

# Blue Gate Fields Infants' School

King David Lane, Wapping, London, E1 0EH

**Inspection dates** 7–8 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Leaders and governors have ensured that recent changes in leadership have not slowed the pace of improvement. All have high expectations for pupils' achievement and personal development.
- The acting headteacher has maintained good standards since the previous inspection. She is determined to make sure the school's performance continues to improve. Staff morale is high and everyone is united in making Blue Gate Fields the best it can be.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. All pupils are set ambitious attainment targets. Unvalidated results this year are likely to remain above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years also make good, and sometimes rapid, progress from their low starting points. There is a rising trend in levels of attainment in this part of the school.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are well supported by teaching assistants. Together, they make sure that learning activities enable children and pupils to achieve well. Assessments are used effectively to check pupils' levels of understanding. These inform interventions that boost their progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. All adults have high expectations and consistently apply the systems for managing pupils' behaviour.
- The school engages with and promotes the confidence of parents. Leaders make sure that their views are listened and responded to. Parents are confident that their children are well taught and that their safety is paramount.
- Pupils are kept safe. The school's systems to protect children and pupils from potential danger are good. Leaders, other professionals and agencies work closely together to ensure all pupils are kept as safe as possible. Pupils are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all middle leaders have been given full responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and pupil achievement. As a result, some inconsistencies remain in these two aspects of the school's performance.
- Improvement plans lack clarity. They do not have measurable targets to check the progress the school is making in key areas.
- Attendance for a small minority of children, particularly boys, remains low in the early years. This limits the progress these children make.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of learning activities across both key stages and subjects. These included 16 longer visits to lessons and two shorter visits to multiple lessons as part of two learning walks. Some of the observations were jointly undertaken with senior leaders. Pupils' books from different year groups and subjects were scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with the acting headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with several middle leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was also held with the local authority representative. Inspectors met with several groups of pupils and spoke to them informally throughout the inspection.
- There were insufficient parental views expressed through the Parent View survey to be considered. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day and examined the school's latest parent survey.
- Inspectors reviewed the 30 staff questionnaires returned during the inspection.
- The inspection team scrutinised information about achievement and the assessment of learning. The inspectors examined any records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was carried out.

## Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynne Kauffman

Additional Inspector

Maura Docherty

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Blue Gate Fields is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Of these, almost all pupils are from a Bangladeshi heritage and most speak English as an additional language. This is well above the national average. Most children when they start school are in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. The majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties and/or are on the autistic spectrum. A high proportion of these pupils has a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost one in two pupils is eligible for support through pupil premium funding. This is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding given to schools for disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for free school meals or are children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has full- and part-time nursery provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were appointed in January 2015. The acting headteacher will become the substantive headteacher from September 2015.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to reinforce the importance of parents sending their children to school every day so that pupils always achieve their full potential, particularly the boys.
- Eliminate the small inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and rates of progress by holding middle leaders fully to account for the quality of teaching and pupil achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Sharpen improvement plans so that:
  - all actions have measurable targets and regular milestones which are precisely linked to the areas that need to get better
  - leaders at all levels, including governors, can monitor the impact of their work accurately.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher has sustained an inclusive culture where everyone strives for the very best in all areas of the school's work. These high expectations and attention to equality of opportunity mean that all pupils make at least good progress and behave well, irrespective of ability, gender or background. Discrimination of any type is not tolerated.
- The acting headteacher has created an outward looking school which is keen to work in partnership with other professionals. Work has already begun in sharing effective practice and expertise with other schools.
- The school's work with parents is strong. Parents appreciate the opportunities the school provides for them to be fully involved in their child's education. Numerous workshops help them support their child at home, for example in reading and in mathematics. Following consultation with parents, the school has also provided e-safety training and has helped parents to improve their English speaking skills through weekly clubs. Parents who inspectors spoke to were unanimously positive and appreciative of all the school does for their child and for them.
- Self-evaluation is based on accurate monitoring of teaching. Senior leaders have also secured accurate assessments of pupil progress through internal moderation, and through external checks with the local authority and another infant school. At present, however, assessments are not moderated with the junior school which shares the same site. This information, including rigorous tracking systems, secures a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It also ensures that those pupils whose progress slows have immediate and effective support.
- Teachers are provided with clear feedback on how they can improve the quality of their practice. Leaders provide good support and guidance through coaching and mentoring colleagues, particularly for those who are in the early stages of their career. All teachers have whole school and personal improvement targets based on this monitoring. As a result, the profile of teaching continues to improve and almost all is now consistently good or better.
- Many middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. They have taken the lead on the development of the curriculum and assessment strategies. However, they do not monitor the impact of their work on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. As a consequence, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. These include the effectiveness of teachers' feedback and challenge for the more able pupils in mathematics, and depth of learning in mathematics across the curriculum. Furthermore, they have yet to manage the performance of their colleagues for their key areas of responsibility.
- Leaders' and governors' allocation and use of additional funds are good. The primary sport funding allows specialist teachers to improve teachers' and pupils' skills in a wide range of activities. Additional physical education lessons and a plethora of sports clubs now operate throughout the day, including at lunch time. The pupil premium supports a wide range of interventions and enrichment activities, such as Forest School. This provides relevant, practical activities to enable all children to learn effectively and make at least good progress. Any identified achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils in school are closing quickly.
- The curriculum provides an appropriate balance of subjects that meets the needs of all pupils. It is carefully planned across all key stages and covers all the required areas of learning. Focus weeks provide pupils to explore a wide range of themes in real life contexts. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in trips to famous landmarks in London. This gives parents the impetus, skills and confidence to visit places of interest beyond the local community in the school holidays to enrich their child's learning experiences. Numerous opportunities are provided for pupils to explore and appreciate diversity, through assemblies, lessons and visits to places of worship. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education and for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders make sure that safeguarding checks and child protection procedures are in place. Training is up to date and all staff know the necessary safeguarding procedures. Senior leaders emphasise that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard pupils. When concerns arise, they refer these immediately to other agencies and follow up referrals diligently. Liaison work with external agencies to secure the best outcomes for both pupils and parents is good.
- Plans for improvement are focused on the right priorities. Nonetheless, these plans lack measurable targets and regular checks which, in turn, prevent leaders from monitoring and measuring the success of their actions. Equally, this means that governors are not able to hold leaders fully to account for their work.
- The local authority has confidence in the school's performance. It provides effective and timely support and advice, including regular checks on the school's evaluations. They have brokered support from an

experienced and successful headteacher to mentor the relatively new acting headteacher.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are led by a very experienced and committed Chair. All governors are well informed about the school's performance. They have good insight into the complexity of the community in which the school serves. They know what the potential barriers to learning are, and make sure that the school does all it can to break these down. As a result, they know that teaching is good and that all pupils make at least good or better progress. They make sure that good performance is rewarded and that the pupil premium funding is used effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make as much progress as their peers.
- Governors annually review their own skills set to make sure that they have the ability to both support and challenge leaders. They receive clear and candid information via the acting headteacher's report and they gather their own information. Specific governors visit classes to observe pupils' learning, and they gather and act upon the views expressed by parents on a regular basis. Governors make sure that all statutory arrangements are met, including for safeguarding. Procedures are robust to secure pupils' safety and well-being. Governors have recently undertaken training on how to recognise and combat extremism and radicalisation. They have ensured that key members of staff have also undertaken this training.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are keen to learn and do their best. They behave well, both inside and outside the classroom. The school is an orderly place where pupils calmly move from class to class and outside. Pupils get on well with each other in both their work and play. They cooperate well, and show respect and courtesy for everyone.
- The school has a clear and effective behaviour policy which is applied consistently by all staff. Pupils respond positively to the rewards and are keen to be recognised and rewarded with a 'rainbow' award rather than a 'cloud' sanction. As a result, teachers are able to concentrate on promoting good learning and progress.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to appreciate and respect different cultures and religions. They visit different places of worship, for example the local church, synagogue and mosque. They also benefit from the ethnic diversity amongst the staff. Assemblies, circle time, religious education and personal, social and health education lessons offer pupils with many opportunities to understand what is right and wrong and to reflect on their own and others' behaviour.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Careful checks are made on new staff to make sure they are suitable to work with pupils. Child protection training is up to date and all staff, including those new to the school, know how to record and report any concerns they may have.
- Unkind acts between pupils are extremely rare at Blue Gate Fields. This is because relationships between adults and pupils are strong and supportive. The school's ethos of inclusivity and equality gives pupils a keen sense of 'doing the right thing' and looking after one another. There are no incidents of bullying of any kind recorded for the last three years.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They are beginning to be taught how to assess personal risk, and how to stay safe and healthy. There are many themed weeks which focus on road safety, healthy lifestyles, and learning about the different types of bullying, including how to keep safe when using computers. They learn about differences between people. They know that there are some who are less fortunate than themselves and gladly raise funds for different charities.
- The school's work to improve attendance has been successful for most groups of learners. The home school liaison officer works closely with parents and the local authority officers. Attendance has steadily risen over the last three years and is now average. However, some children miss out on vital lessons because their parents do not send their child to nursery because of minor ailments. Absence figures are also compounded by a small minority of parents who continue to take their children on holiday during term time.
- Staff work closely with a wide range of professionals, including speech therapists and agencies to support the needs of vulnerable pupils and ensure they are kept safe. The family liaison officer provides vital and much appreciated support for potentially vulnerable families. The school is an oasis of calm and harmony for pupils, and also for parents who appreciate the welcoming atmosphere. Parents say that the outdoor

area with sensory plants and colourful displays of flowers is like 'sitting in the park' as they wait for their children at the end of the school day. The breakfast club provides a positive and healthy start to the school day and is well attended by both pupils and parents.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers work very well together, as they do with the large number of teaching assistants. They make sure that activities are well matched to the interests and ability of all learner groups. As a result, all pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In many lessons, work is set at an appropriate level of difficulty for pupils' abilities. When pupils find work is a little too difficult for them, extra support from their teacher or teaching assistants usually helps them to cope well. In some mathematics lessons, however, tasks lack challenge and do not help the most able pupils make really rapid progress. Occasionally, pupils will complete work quickly with no follow up work to stretch their thinking.
- Teachers successfully engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers and teaching assistants ask focused questions to assess pupils' understanding and to clarify and extend pupils' learning
- An emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills has led to improvements in this area. Pupils produce work of increasing sophistication during the course of the year. Regular visits to places of interest have widened their experiences and provided them with relevant and stimulating contexts for their writing.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils are encouraged to read and share books and stories regularly. This has quickly developed their love of reading. Pupils watched a video of Michael Rosen reading his 'chocolate' poem and, encouraged by their teacher, read a poem by Allan Ahlberg with expression, intonation and amazing confidence to the class. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) helps pupils to use this knowledge to read words that are new to them independently. Pupils' achievement in reading is good.
- Teachers have also made sure that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their basic calculation skills. Work in books confirms that this is now well embedded. Pupils display fluency in their work and evidence shows that these key skills are built on systematically. Nonetheless, although pupils are given some number problems to solve, there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply their skills in other subjects to deepen their understanding and to challenge their thinking. This is particularly so for the most able pupils.
- Teachers' feedback is effective in writing, as it clarifies what pupils have done well and what they need to work on next. However, pupils do not have the same quality guidance in mathematics. This means that they rarely have the chance to practise or deepen their skills and understanding in this subject, which restricts progress, particularly for the more able pupils.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- In 2014, attainment was above average. Attainment in reading and mathematics was a term ahead of what is expected nationally, and in writing almost two terms ahead. Provisional results for 2015 suggest that attainment will remain above average in all three subjects.
- Pupils' current work supports the accuracy of school assessments. Work in books reflects good achievement in both writing and mathematics. Pupils practise their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in relevant contexts. They use their calculation skills fluently and confidently in practical mathematical activities.
- In 2014, Year 1 pupils achieved just above the national average in the phonic check. Indications for 2015 suggest that this will improve further. Phonics is taught regularly and thoroughly, so that all ability groups are suitably challenged which moves their learning on quickly.
- Girls outperform boys, particularly in literacy. Nevertheless, boys still achieved better than all pupils nationally in 2014. This will almost certainly be replicated in 2015. Newly purchased literacy resources provide a stimulating context which motivates both boys and girls to read and write for a purpose. Nonetheless, boys could achieve even more if they attended school as regularly as the girls in the early years.
- The most able pupils attained above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the higher levels. Nonetheless, more work is required to make sure that more-able pupils achieve their full potential in all year groups.
- Disabled pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. The interim leaders of special needs have built on previous effective practice. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked, so that leaders know how

effective strategies are in supporting pupils. This information is used well to plan next steps in learning. Resources, including teaching assistants, are well targeted to provide effective support and guidance.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Their language skills accelerate in the early years. This continues in Key Stage 1. Adults seize every opportunity to extend pupils' vocabulary and comprehension. These pupils achieve as well as their peers.
- The in-school gap between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils was almost a term behind in all the core subjects in 2014. Compared to all pupils nationally, there were no discernible differences in reading and mathematics, and in writing this group was a term ahead of all pupils nationally. Once more, the school's recent assessments and work in books confirm that the gap remains minimal.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children's skills are below those typical for their age when they join the school. This is particularly so in communication and language as most children speak Bangladeshi as their first language. Children quickly become fluent and confident in speaking English. Adults are skilled in developing language through conversation, effective modelling of speaking Standard English and through intensive one-to-one support.
- In 2014 just over three quarters of children achieved a good level of development, which was broadly in line with the national average. In 2015 the school's information indicates that this will rise to four in five children.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning. They make rapid progress in their language and communication and literacy skills. Their progress is well documented in their 'special books'. Children are well prepared for the demands of Year 1 both academically and personally.
- Assessments are used effectively so that activities build effectively on what children know and can do. Gaps in teaching and learning are identified quickly to secure good achievement. No child is left behind. Children with complex needs have tailored support from staff, speech and language therapists, one-to-one mentoring and play therapy.
- Opportunities for children to practise their emerging writing skills are evident, both inside and outside the classroom. Children use their phonic skills well to help them spell words. There are numerous activities for children to develop their mathematical skills. Nonetheless, more able children are not always consistently challenged to achieve more in mathematics in the Nursery.
- Adults are skilled in creating an environment which is both stimulating and supportive. Activities are relevant and capture children's interests to sustain their concentration. Children are confident to try out new experiences. They share resources and work cooperatively together. They feel safe and are kept safe.
- An exceptionally strong partnership is fostered with parents. Parents talk to staff during the school day to discuss any concerns, issues or to receive general updates on their child's progress. This effective bond of trust is established which is continued as children progress through to Key Stage 1.
- The early years provision is led and managed very well. Teamwork is strong. Staff share the same goals, so that all children make good progress and their welfare is safeguarded. Information is used well to plan for further improvements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100915
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	448203

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Amjad Rahi
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 77903611
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