

Saint Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School

Kingsman Street, London, SE18 5PW

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Exceptionally skilled leadership, vibrant learning experiences and high-quality teaching enable pupils to achieve outstandingly well.
- In English and mathematics, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is much higher than in most schools nationally.
- Teachers' outstanding use of imaginative and innovative methods captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm. As a result all pupils, regardless of their starting points, make excellent progress.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils. Their first-rate marking of pupils' work and constructive guidance in lessons guide their next steps in learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they feel extremely safe. Pupils enjoy attending very much and many hardly miss a day in school.
- Leaders, staff and governors have secured excellence in nearly every aspect of the school's work. They continually check on what works well and what needs improving to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met.
- The range of work covered in Years 1 to 6 is highly imaginative and practical and meets the interests and aspirations of all pupils in the school.
- The school's very caring atmosphere underpins pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in parts of 19 lessons. Two joint observations were conducted with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, teachers, two representatives of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and pupils.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documentation including, the school's checks on its performance, plans for improvement, day-to-day health and safety arrangements, including checks on staffing, policies and records of pupils' progress.
- The inspection team took account of 11 responses to the online 'Parent View' survey, along with the schools' recent survey of parents' and carers' views.

Inspection team

Kewal Goel, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Kath Beck

Additional inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is currently expanding. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes. There are two classes in each year group from Years 1 to 3 and one class in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The school moved into a new building on its original site in March 2011.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well above the national average, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through extra 'pupil premium' funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is similar to most schools.
- The proportion of pupils with severe special educational needs, supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is higher than usually found.
- The senior leadership team provides support for a local primary school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help all children to develop independence and make even more rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by allowing them to choose more of their activities themselves, solve harder problems and talk with adults about what they are learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The school has been extremely successful in sustaining pupils' high levels of achievement during its rapid expansion. All groups of pupils make excellent progress. By the time they leave, pupils are very well prepared for their time in secondary school. Their essential skills in English and mathematics are mastered to a high degree and they are confident in applying them in different subjects.
- Pupils of all ages read widely and with enjoyment. Their writing is lively, imaginative and captures the interest and emotions of the reader. Pupils cover a great deal of work in mathematics and are confident in tackling mathematical ideas that are not usually encountered until they are much older.
- Children join the school with skills and knowledge that are below expectations for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. They continue to make good progress in the Reception classes, especially when in developing their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. A few children are not confident to learn on their own, solve difficult problems without adult help or discuss what they are learning. However, nearly all start Year 1 with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are much higher than those usually found for their age.
- Teachers ensure that pupils build extremely well on their previous learning in Key Stage 1. Much of the teaching appeals to pupils' interests and imagination. They make rapid gains in their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Most enter Year 3 writing confidently, using joined up handwriting, and using their excellent knowledge of the sounds letters make to spell correctly.
- Pupils who are capable of doing harder work rise to the challenges provided by their teachers and make outstanding progress. In 2012, 50% of pupils attained higher than expected levels of attainment in English and more than 60% in mathematics.
- Skilled and directed support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, means they make excellent progress. Some have individually planned activities that meet their specific needs very well. The use of the extra 'pupil premium' funding is highly effective, so that those pupils for whom it provides support make outstanding progress.
- Making sure everyone gets an equal chance to succeed, while valuing the differences in backgrounds and beliefs of pupils, is central to the work of the school. Many lessons include activities related to the different cultures in the school. This makes learning meaningful and relevant to everyday life. For example, when learning about how shapes fit together, Year 2 pupils explored the patterns in clothing materials from Nigeria and Ghana.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently outstanding in Years 1 to 6. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, they plan motivating and captivating learning experiences, use skilful questioning and place a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers make clear at the start of every lesson what pupils are expected to learn in their work, and the high level of challenge set helps them to achieve as well as they can. This makes a very important contribution to the rapid rates of pupils' learning.
- Teachers use a variety of approaches to meet and respond to pupils' different learning needs. As a result, pupils are highly interested and motivated to learn and make outstanding progress. For example, in Year 6, pupils responded really well to the teacher's high level of challenge to explore ways to make a reader react to a piece of writing. Pupils conscientiously shared their ideas about the feelings of two young evacuees, one who was sad and the other who saw it as a time of adventure. Their determination to write about how one or the other character may have felt was first rate.

- Teachers' planning is thorough and takes into account fully the skills pupils need to learn in all subjects. Staff use their exceptionally creative ideas and expertise to make sure that activities are closely matched to the age, abilities and interests of their pupils.
- Newly appointed staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are generally skilful at developing a wide range of children's skills. For example, when children are working with grown-ups on early reading, writing and mathematical skills, they make rapid progress and learn good work habits. However, from time to time, their planning of activities does not take into account fully the opportunities for a few children to be more independent in their learning or to develop their ideas to the full.
- Arrangements to provide specialist support and teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are highly effective and enable them to make excellent progress. For example, teachers' positive and sensitive response to pupils with behavioural difficulties ensures that pupils remain fully interested and no learning time is lost. Teaching assistants demonstrate excellent understanding of pupils' needs and support them very effectively.
- High-quality marking of pupils' work and constructive guidance by teachers involve pupils in deciding what to do next and how to influence their own learning. Pupils say they like the time to consider the comments made about their work so that they are actively involved. They take pride in what they do well and know they too are responsible for making sure they do as well as they can.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' energetic and lively enthusiasm is, through high-quality teaching, channelled into very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils take pride in presenting their work to high standards, working collaboratively, listening to different points of view and sharing their ideas to help one another learn. Often there is a buzz in the class, and sometimes it is almost possible to hear a pin drop as pupils concentrate on the task in hand.
- Relationships are excellent. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school. They are well mannered and polite to one another and to adults. Scrutiny of behaviour records and discussions with pupils and staff show that this is typical over time.
- Pupils are exceptionally well motivated about learning and enjoy being in school. All know they have a responsibility to care for others and to look after the new school building. Not surprisingly, they enjoy attending and most of them miss very few days..
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities and carry them out in a mature way. They are 'Guardian Angels' for new nursery and reception children, play-deck buddies, monitors, lunchtime helpers, and stair and hall monitors. These roles make very important contributions to their high levels of personal development.
- Pupils feel extremely safe and secure. They told inspectors that if they have any concerns, teachers and other staff deal with them promptly. School records show that bullying is rare and dealt with robustly and successfully. Pupils have a very good understanding of different forms of bullying and know about internet safety.
- The school sets clear and consistent boundaries for ensuring pupils' excellent behaviour. Safety routines are systematic and consistent. All pupils know the 'Golden Rules' and understand the consequences if they choose to misbehave or do the wrong thing.
- A number of school-based records on behaviour indicate excellent improvements over time for individuals and groups who have found it hard to live up to the school's high expectations of behaviour and care for others.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Exceptionally skilled leaders, managers and staff have ensured that high levels of achievement have been maintained during the school's rapid growth. They have continued the successful

drive to maintain and improve all aspects of the school since the previous inspection.

- Senior leaders are willing to 'lead from the front' to ensure that the school continues to improve. Their accurate checks on how well the school is performing, which lead to very clear steps for action, mean that any weaknesses are remedied very quickly.
- All teachers and teaching assistants have clear targets for improvement which are checked upon regularly. This has had an exceptional impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning across the school because all staff know exactly what is required of them. Pay rates and salary progression are linked closely and effectively to the quality of teaching. Governors are fully involved in implementing robust performance management systems that challenge staff to improve their skills in teaching, which in turn contribute greatly to the outstanding achievement of pupils.
- The school's strong caring atmosphere has a great impact on the daily life of the school and, as a result the level of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is high. The school places high value on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, reflection, expression of feelings and independent learning.
- A new curriculum helps teachers to be creative and pupils to be imaginative in developing their knowledge and understanding across different subjects. Films, drama, and the creative arts particularly allow pupils to express their original ideas.
- The school works very well with parents and carers, the local community and other schools. It has a dedicated home-school link worker who supports families who may need help and advice.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are maintained to a very high degree, including staff vetting procedures and day-to-day health and safety arrangements.
- The local authority has taken a light touch approach to the school, given the school's track record of performance. It uses the expertise of senior staff to support the raising of attainment in another school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - All members of the governing body share the same high expectations for the pupils as the senior leadership team. They monitor the effectiveness of the school rigorously and its comparative performance in relation to other schools nationally. The governors challenge the senior leaders robustly on proposed changes, such as the new staffing and leadership arrangements and the curriculum. They have a thorough understanding of pupils' performance and question senior leaders to ensure that areas for improvement are dealt with quickly. They manage the budget efficiently, using the 'pupil premium' additional funds to ensure even the most vulnerable pupils make rapid 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	100171
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	402821

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	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Gregory
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 December 2007
Telephone number	020 8854 3531
Email address	sao@stmaryscepri.greenwich.sch.uk

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