

Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

St James's Passage , Duke's Place, London EC3A 5DE

Inspection dates 18–19 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above those of most schools nationally by the end of Year 6
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage lays excellent foundations to help accelerate progress as pupils pass through the school from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Teaching is outstanding and reflects the energy and determination shown by staff, including support staff, which helps pupils to learn exceptionally well. Occasionally, limited resources mean teachers miss opportunities to use information and communication technology to extend learning even further.
- Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Pupils from all cultures and backgrounds learn and play well together. The vast majority of pupils are eager to learn. They enjoy learning and rise to the challenges provided by their teachers.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and show concern for, and interest in, the safety of others in school.
- School leaders, teachers and staff across the school have high expectations for the pupils and for themselves. They work closely with each other and with parents to ensure that pupils achieve well above national levels.
- Staff continually adjust the curriculum to respond to pupils' interests. As a result, pupils find learning purposeful and work tirelessly.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very strong across the school. The school is a very harmonious and supportive community. Pupils want to learn about the wider world, including its opportunities and difficulties.
- Governors know the school very well. They hold school leaders rigorously to account and ensure that all aspects of the school meet the highest standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons. This included four joint observations with the senior leaders and observations of pupils receiving additional support. In addition, the inspection team examined pupils' work in their books and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, four governors, including a conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body by telephone, senior and middle leaders and a representative from the Local Diocesan School Board.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), an additional 29 paper surveys of parents' views about the school and the 30 staff surveys returned to the inspection team.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including policies and improvement plans and documentation relating to staff development, pupil achievement, teaching, the curriculum, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mehar Brar, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gareth Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of girls is above the national average but variable across year groups.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is above average. In this school, these are pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.
- Over four fifths of the pupils, a much higher proportion than that found nationally, are from a range of minority ethnic groups. The remaining, and largest group of pupils, are from White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average, and the proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school does not send any pupils to be educated off-site in other institutions.
- A child and family centre on the site of the school provides early education and integrated childcare. This centre has been inspected separately. The latest report can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupil attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a partnership with another primary school in a neighbouring local authority. The schools share one executive headteacher and have separate governing bodies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across all topics in the curriculum to deepen and extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter the school with levels of skill and knowledge below those expected for their age. As a result of outstanding teaching, pupils of all abilities make rapid progress. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have reached levels well above the national average for English and mathematics. This high standard of achievement has been maintained over a number of years.
- Pupils requiring extra support are identified early and accurately. Teachers and support staff work well together to meet these pupils' needs through skilful support in class and highly effective small group teaching. They involve parents from an early stage in understanding how they can support their children at home. As a result, pupils who are entitled to free school meals, and therefore pupil premium funding, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have English as an additional language make similarly excellent progress compared to other pupils in the school. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls.
- The teaching of reading is very effective. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy learning about the sounds that letters make and joining these sounds together, because teachers take every opportunity to let children hear these sounds and practise them. Throughout the school, learning to read arises naturally out of the interests that pupils have, so they are highly motivated to read and almost all can do so accurately and fluently. They read extensively at school and at home. The high numbers of books read by most pupils is impressive.
- The development of speaking and listening skills is a strength throughout the school. Pupils speak confidently with each other and with adults from a very young age. They use the ideas they speak about to write imaginatively, clearly and accurately.
- Standards in mathematics are exceptionally high and, as with English, have been this way for a number of years. Every opportunity is taken to make sure that pupils can, for example, count and calculate accurately, and understand some of the complex ideas within equations. Pupils have opportunities to apply their learning across the curriculum.
- The school has a deeply held commitment to equal opportunities for all the pupils who learn and develop here. As one governor stated, 'We need to make sure no child falls through the net.' The school's results by the end of Year 6 bear this out. Standards are very high and most pupils make excellent progress. There are no gaps between the attainment and progress of any group of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium. Almost all parents rightly believe that their children make rapid progress in this school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching in the school is outstanding. Teachers and support staff have very high expectations, strong subject knowledge, and very effective relationships with pupils. As a result, over a number of years, most pupils from all abilities and backgrounds have made outstanding progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from being taught the formal curriculum, learning wider skills from the popular clubs that the school provides and developing the personal and social skills that pupils need in order to rise to the challenges of learning in school, and beyond school.
- Almost all pupils themselves make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. Typically, they are eager to learn, highly attentive, and think deeply about the ideas they are being taught. In one lesson, for example, they were discussing how highwaymen might be different from other types of robbers. In another lesson, they were evaluating detailed aspects of the design of a model car they were building.
- Teachers adjust the curriculum according to pupils' interests and current events, so no topic is ever taught in the same way more than once. This focus on pupils' interest helps pupils to concentrate for longer, work harder, think more clearly and put forward their own thoughts about what they are learning.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff know the children's needs very well. Staff form strong relationships with parents very quickly by involving and informing them about how the school will be helping their children learn and develop, and how they can help this happen more effectively. As a result, most children quickly become confident learners, with many opportunities to communicate, explore and learn alongside other children and adults.
- Reading and mathematics are taught very well. As well as structured teaching, staff miss no opportunity for pupils to practise the sounds that letters make, or understand better the key ideas in a text or recognise and use mathematical patterns and relationships within activities.
- Teachers use information and communication technology to make lessons more interesting, but the current limited resources sometimes hold back teachers' and pupils' efforts to accelerate learning even further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The inspection team agree with the views of parents and staff that behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. The school has had no reason to exclude any pupil in this school, and the records of behaviour incidents show that any type of behaviour incident is rare.
- Staff throughout the school show their commitment to the academic and personal success of pupils at this school by the courtesy and respect they show towards them. Pupils greatly value this. They learn from it and reflect it in their own behaviour.
- Pupils, parents and staff understand the systems in place to manage behaviour. They believe them to be fair and skilfully implemented. On the few occasions that pupils need to apply themselves better in lessons, a glance or a gentle word from staff is enough because of the mutual respect between staff and pupils, and the desire pupils have to learn.
- This school is proud of the diversity of cultures and backgrounds of the pupils who learn here and the way that they show interest in each other's lives. This is a very harmonious community where everybody believes that the experiences and traditions brought into the school enrich learning. As a result, there are no prejudice-driven incidents in this school of any type. The school is a valuable model for the wider community.
- All pupils feel safe in this school. They know how to keep themselves safe, and show concern for the safety and well-being of others. As well as holding positions of responsibility, such as anti-bullying ambassadors, the school works within a culture of shared responsibility, where staff act promptly to ensure the well-being of pupils. Older pupils are also well accustomed to responding to any signs of concern shown by younger children.
- The wide-ranging and integrated care provided by the school through breakfast and after-school clubs, the on-site children's centre and the work of the home-school family liaison colleague support the very high attendance of pupils.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders at all levels, and staff throughout the school, work as a dedicated, energetic and cohesive team. They have clearly defined responsibilities and share high expectations within a strong common purpose. Together they ensure that pupils receive a high quality of education that prepares them academically and as confident members of a community.
- Parents are valued as partners in learning from the very first day that their child joins the school. They speak with a clear understanding of school systems, such as the behaviour management system, and describe their children as enthusiastic, curious, eager and ambitious. Parents use ideas and workshops provided by the school to help their children continue learning at home. Inspectors agree with the many parents who believe this school be outstanding.

- School leaders' checks on how well the school is doing are accurate. The school continues to improve because leaders judge the quality of teaching accurately, and identify effective actions to further improve it. Teachers' targets for improvement are specifically linked to improvements in pupils' progress.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils is a central feature of all aspects of the school. The experiences that pupils are given at this school give them an understanding of historical and current events and opportunities to learn about rights and responsibilities. They also learn about the world of work by shadowing professionals in different occupations within the business, public service and arts sectors.
- The local authority and the London Diocesan Board for Schools provides regular advice and challenge. Training for school leaders is practical, innovative and effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are a committed and active team. They share the strong ambition and sense of direction evident throughout the school. They are knowledgeable about issues that are relevant to the performance of the school, and are supported with this through extensive training by the Local Diocesan Board for Schools. They challenge and support school leaders by, for example, ensuring that the executive headteacher role does not weaken their own school in any way. Their accurate knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching is based on first-hand visits to the school, and comprehensive and clear information provided by the executive headteacher. The progress of pupils receiving extra support through the pupil premium matches the excellent progress made by other pupils in the school. Governors scrutinise assessment data to ensure this is the case. They also ensure that performance management and staff progression are linked to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

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	100000
Local authority	City of London
Inspection number	411816

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Priest
Headteacher	Gerard Loughran (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2008
Telephone number	020 7283 1147
Fax number	020 7626 5071
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