

Shapla Primary School

Wellclose Square, London E1 8HY

Inspection dates

17–18 November 2015

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils in English, a key subject, are not consistently in line with or above the national average. Weaknesses in writing, which were identified at the previous inspection, have not been tackled rigorously.
- High standards are not sustained. Pupils' performance in English and mathematics varies too much.
- The rates of progress different groups of pupils make vary, especially in writing. For example, in 2015, the most-able pupils, those of Bangladeshi descent and girls did not all achieve as well as their respective group nationally.
- Robust assessment systems for tracking pupils' progress are not fully in place, particularly to show progression in writing from early years through to each key stage.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good or challenging in all subjects and this hinders most pupils making rapid progress.
- Leaders know and work very well with the community. However, they have not dealt swiftly with all known weaknesses from the previous inspection to ensure that their ambitious vision is sustained over time.
- The governing body is very involved in the school's work but have tended to rely too much on information given to them without delving into and checking the evidence.
- Leaders at all levels monitor the provision regularly but the quality varies across subjects.
- In the early years provision, low expectations have a negative impact on outcomes, particularly in writing, and on pupils' transition to Year 1.

The school has the following strengths

- Disadvantaged pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum is exciting and innovative and provides pupils with ample opportunities to research and make new discoveries.
- Pupils' behaviour and their personal well-being are good. They feel safe and simply love to learn.
- Inclusivity is very strong. The sterling support and provision for pupils with special educational needs or an education, health and care plan ensure that they are integrated and making expected progress.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that early years provision provides high-quality learning opportunities by developing and implementing a suitable system for recording and tracking children's progress in writing throughout the early years.
- Improve the rates of progress of pupils, particularly the most able and girls, by ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better through:
 - senior leaders taking a robust approach to using assessment information to challenge underperformance in mathematics and English
 - developing and implementing clear systems for developing pupils' writing skills so that grammar, spelling and punctuation are used accurately in English and across all subjects
 - developing the quality of marking in English so that pupils are given specific subject guidance on how they can improve the content of their work
 - staff working with pupils to develop their handwriting and presentation skills.
- Improve the quality of governance by requiring governors to carry out their own independent assessments of pupils' outcomes and the school's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, with the good support of the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, has developed a shared vision among staff. Although they have had a good impact in some areas of the school's work, the vision of high standards and rapid progress has not been sustained over time in all subjects.
- Since the last inspection, the school has not made good enough progress in tackling all areas for improvement. The plan to improve standards has not focused sharply enough on accelerating pupils' progress, particularly in writing. For example, pupils achieve very well in the national tests in grammar, punctuation and spelling, but teachers have not ensured that they apply these technical writing skills accurately. Additionally, handwriting and presentation skills are untidy. The school has not been swift to develop a discernible Shapla writing style. There is not a rigorous approach to reinforcing the policies on handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Senior leaders and the governing body engage in a number of helpful activities to monitor the effectiveness of the school's work. However, all leaders do not have an in-depth understanding of how well all groups are achieving. This is because:
 - analysis and use of assessment information is not used strategically to tease out how well different groups are achieving. Consequently, leaders' understanding of how well pupils are achieving differs. Furthermore, the focus on all pupils attaining expected progress has detracted them from assessing the rapidity of progress over time
 - whereas the mostly good-quality monitoring and feedback notes pick up and deal with weaknesses in mathematics and other subjects, this is not the same in English
 - systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress are not all completed.
- The senior leadership team have correctly identified the priorities for improvement and have put in place a development plan to make further improvements. However, measurable success criteria, milestones and timelines to assess the impact of actions are not all included. Inspection evidence did not support the leadership team's assessment that the school was still good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is checked regularly and a support system, including training, is provided for staff when weaknesses are identified. Leaders are aware of the need for consistency and have not hesitated in having difficult conversations with staff, as necessary.
- Performance management is linked well to teaching and there is a clear understanding that a pay award is not given unless the set criteria are met.
- The curriculum is well organised and planned with effective monitoring that focuses on teaching and learning. The choice of curriculum package provides breadth and depth on a range of subjects and topics. These enhance pupils' learning and give them a chance to discuss other cultures and faiths and explore complex topics. Good coverage of life in Britain, past and present, gives pupils a very good insight into British values and institutions. Enrichment activities through local trips, events and project work serve to develop their research skills.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good. This is integral to the work on British values and diversity which reaches out into the school, the locality and wider afield.
- The school is well known for its inclusivity. The leadership of the inclusion team is strong. This has led to pupils with special educational needs or an education, health and care plan receiving exceptionally good personalised care to help them achieve in most areas of the curriculum in line with national expectations.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding very well to support vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. The decisiveness in employing experienced and senior staff has meant that identified pupils are receiving personalised in-class support which is helping them to achieve good outcomes in reading and mathematics.
- The sports premium funding for primary schools is used effectively to provide expert coaching in traditional and top quality sports and to promote competitive sports. Participation has led to talents being nurtured in, for example, cricket and to pupils being scouted. Pupils gained memorable insights into world class sporting events when they visited the Olympic Park to watch a World Cup rugby match between South Africa and the USA.
- Following the last inspection, the school has tackled persistent absence well. The school works very well with partners such as the attendance welfare adviser, early help service to ensure that help and support are available to pupils and families, as needed.
- Leaders and governors are effective in carrying out their statutory duties to keep pupils safe. All adults

working with pupils are carefully checked. They have kept abreast of the national agenda in relation to providing appropriate training and development for staff on extremism and radicalisation, female genital mutilation and children missing education, as well as on other safeguarding matters. They are aware of the need to keep up to date with changes in priorities.

- Links with parents and the local community are mostly positive. Parents spoke positively about the school's work on diversity and use of workshops on subjects taught to increase their understanding of their children's learning. Parents very much appreciate the work of the parent support worker.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is actively engaged in the life of the school. All are linked to a subject or a specialist area such as safeguarding. However, although they are involved in consulting staff about the three-year development plan, they do not have a system in place to record the outcome and impact of their monitoring visits.
 - Governors have an accurate understanding of the expected rates of pupils' progress. However, published information is not used rigorously to hold the school to account for any weaknesses in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They have relied too heavily on the school's analysis of assessment information without seeking verification.
 - Governors use their expertise in finance, law and safeguarding to keep various areas of the school's work under scrutiny. For example, they know about the pupil premium funding to support eligible pupils and can comment on the impact of the spending. However, a link governor with responsibility for this work has not been appointed.
 - Governors supervise the headteacher's performance and are aware of the pay award of other members of staff.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good in all subjects. This has meant that pupils are making steady rather than rapid progress. Recent changes in staffing have not helped.
- Expectations of work, from early years through each key stage, are not always high enough for all pupils. Pupils and parents who spoke to inspectors indicated that work is not always challenging, particularly for the most-able pupils. For example, pupils said that, at times, even challenging work in mathematics is easy. The starting points of pupils are not always given sufficient consideration to ensure they can achieve as well as they could. The pupils all complete the same type of worksheets, which often removes any challenge for the most able.
- Most adults provide invaluable support for pupils with additional needs through working alongside them. Careful questioning, demonstrations, marking and explanation contribute to the pupils keeping up with their peers in lessons and progressing on to similar work. This was seen in Year 4 when pupils interpreted graphs. The high ratio of adults to pupils in some classes makes a big difference to the speed with which pupils learn.
- Pupils learn well when teachers review previous learning and deal with misconceptions using short summary discussions and feedback and throughout lessons. Good examples of these strengths were seen in both Year 2 and Year 6 lessons which involved the teachers constantly assessing the quality of pupils' written work. This gave pupils a great sense of achievement.
- Mathematics is a strong area of the school's work. A particular strength is the collaborative approach which teachers encourage. Good cooperative learning among pupils in Years 4 to 6 served to help them to work out answers. Good-quality marking in mathematics focuses on subject-specific comments that pupils need to address.
- In English, the quality of marking is not strong. Subject-specific comments in books and records of monitoring do not pinpoint technical weaknesses in pupils' work, including sentence structure, punctuation and grammar. As a result, there is insufficient focus on the quality of writing. The process of writing is not deliberated to enable pupils to develop their writing skills. They are not adept at editing their work and too many basic errors persist, such as omitting to use capital letters for nouns and omitting the apostrophe. The school is aware that pupils are not well versed in writing for a range of purposes, particularly creative and persuasive writing. Work has started on this and there is emerging evidence that pupils are developing the skills to use language imaginatively to convey meaning, as seen in their poems to create the scene in

Macbeth when he meets the witches on the heath. Writing remains the weakest element in the English curriculum.

- The school has recently introduced a reading record to promote reading but it is too early to comment on the impact. Parents welcome this. Guided reading does not always have sufficient pace to engage pupils or enable them immediately in the text. The home learning projects provide pupils with an opportunity to develop research skills and delve into a range of reading materials. However, skills to extract and represent information and develop good writing and learning across the curriculum are not exploited fully. The projects are also not marked to provide guidance to pupils on improving their comprehension and writing skills.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. It is particularly good in the topic work, personal and social education and in mathematics. Insufficient attention is given to commenting on how pupils can extend their skills.

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 self-assured and mature and are clear about why learning is important to them. All spoken to outlined their future ambitions. They are self-motivated and keen to learn; nothing is too hard for them to try.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and visitors. The school's policy which includes pupils using first names when speaking to adults is not abused. Relationships between pupils and with staff are strong.
- Pupils accept responsibilities as council members, librarians, eco-warriors and as charity workers.
- Leaders have worked hard with the parent support worker, attendance and welfare advisers and other external agencies to improve attendance. Better systems, including a reward system, penalty notices, intervention of the welfare officer and other agencies, mean that attendance is now slightly above the national average. Persistent absence is much improved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, like their children, say that behaviour is indeed good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Pupils work very well together; they respect one another and embrace the school's values; they are happy, collaborate well, show creativity in their work, demonstrate the ability to relate to others and show respect and independence. They are highly motivated and enjoy being challenged and readily embrace the school's approach to developing 'international mindedness' when considering other cultures outside their experience.
- The school's records of behaviour incidents show that there are few examples of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils value the reward system and the strong sense of community means that few want to take time out to reflect on why the 'golden rules' were broken.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge of being safe in their school. The visibility of staff at all times throughout the school day reassures them and their parents. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of potential dangers when using the internet and are aware of what it means to 'trust' someone. They know about different forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. Pupils are clear that bullying is rare in their school. This is linked to the strong community spirit which the school has engendered. Pupils know that they can turn to a friend or an adult to support and help them.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes have varied each year since the last inspection in both key stages. Whereas the 2014 Key Stage 2 results were high and the best for three years, the high standards reached have not been sustained. In 2015, outcomes in the national tests were average and pupils' rates of progress were in line with the national average. However, this masks the relative strengths and weaknesses in subjects among different groups of pupils. Outcomes in Key Stage 1 were better, but were significantly below the standard expected nationally.
- At Key Stage 2, attainment in mathematics was significantly above the standard expected nationally, as it was in the proportion of pupils reaching similar standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Attainment in reading was not significantly different from the national average but writing was significantly below for all groups of pupils in both key stages, overall. School-based assessment information and scrutiny of pupils'

work confirm that this trend remains. Teachers are at the early stage of improving pupils' writing skills.

- The proportion of the most-able pupils who attained the higher levels and made good progress against similar pupils nationally was above in mathematics, average in reading and below in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the additional funding achieved outcomes that were at or above the standard expected nationally. They made better progress in reading and mathematics than the national averages and their peers in the school. Outcomes in writing were, however, significantly below average as they were for all pupils in the school. This disparity in outcomes in writing has widened the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils because too few made more than the expected progress when compared with their peers and the national average. Disadvantaged pupils were over two terms behind their peers in writing, less than one term behind in mathematics and at least one term ahead of all pupils, including their peers in the school, in reading.
- Based on the starting points of the very few pupils with special needs or with a statement and/or an education, health and care plan, these pupils achieved outcomes in line with expectations. In 2015, their progress in writing was low. However, this is accounted for by their specific learning needs. The school's alternative assessment records confirm that they made stronger progress than expected in reading, writing and mathematics. This is linked to the school's awareness of their needs and highly effective support provided. Across the school, these groups of pupils make the same progress as other pupils.
- In 2015, girls underperformed in all subjects, particularly in writing when compared with boys. While this is not a continuous pattern of achievement, the school is alert to girls not being assertive and has taken steps to provide opportunities to increase their confidence.
- Outcomes for pupils from a Bangladeshi background were lower than average for similar groups nationally at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. On the other hand, it was significantly above for the few pupils from other cultural heritages.
- Children in early years make similar progress to other pupils in the main school.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- A minority of children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. In all areas, the other children's skills are well below those expected for their ages.
- Children make progress in line with the national average. Recorded outcomes in 2014 were lower than the national average and did not give an accurate record of children's skills because assessment information was submitted too early. The moderated 2015 outcomes showed a significant rise that was in line with the national average in the proportion of children reaching the attainment typically found for their age in all areas of learning. Boys do less well than girls and require more direction to stay on task.
- Differences in outcomes are directly linked to the quality of tracking. This is particularly so for the tracking of writing development which is difficult to assess because evidence is not collected over time. Additionally, children are not tracked in all key activities; their interests lead their choices without a clear steer.
- Leaders' expectations of what children can achieve are not always high and neither are all groups challenged sufficiently. In Reception, 'special books' do not currently show how staff track children's progress. Notes of children's progress are made but do not show how they are used to improve outcomes.
- The new early years leader is providing strong leadership and understands the support children require for them to make better progress. As a result, since the start of the new school year, the quality of learning is stronger in Nursery; it is also better than in Reception. This has a direct impact on pupils' outcomes and the transition process to Reception and Key Stage 1. The school is aware of this and plans are being rolled out to offer more support and raise expectations and outcomes. This includes, for example, the use of portfolios to show development and progression over time.
- Preparation for transition to Year 1 is not as strong as it could be and has implications as pupils move up the school. As a result, there is a sharper focus on providing more opportunities for children to develop their writing. Children are encouraged to use English as the main medium of communication with each other and adults. All members of staff constantly model in English. The development of reading skills is stronger than writing.
- Good emphasis on developing children's reading skills during phonics sessions leads to children blending sounds and reading out simple words either as a class or independently. ('Phonics' means letters and the sounds they make.) They demonstrate good phonics knowledge and skills which enable them to pronounce more complex words such as 'grass' and 'cold'.
- Leaders and teachers do not ensure that children engage fully in free-flow activities, and when they take part in outdoor activities, such as in a treasure hunt, they quickly lose interest. Although activities provide

rich potential for developing children's language skills, opportunities to extend their skills are not used well as children move from task to task quickly. The deployment of adults is not as effective as it could be in raising the learning opportunities within activities.

School details

Unique reference number	100935
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10001493

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	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Campbell
Headteacher	Tim Barnes
Telephone number	020 7480 5829
Website	www.shaplaprimary.co.uk/
Email address	head@shapla.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2012

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school with a Nursery and one Reception class.
- The school makes full-time provision for most of the 22 children with very few attending part time.
- A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the additional government funding provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of children who are of minority ethnic heritage is high, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Most pupils are from a Bangladeshi background.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was converted from a Section 8 short inspection to a full Section 5 over two days.
- Inspectors observed 17 parts of lessons, some of them jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They also carried out short visits to a number of lessons and scrutinised work independently or with the senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, three groups of pupils and a group of parents. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at the school's work , including the school self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's information on pupils' progress, pupils' work, as well as documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance, provision for pupils with special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. They also scrutinised other documents on leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses from parents and carers recorded in Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire. The school's internal survey on a wide range of provision was also considered.

Inspection team

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