



Inspection report

St Mary and St Pancras CE Primary School

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 100043
LEA Camden

Inspection number 273651
Inspection dates 3 and 4 March 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs C Blake HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Polygon Road
School category	Voluntary Aided <i>Diocese of London</i>		London NW1 1SR
Age range of pupils	3 to 11 years	Telephone number	0207 387 6117
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Fax number	0207 383 4874
Number on roll	227	Chair of governors	Fr Paul Hawkins
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Ms S McCalla-Gordon
Date of previous inspection	October 2003		

Age group	Published	Reference no.
3 to 11 years	20 April 2005	273651

Introduction

When St Mary and St Pancras CE Primary School was inspected in October 2003, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in March 2005.

Description of the school

St Mary and St Pancras CE Primary School serves the diverse urban community of Somers Town behind Euston Station in central London. It is an average-sized school, with 227 pupils on roll. The pupils live in the immediate locality. About one third are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Over two thirds of the pupils speak a language other than English at home, and approximately 14 per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. There is one class in each year group. On entry to the nursery, the pupils' attainment is well below that expected for their age.

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Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Since the school became subject to special measures, there have been significant changes in staffing, and in school leadership and governance. Under the inspirational and purposeful guidance of the headteacher, the school is now providing a sound, and in some aspects good, education for its pupils. The pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in lessons. Standards of attainment are rising overall; at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 they are broadly in line with those of similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in science is well above the national average.

Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of October 2003 required the school to address areas for improvement concerned with the leadership and management of the school, the pupils' achievement in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning, and the promotion of equality of opportunity. There has been good improvement in leadership and management, the promotion of equality of opportunity and the raising of standards in science, and reasonable progress in the other areas. The quality of teaching and learning has shown significant improvement. However, there is scope to further improve provision in the Foundation Stage.

Capacity to improve

The school is well placed to sustain its recent improvement. The headteacher has a clear overview of the school's strengths and of the areas for further development. The senior management team supports the headteacher well and the staff work together effectively. There are effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The leaders of learning and the subject co-ordinators have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. The governing body now provides more strategic leadership and is increasingly holding the school to account. The school has started to work on a strategic plan to guide its longer-term development.

What the school should do to improve further

The school recognises the areas where improvement is needed. However the key priorities are to:

- continue to improve the quality of teaching;

- continue to raise standards of attainment, particularly in English and mathematics;
- continue to improve provision in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

The pupils in the nursery and the reception class receive a sound start to their education. Their skills in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development are generally below average when they start school and they make steady progress, but this means that not all of them are on course to reach the nationally set Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Standards are rising in Key Stage 1 and the proportion of pupils who reached the level expected for their age in the national tests in 2004 was in line with that of similar schools. Too few pupils achieved a higher level, however. Standards are also improving at Key Stage 2 and in last year's national tests there was an exceptional improvement in science, where the results were well above the national figure. This was not reflected in the results in English and mathematics, which were lower, but broadly in line with the performance of schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school acknowledges that improvement in the pupils' writing skills is needed in order to boost attainment in English and other subjects. The school's predictions indicate that the improvements made last year are set to be built on and thus sustain the recent upward trend. Improvements have been helped by strong teaching in Year 2 and Years 5 and 6, and the effective additional initiatives to boost attainment.

Many of the pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in lessons, including those who have special educational needs and those whose home language is not English. However, rates of progress vary across year groups, and the provision in the Foundation Stage classes and the lower years of Key Stage 2, although satisfactory, is not consistently good enough to move the pupils forward swiftly.

Personal development

The pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are respectful of adults and have friendly, supportive relationships with one another. They follow the rules in class and know what is expected of them. The pupils play happily and energetically at break and lunchtimes, but with thought for others. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are recorded and followed up. No pupil has been excluded from school this term.

The pupils are keen to learn and want to do well. In the nursery and reception classes, the pupils eagerly explore the activities and enjoy learning. The oldest pupils have a mature and sensible approach to their work and give a good lead to others; for example, by sitting quietly and attentively in assembly. The pupils respond enthusiastically to good and effective teaching, applying themselves well to their tasks and usually taking care with their work. They work well independently and in small groups or with partners. Most pupils are

confident to talk and explain their ideas to the whole class, and they listen to each other attentively. They are pleased when their classmates do well and acknowledge the achievements of others; the older pupils showed great pleasure at the nursery pupils' performance in assembly. Occasionally, however, when the teaching does not fully engage the pupils or the tasks are inappropriate, the pupils become restless and their attention slips.

Last year, the rate of attendance was close to the national average, and was one of the highest in the local education authority (LEA). Attendance rates this year have been adversely affected by a number of families making extended trips abroad and the school is working with parents to make them aware of the importance of regular, sustained attendance and its effect on their children's progress.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school has a strong Christian ethos which is evident in the way that every pupil's cultural and linguistic heritage and their achievements are acknowledged and celebrated. A wide range of clubs and after-school activities promotes the pupils' social development, and the pupils willingly take responsibility; for example, by participating in the school's council and arranging the hall for assembly. The pupils take part in cultural events such as Black History Month and festivals from different faiths, and a multicultural dimension is evident in many aspects of the curriculum. High quality displays support this work.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching overall has improved significantly since the last inspection in October 2003. It was satisfactory overall, with strengths in Years 2, 5, and 6. The teaching in about half of the lessons was good or better. The teachers work well together in their teams and, with support from the leaders of learning, they have improved their practice. A better match of activities to the pupils' levels of attainment has enabled most of the pupils to make steady progress.

The lessons were most effective when the teachers were confident and assured, had good subject knowledge, planned their lessons carefully and managed the pupils well. When teaching incorporated the use of appropriate resources and questioning techniques which involved and appropriately challenged all of the pupils, the pupils' response was enthusiastic. Explanations were clear and the tasks built well on the pupils' previous knowledge. In the best lessons, the teachers used assessment information to extend the pupils' learning; this involved probing questions which extended the pupils' understanding.

Most teachers used a variety of approaches to engage the pupils in their learning. Where there was good modelling or demonstration of the teacher's expectations and a purpose provided for the learning, the pupils were very motivated and produced work of a high standard.

In a few lessons the teachers were too tolerant of high noise levels and some pupils were unclear about the tasks they were expected to do.

Most of the teaching assistants and other support staff made effective contributions to the pupils' learning, leading group work and helping individuals during whole-class sessions. Their work aided the progress of different groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs.

Systems for assessment are developing well and the information is effectively used by all teachers to devise strategies that meet the pupils' learning requirements.

The curriculum has been extended and is well matched to the needs of the pupils. There is a wealth of clubs and activities to extend the pupils' interests.

The school has a supportive and caring atmosphere in which the pupils feel safe.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She has a clear strategic vision for the school which is shared by all of the school's staff. Management is supportive and has a clear focus on raising standards. Since the inspection in October 2003, the headteacher and the senior staff have worked hard to establish good systems and procedures for raising standards and to keep the work of the school under rigorous review. This effective monitoring and evaluation has been used to identify strengths and weaknesses and to target support for individual teachers and other staff.

The headteacher has been careful to extend the curricular provision available, paying particular attention to issues of inclusion.

The management roles of subject co-ordinators and the leaders of learning have been clearly defined, and these staff have helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Support from the LEA has been well judged and effective in meeting the needs of the school. The LEA's training and guidance for the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and governing body has been good. The London Diocesan Board for Schools supports the school well.

The governance of the school has improved and is satisfactory overall. The governing body has received suitable training in order to develop its monitoring responsibilities. Governors make regular visits to the school and are better able to hold it to account.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

St Mary and St Pancras CE Primary School was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in October 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in March, June and November 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of October 2003.

In March 2005, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Sixteen parts of lessons and one assembly were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair and vice-chair of governors and representatives from the LEA and the diocese. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and areas for improvement in the inspection report of October 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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