by pupils who say 'they all add to our learning'. Attendance is average but improving rapidly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Together with the deputy headteacher, they have been the driving force in bringing about sustained improvements in teaching, achievement and behaviour.
- Good procedures are in place for monitoring and improving teaching. In addition, senior leaders lead by example, teaching, modelling lessons, and working alongside teachers. Middle leaders are becoming increasingly more actively involved in evaluating and supporting teaching and learning, analysing data and identifying priorities. Capacity for continued improvement is clearly demonstrated.

- Teachers are held accountable for the progress of the pupils they teach. The staff appraisal and performance management process sets challenging targets and provides appropriate professional development. The system rightly enables better teachers to move more swiftly up the salary spine.
- The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of pupils. Many opportunities are provided to develop pupils' literacy skills across the subject range but this does not apply to the same extent for promoting mathematical skills. Pupils are provided with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and very good provision is made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school works extremely hard at promoting equality of opportunity in this culturally diverse community, and discrimination of any kind is rigorously tackled. An air of tolerance and respect envelops the school and positive relationships have been established with parents and carers.
- The local authority provides light touch support as the school continues its journey of sustained improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are actively involved in school improvement planning, and are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. They regularly attend training courses to become versed in understanding data and financial management. They hold the school to account by asking informed and challenging questions on the quality of teaching and pupil achievement, are aware of the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally, and understand how well different groups of pupils perform. Governors make sure that pupil premium funding is used to best effect, and ensure that there is a close correlation between the quality of teaching and salary progression. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory requirements.

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	102764
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	400569

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Church of England (Controlled)
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ellen Kemp
Headteacher	Mrs Nina Panayis
Date of previous school inspection	30 June–1 July 2010
Telephone number	020 85344030
Fax number	020 85553721
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