

St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101129
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	395383
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Jennifer Barker

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Luke Irvine-Capel
Headteacher	Miss Sue McMahon
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2007
School address	Churchill Gardens Road London SW1V 3AG
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jennifer Barker

Additional inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by seven teachers as well as making six shorter visits to classrooms. Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke with parents, carers, groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, school improvement planning, the school's self-evaluation and leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning. Inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses of 162 parents and carers, 20 staff and a sample of 100 pupils.

Information about the school

St Gabriel's is an average-sized primary school and all pupils come from the local community. The school is over-subscribed. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritages is about three times the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There have been some significant staffing issues in the past two years which have now been resolved through the appointment of new staff, some of whom have joined the school very recently. The senior and middle leadership teams were restructured in September 2011. The school has been accredited with a range of awards including Green Flag eco-status as well the Artsmark silver award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- St Gabriel's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their attainment is broadly average. They make the progress expected of them, though this is variable across the school and better in Key Stage 1. There are some signs of improvement. A whole-school focus on raising achievement in mathematics has had a positive impact and current data indicate that, following a dip in performance, pupils are now on track to reach average levels at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons with a range of activities so pupils enjoy their learning. The new leadership team has rightly initiated changes across the curriculum to support the development of purposeful writing and application of mathematics skills. However, in some lessons there is insufficient challenge, particularly for the more able, and variations in the quality of marking mean that not all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and agree that their children are safe. Inspectors were particularly impressed by behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils across all cultures relate well to each other through the many activities in the small playground area.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has tackled difficult staffing issues effectively and new staff teams are working productively to bring about improvements. There is an extensive programme of monitoring but the impact of this is reduced by lack of sharp focus, for instance on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Consequently, staff do not have a common understanding of the key things that produce excellence in teaching. The lack of focus is partly a consequence of a school improvement plan which, while capturing the school's main priorities, is much wider in scope. This makes it difficult for the governing body to monitor the school's progress rigorously.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - tightening school improvement planning and its evaluation so both are closely focused on the key priorities for improving progress
 - ensuring that staff at all levels have a shared understanding of the key features of excellence in teaching
 - ensuring that monitoring and evaluation of teaching give sufficient attention to its impact on learning and progress.

- Improve teaching to at least good by:
 - ensuring that assessment is used effectively in planning and during the lesson, so that there is suitable challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able
 - improving the balance of lessons so pupils move quickly to active learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work in groups to investigate ideas, share their findings and evaluate their work
 - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to respond to marking that gives clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter school in Reception with skills that are below, and frequently well below, those expected for their age. They make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across Key Stage 1. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in English has been average for the last two years: in mathematics it fell to below average. Following changes in staffing, a school focus on mathematics has recently accelerated progress. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is now broadly average and progress is satisfactory. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books shows that progress is inconsistent across year groups and is better in Years 2 and 6. On occasion, progress in lessons slows because teachers talk to the whole class for too long and pupils do not move quickly enough to active learning.

Parents and carers comment very positively about their children's progress at the school. Inspectors confirm that pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals, make adequate progress, but found that not all pupils are challenged to learn more rapidly, particularly those who are more able. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported through the wide range of additional interventions,

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particularly in mathematics, reading and social and listening skills. They learn as well as the rest of the class and so make at least satisfactory, and sometimes better, progress. As a result, some are starting to close the gap on pupils nationally.

When listening to pupils read, inspectors found that pupils are able to apply their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to decode unknown words. They are able to use initial sounds to work out short words, although multi-syllabic words are more of a challenge. As they develop understanding, they are able to self-correct when the text does not make sense. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress over time to reach average standards in reading at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils have opportunities to write in a range of styles across the curriculum. Although pupils' handwriting has improved since the previous inspection, and pupils are using a cursive script, this is variable across year groups. Relationships are good between pupils and adults and, when given the opportunity, pupils discuss their work well: writing, for example, is sometimes developed well through sharing ideas and vocabulary. Pupils are increasing in confidence when applying their skills in mathematics and are able to use a range of calculation strategies to solve problems.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory overall: it is improving and has some good features. No inadequate or outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers typically have good subject knowledge and behaviour is managed well. Inspectors saw some good examples of innovative applications of information and communication technology, such as video clips and the use of camcorders and tape recorders to support pupils' language development and improve their writing skills. Lessons are soundly structured to ensure that ideas are developed in the right order. However, although teachers plan and set different tasks for groups of pupils, there is sometimes too much whole-class teaching. When this happens, though lower-ability pupils are steered through with additional adult support, higher-ability pupils make slower progress because they are given work that does not fully challenge them.

The use of individual writing boards for pupils to practise their skills is effective in some lessons, for example by extending sentences through the use of connectives in writing. Use of the boards also helps teachers to see quickly which pupils understand well and which are struggling. Inspectors saw few opportunities for pupils to work in groups to investigate ideas and to share their findings or evaluate their work against given criteria. As a result, opportunities to involve pupils better in their learning were sometimes missed.

Teachers track pupils' progress effectively and quickly identify those who are falling behind. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is satisfactory. Well-structured intervention programmes for groups and individuals, using practical resources and games, are enjoyed by pupils and make an effective contribution to their progress.

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There is some good practice in marking, but this is inconsistent so pupils are sometimes unclear about how to improve their work. Better practice includes giving positive comments and areas for improvement, such as developing spelling, correcting misconceptions in mathematics and extending writing, and pupils commented on how helpful they find these comments.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The good and sometimes exemplary behaviour of pupils is a key factor in the success of the school as a welcoming and harmonious community. Parents and carers are very positive about these areas of school life: one commented, 'The school provides a safe and caring environment for my son, who is very proud to be a part of the community.' Discussions with pupils confirmed that good behaviour is typical in the school. The high level of support and action planning for pupils with identified behavioural difficulties is having a good impact on improving their behaviour. There have been no exclusions for 10 years and behaviour incidents in lessons have greatly reduced in the last two years. Teachers manage behaviour well in lessons, having a variety of strategies and a common approach across the school. As a result, though pupils can lose concentration when work does not challenge or engage them in active learning, disruption is rare.

Pupils were very clear about how much they enjoy school and they know how to keep themselves safe. They understand issues related to cyber and racist bullying and say there is no racism in the school. Records show there have been no racist incidents in recent years. Pupils understand that bullying such as name-calling can be hurtful. They have strategies to deal with it themselves and know that adults listen to them and that any incidents will be resolved. There are reminders through services and assemblies about helping others. The system of vertical grouping in the school creates opportunities for older pupils to look after younger ones and, as a result, younger pupils feel safer and there is a greater sense of belonging within the school. Over time, attendance is average, with evidence of recent improvement. School data show that in this school year up to the inspection, attendance has been above average. The school's close work with families underpins the rise in overall attendance rates and a reduction in persistent absenteeism.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have dealt successfully with significant staffing issues and have remedied some areas of weakness, demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve. Strengths are evident in the effective way the school communicates and engages with parents and carers. They find the headteacher particularly approachable and know the school listens to their concerns and supports them. Safeguarding systems meet requirements, including training for child protection and safe recruitment. Pupils' progress is tracked systematically across the school. The school's promotion of equality is sound and discrimination is not tolerated. Some subject development plans, for example mathematics, use effective assessment and review of pupils' work in order to set the next key priorities. However, school

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improvement planning, while including key areas such as writing and mathematics, also covers many other elements, so it is hard to focus the school's efforts. Monitoring of teaching does not give close enough attention to the impact of particular aspects of teaching on learning in the lesson. Consequently, it does not make a strong contribution to the school's evaluation of exactly what the priorities for improvement are. Staff are committed to improvement, but do not all share an understanding of what they are aiming for in terms of the most successful teaching strategies.

The governing body, which has supported the school through the staff changes, provides a satisfactory level of challenge to the school's leaders. However, the school improvement plan's broad agenda dilutes focus so that reports from leaders and of governors' visits to the school are not systematically linked to key priorities.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it provides a sound framework for teaching. Although there are limited opportunities for pupils to extend their learning about different faiths and beliefs, there are strengths in the opportunities for their social and moral development. Cultural development is supported through visits to art galleries and study of the work of different artists. Improvements to cross-curricular planning for literacy and numeracy are underway through the efforts of the enthusiastic and cohesive team of middle leaders.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School, London, SW1V 3AG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Thanks go particularly to those of you who talked to us about your school or filled in questionnaires. We were impressed by the good relationships you have with each other as well as how much you enjoy your school environment and all the activities at breaks and lunchtimes. You told us that you also enjoy going on many trips, including to art galleries, museums and the Houses of Parliament, and that these experiences help you develop your writing, creativity and knowledge of the world. You also said that you feel safe in school because teachers and other adults will help you if you are worried about anything.

Although there are many positive things about your school, there is room for improvement. We have asked your headteacher and other leaders to do the following things.

- Sharpen the way they plan to improve the school, so they are concentrating on the most important things.
- Make sure everyone understands how to improve teaching so that you can make better progress.
- Be sure the work you are given is hard enough.
- Get you actively involved in learning as quickly as possible, and in sharing your ideas and evaluating your work.
- Make sure marking always tells you what you do well and how to improve.

You can all help by continuing to behave well and doing your best at all times. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Barker
Lead inspector

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