

New City Primary School

New City Road, Newham, London, E13 9PY

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils make good progress each year and by the end of Year 6 standards are not high enough.
- While senior managers show a positive impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress, some subject managers have not been in post long enough to develop their roles sufficiently.
- Standards in mathematics are not high enough. It is not taught with sufficient consistency across the school and this inhibits pupils achieving as well as they should.
- The quality of teachers' marking varies. Sometimes, pupils are not given enough advice about what they need to do to improve their work further.
- More-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- The progress of pupils eligible for additional funding is much slower than that of other pupils.
- Governors do not understand the full range and impact of their responsibilities.
- Attainment remains too low because of a legacy of underachievement from the past.

The school has the following strengths:

- Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils feel very safe in school and behave well.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to participate regularly in a variety of activities and events.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school. Almost all would recommend it to others.
- Pupils' academic and personal experiences are nurtured across a broad and stimulating range of learning activities.
- The school is closely involved with the local community and has built up close links with families and local groups.
- The good provision for children in the Reception Year is enabling them to make good progress and achieve well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons, including guided reading and linking sounds to letters (phonics) sessions. Five of these visits were joint observations with senior members of staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes, talked to pupils about their work, looked at samples of their work and displays of work around the school and attended assemblies.
- Discussions were held with governors, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard some pupils from Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 read.
- In addition to observing the school's work, the inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, information about pupils' attainment and progress, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account the views expressed in the 48 completed online Parent View questionnaires and the school's own questionnaire that had 86 returns. They also considered 31 staff questionnaires and spoke to a number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

David Nebesnuick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Liz Kissane	Additional Inspector
Milan Stevanovic	Additional Inspector
Jeanie Underwood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the largest being pupils from Pakistani heritage.
- An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, though most are fluent English speakers.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding given to the school on the basis of the numbers of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, have a parent or carer in the armed forces or are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is similar to the national average. However, the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- More pupils than average join or leave the school at other than the normal times.
- The school has experienced some difficulty in recruiting experienced staff, and staffing in some classes has been subject to considerable change during recent years and the current year.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club, a nursery and a community outreach centre on the school site. They were all part of the inspection.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2012 and most management posts have changed since that date.
- The school is supported in its drive to raise standards by a neighbouring outstanding primary school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the consistency of teaching so that achievement improves, particularly by ensuring that:
 - more-able pupils are consistently challenged and given more difficult work to extend their thinking sufficiently
 - there is a consistent approach to marking pupils' recorded work so that all pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to do to improve
 - how mathematics is taught is reviewed so that pupils develop their knowledge and skills in a systematic way as they move through the school.
- Maximise the effect of all leaders through ensuring that when monitoring they have a clear and rigorous focus on progress, including that of different pupil groups.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the past, the achievement of too many pupils has not been good enough. This has resulted in much underachievement and standards that have been too low. While this is now improving some pupils continue to need extra support to fill the gaps in their learning.
- Rates of progress are inconsistent as pupils move through the school. At Key Stage 2, pupils do less well in mathematics than in English. Although the gap is narrowing it has not yet been eradicated.
- More-able pupils are not achieving well enough because the tasks set are not always difficult enough and do not extend their thinking sufficiently.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make slower progress than other pupils and although the gap has narrowed, it is still too wide, particularly in Year 2. In 2013, by the end of Year 6, these pupils were almost four terms behind others in mathematics and three terms behind in reading and writing.
- Children begin in the nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below age-related expectations. Throughout the school they make expected progress and leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are still well below the national average. However progress that pupils make has improved, particularly in the last year, so they are beginning to catch up.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills that are slightly below the levels expected for that age. They make good progress because activities interest them and challenge them. For example, they really enjoyed the many different activities around the fire fighters theme.
- In last year's phonics (the linking of letters and sounds) test in Year 1, pupils' attainment was above average. This was an improvement on the previous year and a result of revised strategies for teaching phonics.
- Pupils have had good support to improve their writing. There is little difference across their literacy skills and much improvement in writing especially across Key Stage 1. Pupils are encouraged to extend their writing through their other subjects, such as the India theme in Year 3 and the work on Japan in Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive suitable support to keep them included in lessons and make broadly similar progress to other groups of pupils.
- Until recently, pupils in Key Stage 2 not made enough progress. Standards have improved slightly and indications are that they will improve again this year. However, progress is not yet consistent across the age range and improvements are very recent.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough has been of the good quality needed to overcome previous gaps in pupils' learning.
- The quality of marking is variable. Much is done thoroughly, praising pupils' successes and identifying their mistakes. There is good practice in telling pupils how to improve but this is not consistent across the year groups.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable and over time teachers have not used checks of pupils' progress well enough to develop pupils' basic numeracy skills before expecting them to calculate effectively. These gaps in understanding are most evident in Years 5 and 6.
- The teaching of the more-able pupils is variable and suitably challenging tasks are not always set to extend the pupils' thinking skills sufficiently.
- Teachers generally demonstrate secure subject knowledge and use a wide range of teaching methods effectively. For example, teachers help pupils to explore and express their ideas and understanding. Teachers' questioning is often searching, making pupils explain their thinking

carefully and accurately.

- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. Lessons are planned carefully to meet the needs and interests of the learners. The work they do sustains their interest and learning activities are inspiring. For example 'the pirates' role play completely involved the children in learning through active play.
- A consistent strength in teaching is the management of behaviour, based on positive relationships with pupils and well-understood systems of sanctions and rewards. The resultant good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning have helped underpin the improvements in pupils' progress this year.
- Teaching is typically good in the lessons in which disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive additional tuition. Teaching assistants know the pupils' needs well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they are keen to learn.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. As a result pupils say that they feel safe in school. This view is supported by almost all parents and carers that expressed a view in the Parent View questionnaire.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and it contributes well to the pupils developing into independent young people.
- Pupils value the school council and they think that their opinions are carefully listened to by the staff.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are good. Pupils are proud of their school and find it a happy place to learn. All parents and carers said that their children were happy in the school.
- Pupils know that bullying can take different forms but they say instances are rare and when they occur they are dealt with appropriately.
- They understand the implications of potential threats such as cyber bullying. The school was focusing on this issue during the inspection and inspectors attended assemblies that covered this theme effectively and sensitively.
- Boys and girls from many different backgrounds play together happily in the playground. The older pupils enjoy looking after the younger ones and this helps new pupils to settle into school life quickly. The gardening activities make a strong contribution to the good behaviour at lunchtime.
- Attendance is above average because the school works well with parents and carers and any absence is followed up quickly.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about coming to school. They say that every adult helps them and that the adults really care for the pupils. This has a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning and the improvement in progress seen this year.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher, with the senior leadership team, has focused more closely on improving teaching and learning. The impact of this change of focus is that the decline in standards and progress has been halted.
- A number of middle managers are now in place but it is too early for most to have made a significant impact in improving pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders produce an overview of pupils' attainment and achievement every term but the monitoring and evaluation process does not always focus sufficiently on which groups are doing less well. As a result the rate of improvement of some groups, such as those receiving additional funding, is inconsistent in different parts of the school.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is a strong feature that has helped to sustain pupils' consistently good progress.

- The school's commitment to equal opportunity and to eliminate discrimination is evident in the carefully planned support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Procedures for checking the work of the school, such as looking at pupils' books, observing teaching and analysing pupils' progress information, have recently been improved. However the impact has yet to be felt fully across the school because considerable inconsistencies of approach still remain.
- The school provides an interesting range of subjects which increasingly link different topic work with pupils' literacy and numeracy work. This has been particularly successful in boosting pupils' writing skills. However the use of mathematical skills, particularly in problem solving, is not as extensive as in the other subjects.
- Many visitors are welcomed into the school, for example an Indian cultural specialist and a fire officer were in school during the inspection. This external expertise strengthens the subject experience of the children. Visits to local places of interest, such as the Olympic Park, also capture the pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment. In addition the school offers a very wide range of clubs and activities that are supported by the majority of the pupils. This wide range of experience makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- There are historically strong links with the local community and the outreach centre is well used by many different local groups. The school provides cycling training and cycle maintenance not only for its own pupils but for the wider community.
- Performance management is closely focused on teaching and where appropriate, leadership targets. The headteacher effectively holds staff to account for their roles and responsibilities. Assemblies in different parts of the school help the pupils to feel part of a community and encourage them to reflect on personal values. The school ensures that pupils learn about many different cultures and religions and as a result the school is a caring and tolerant place for pupils to learn and mature.
- The school works hard to develop close relationships with its parents and carers and it is successful. Almost all parents and carers would recommend the school to others and all say that their children are happy in the school. One parent or carer observed, 'It is a great school, they have lots of after-school clubs and mathematics help on Saturdays.'
- The additional sports funding has been well used to raise standards of physical education teaching by employing a sports coach and by developing new activities for all pupils.
- Procedures for safeguarding meet requirements and are regularly checked by leaders and managers.
- The local authority provides appropriate support mainly through the school's partnership with a local outstanding primary school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is now becoming stronger. A new Chair of the Governing Body and other new governors have enabled the governing body to challenge leaders and managers more effectively, partly because the quality of the information from the school has improved. This process still needs to be taken further and an external review of the governing body is therefore recommended. Governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher and they understand that inconsistent teaching overtime has constrained pupils' progress so that standards do not compare well with other schools. As a result they question the headteacher more closely. They support the headteacher in ensuring that teachers' pay and promotions are linked to their performance, priorities in the school improvement plan and continued improvement both in teaching and pupils' learning. Governors know where the additional pupil premium funding has been spent but they are less sure of its effect in reducing the progress gap with other pupils. They are aware of their own training needs and attend appropriate courses.

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	102734
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	440967

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	607
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mohammad Jahangeer
Headteacher	David Wareham
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 March 2011
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