

New City Primary School

New City Road, Plaistow, London E13 9PY

Inspection dates

11–12 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The pace of improvement since the previous inspection has, until recently, been too slow. As a result, teaching across the school is not consistently good. Because of this, pupils do not always make the progress that they should and there remain some pockets of underachievement in the school.
- The school's information on the progress pupils make does not give an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing.
- The checks leaders make on the quality of teaching do not focus sharply enough on the progress that different groups of pupils make.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school is over generous and action plans for improvement lack precision.
- Teachers do not always use what they know about pupils to set work at the right level. Tasks set are often too easy for pupils and do not challenge them. Expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve are too low.
- Governors have not challenged leaders robustly enough over the progress that pupils make, particularly those who are eligible for the pupil premium funding and those who have special educational needs or disability.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent action taken by leaders has led to improvements in teaching. The progress of disadvantaged pupils, pupils who are falling behind and those who have special educational needs or disability is speeding up.
- The school have recently recruited governors who are committed to developing their skills.
- Pupils attend well, are kept safe and well cared for by staff.
- Pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to work, their relationships with adults and with each other are good and contribute well to their learning.
- The curriculum enriches pupils' experiences of school life and develops their skills well in music, art and sports.
- Children make good progress in the early years. They are taught well and enjoy their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - making sure that the guidance given to teachers to improve their teaching focuses tightly on the impact they are having on the progress of all groups of pupils in the school
 - making sure that the impact of the pupil premium funding spending on pupils' progress is regularly and rigorously monitored by leaders at all levels, including governors
 - fine tuning improvement plans to ensure that they are more precisely focused on evaluating the impact of actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress
 - developing assessment systems to make sure that they give an accurate picture of pupils' achievement.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5, by:
 - making sure that work is not too easy for pupils
 - making sure that teachers always expect enough of the most-able pupils so that they can achieve what they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants continue to develop their subject knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics
 - giving teachers the opportunity to share the practices which lead to strong progress in the early years and in some classes in key stage 1 and 2.

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

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not secured sufficient improvement since the last inspection. The pace of change has not been fast enough and some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have not been effectively attended to, until recently. Because of this, there are still pockets of underachievement across the school, especially in key stage 2.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of the school's work is over generous and action plans are not sharply focused on the key actions needed to move the school forward.
- Senior leaders monitor teaching and give feedback and guidance to teachers on how to improve. However, this guidance rarely helps teachers understand the impact of their work on specific groups of pupils such as those who are disadvantaged or those who have special educational needs or disability. Teachers are not consistently challenged or supported in meeting the needs of the most-able pupils. As a result, progress of all groups of pupils across the school is not consistently good.
- Leaders have implemented a system to check on pupils' progress across the school but this does not help teachers to present an accurate picture of pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders recognise that they need to adapt aspects of their assessment procedures as they currently have an inflated picture of pupils' achievement. Work in books does not match the information provided by leaders on the progress and attainment of current pupils in the school.
- During this academic year, the local authority has worked with the leadership team and the governors to re-focus their efforts on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders at all levels have responded well to this support and actions taken have started to show an impact on improving teaching and learning. As a result, gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others are closing and pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making strong progress from their starting points. Some strong teaching in key stage 1 is leading to pockets of good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in this key stage.
- Several new leaders have been appointed since the previous inspection. They all share the headteacher's and deputy headteacher's commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They are clear on priorities for their subject or phase group but it is still too soon to see the impact of some of the actions they have taken.
- The headteacher has reviewed appraisal systems for teachers since the previous inspection and targets are now focused more sharply on pupils' progress.
- Leaders have ensured that feedback and guidance to pupils about their work has improved since the previous inspection. The marking policy is used consistently in all classes and generally supports pupils' progress. In some classes, peer assessment is also well established and pupils learn from each other as well as from the teacher.
- Leaders ensure that teachers receive training and support around the priorities for improvement. This has led to some improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across the school but has not led to teaching which is consistently good. Newly qualified teachers say that they are extremely well supported by leaders and that they receive good training in school and from the local authority. The majority of staff who completed the online questionnaire are proud to work at the school and feel well supported by leaders.
- The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is integral to the curriculum and a strength of the school's work. For example, the impressive rooftop 'gardening club' benefits pupils of all ages who happily work together to grow produce which they proudly sell to parents. British values are explored in a range of ways such as assemblies which focus on current world events. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the topics they study and the school trips that they enjoy. The curriculum is enriched with a range of after-school clubs and school visits. Pupils benefit from excellent sports teaching, provided by sports coaches who are funded through the sports premium funding. They also benefit from learning to play a musical instrument. Art provision is also a strength of the school as can be seen by the large-scale model dinosaurs which can be found throughout the building.
- The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or completed the online survey, Parent View, were positive about the school. The school's own parental questionnaire was also positive.
- Leaders have ensured that attendance remains in line with the national average or better.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has been reviewed by leaders since

September 2015 and this has led to improvements in teaching and learning this year for these pupils.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors did not challenge leaders robustly enough following the previous inspection.
 - The governing body has recently been reconstituted and several new governors, including a new chair of the governing body, have been recruited. Governors are highly committed to improving the school and they have a range of skills to offer. They rightly recognise that they would benefit from a review of their skills to make sure that they are challenging and supporting the work of the school effectively.
 - Because many governors are new to the role, they do not yet have an accurate picture of the effectiveness of the school's work or an accurate understanding of pupils' achievements. Governors' minutes suggest that they are not yet fully confident in asking the right questions about the impact leaders have on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and new staff are given relevant training and updates. Systems and logs for recording actions taken as a result of safeguarding issues are not easy to access. However, it is clear that the school responds quickly to concerns and swiftly seeks advice from the local authority and external agencies. During the inspection, inspectors raised concerns which were echoed by some parents about supervision on the school gate in the morning. Leaders immediately acknowledged and dealt with the issue.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but it is not yet consistently good. As a result, progress pupils make in all subjects varies between classes and year groups.
- Teachers do not always set work which is matched well to pupils' needs. It is often too easy. Despite this, pupils do their best to enjoy all the learning opportunities they are given and they work hard. In key stage 2 classrooms, teachers often fail to realise that the most-able pupils are not being effectively challenged by tasks set. Pupils frequently finish tasks quickly but there is no further challenge or extension task, particularly in mathematics lessons. In writing lessons, the most-able pupils sometimes make the task more challenging for themselves. For example, in one writing lesson the most-able pupils were asked to write short descriptive phrases. Books showed that they were already confident at doing this. After deciding that the task was 'really easy', several pupils 're-invented' the task and set about composing complex descriptive sentences instead.
- Too often in mathematics and writing lessons in key stage 2, work is set at a level which does not match the expected level for the age range. As a result, some pupils make little progress because they are going over aspects of learning that they are already confident with. Pupils are placed within a set, according to ability for writing and mathematics. Sometimes, teachers take no account of the range of abilities within a set to provide effective challenge for all. As a result, overall attainment remains broadly average.
- Although the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good, books show that the quality has improved over the past year, particularly in the early years and in key stage 1. Pupils across the school are making progress but not all are making good progress. Where teaching is strongest in the early years and in some classes in key stage 1, good progress can be seen. Skilled questioning which challenges pupils' thinking as well as regular checks on pupils' understanding are typical features of the strongest teaching in the school.
- As a result of recent improvements to teaching, disadvantaged pupils across the school are making at least similar progress to their classmates.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have received training and support to improve their teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). This has led to some improvements in teaching and learning but there are still some staff whose subject knowledge of phonics is weak. They are unsure how to tackle pupils' misconceptions or guide them to next steps in developing phonics skills. Checks on pupils' progress focus on the number of sounds pupils know rather than how pupils apply their phonics knowledge into reading and writing. Nevertheless, all key stage 1 pupils who read to inspectors used their phonics skills well and were reading at an appropriate level for their age.
- Less-able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability are well supported during lessons by teaching assistants. One-to-one interventions such as the specialist reading and mathematics support are having a good impact on pupils' progress and on their personal development. Some pupils enjoy and benefit from small group 'catch up' mathematics sessions which is helping to fill gaps in mathematics skills and knowledge.

- The quality of feedback and marking has improved since the previous inspection. All teachers use the marking policy consistency and some teachers use peer assessment well so that pupils reflect on each other's learning and learn from each other. However, guidance given to pupils does not consistently help pupils make good progress in all classrooms.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are extremely friendly and welcoming and proud of their school. They are happy, they enjoy learning and see the value in it. They feel safe and well cared for and parents confirm this view.
- Warm relationships between adults and pupils support pupils' learning. Pupils also support each other very well. For example, in assembly they are genuinely pleased for each other when rewards for good learning are given. They say 'well done' while patting each other on the back with real affection and pride.
- Pupils work well together in lessons. They share resources sensibly and they sometimes give written feedback to each other on their work.
- There is a calm working atmosphere around the school. Pupils rarely fail to show commitment to learning, even when teaching does not meet their needs.
- The school responds swiftly to any concerns regarding the safety and well-being of pupils. However, records of actions taken as a result of concerns are hard to access.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe outside school and show a good understanding of e- safety. Pupils respect those who have religious beliefs which are different to their own and they talk positively about assemblies and theme days which celebrate festivals from a range of different cultures and religions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff and parents agree that pupils behave well and that behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons, in the playground and around the school is good. They play well together at playtimes and during breakfast club where they benefit from a warm welcome from adults. At playtime, older pupils can be seen helping and playing with younger pupils.
- Incident logs show that bullying or racist incidents are rare. However, records do not give a clear enough picture of actions taken as a result of incidents or of any subsequent follow up.
- Attendance remains broadly average.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because their progress is not consistently good. Pockets of underachievement remain, particularly in key stage 2. As a result, attainment for the current Year 6 pupils is set to be broadly similar to recent years.
- Standards at the end of key stage 2 have been below the national average for the past four years. In 2015, pupils left Year 6 with standards in mathematics which were well below what was achieved nationally. Disadvantaged pupils left the school more than two terms behind their classmates in all subjects and the progress during their time in key stage 2 was well below that seen nationally for all pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability made less progress from their starting points than others.
- Expectations in some classes are too low and teachers do not plan challenging enough tasks for pupils, particularly the most-able pupils. This means that they do not make rapid progress and achieve what they are capable of.
Sometimes teachers plan mathematics and writing tasks which are not pitched at the expected level for the age group they are working with. When this happens pupils re-visit aspects of learning they are already competent with, which means they make little progress. This is too often the case in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Since September 2015, pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making stronger progress than previously. This is because of the good quality teaching they receive in lessons and in individual and group intervention sessions. Typical of this was a one-to-one maths session with a specialist intervention teacher where a pupil arrived for his session with enthusiasm and was able to share how much he liked

mathematics. Skilled teaching and incisive knowledge of the pupil's specific needs were clear. This helped the pupil to make good progress.

- As a result of training and support for teachers since the start of the year, disadvantaged pupils across the school are making similar progress to their classmates and gaps in attainment are beginning to close. However, much of the progress seen remains average and is not good enough to result in a rise in standards.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are making better progress than those in key stage 2 because of stronger teaching and very effective phase leadership. Attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below the national average for the past three years. Pupils currently in Year 1 are making sound progress in phonics skills and are using these skills in reading and writing. Assessment information suggests that attainment in the Year 1 check will improve this year.

Early years provision

is good

- Improvements in the early years provision have been well led and managed. Good teaching in the early years means that all children are making good progress in the current Nursery and Reception classes.
- Children in the Nursery, including those who have English as an additional language, are well supported in developing their early communication and language skills. The majority of children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge which are below those typically seen for their age. As a result of the interesting, stimulating environment and good teaching, they quickly become confident learners, enjoying the range of opportunities set and making good progress from their starting points. Adults skilfully question children and draw them into tasks. For example, one adult working with a group presented the task as a problem, 'Oh now how can I get these legs on my caterpillar? Can someone help me?' This immediately captured children's interest and they set about problem-solving and to give the huge caterpillar some legs.
- Reception classes provide a rich and stimulating environment with a range of high-quality resources. Teaching has improved this year as a result of strong leadership. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of pupils leaving the early years in 2014 and 2015 with a good level of development has been below national averages. Children's work and information on the progress children are making shows that this is set to improve in 2016. While strong progress is evident in Reception books, there is still some variability, particularly in writing. Most teachers have an accurate picture of what pupils can do but occasionally they are overgenerous in their assessments of writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well cared for and supported in the early years. Pupil premium funding has been wisely spent on providing additional support for developing speaking and listening skills and on improving transition arrangements from Nursery to Reception. Both these aspects of the school's work have had a good impact on children, and parents recognise this.
- A very few adults responsible for leading group phonics sessions are not entirely confident in the subject knowledge needed to teach phonics. When this happens, progress for small groups is limited. Occasionally, during these sessions, the most-able children complete tasks quickly and then have to wait for others to catch up. This limits the progress they could make. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to improve provision and outcomes in this area further.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe, nurturing environment for children. Children are well cared for. Children and their parents speak highly of the provision. Children in the Reception year now are well prepared socially and academically for their time in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	102734
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10011879

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	650
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Jackson
Headteacher	Mr David Wareham
Telephone number	020 8472 2743
Website	www.newcity.newham.sch.uk
Email address	info@newcity.newham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 April 2014

Information about this school

- New City Primary is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- A slightly larger than average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding. This is additional government funding to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, have a parent or carer in the armed forces or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils come from a range minority ethnic groups. The largest group of pupils are Bangladeshi, followed by Pakistani pupils. The next largest group are pupils with 'Any other White background'.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly average.
- There have been significant changes to the membership of the leadership team and to the governing body since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club.
- The school has recently started to benefit from the support of a national leader of education and from links with a local outstanding primary school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes except year 6 at least twice. Year 6 pupils were taking end-of-key-stage tests at the time of the inspection. Several observations were undertaken with senior leaders including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, acting headteacher and all senior leaders responsible for a phase group.
- Meetings were held with governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school. Pupils took inspectors on a curriculum 'tour' of the school.
- All leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Meetings were held with learning mentors.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, in lessons and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors attended assemblies.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised books in every classroom to see what progress pupils make and to look at the impact of the guidance teachers provide. Senior leaders scrutinised a range of books from Years 3, 4 and 5 with inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of 40 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and to information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. Inspectors also considered the school's own information from a recent parent questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered questionnaires from 29 members of staff. No pupils completed the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Melanie Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Joy Barter	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Thomas	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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