

# St Thomas' Cof E Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100492
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kensington and Chelsea
<b>Inspection number</b>	276321
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 November 2006
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry Mortimer

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Trusler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Sarah Bouette
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 1999
<b>School address</b>	Appleford Road North Kensington London W10 5EF
<b>Telephone number</b>	02089692810
<b>Fax number</b>	02089648625

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average size primary school. Nearly three quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above average, with twenty three languages being spoken; the most common languages are Arabic and Portuguese. The majority of these pupils are at an early stage of fluency and are in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. A very high number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the number with statements of special educational need are above average. The school has had a change of the whole teaching staff over the past three years.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils and parents hold the school in very high regard. Pupils are keen to come to school and they feel safe. The vibrant and creative curriculum is an outstanding feature. The head and deputy supported by the governors and senior staff provide very strong leadership and management. Their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses is outstanding. Effective action has been taken when weaknesses are identified resulting in the significant improvement in performance which has halted the decline of previous years. Pupils achieve well and standards are rising throughout the school as a result of good teaching and learning. The senior team sets extremely high standards and has very high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Achievement is good. From an extremely low starting point on entry to Nursery, children make good progress and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6, with many reaching above average standards in English and science. Standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2, however, are below average, because of the inconsistent use by teachers of assessment for learning, but this is now an improving picture. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve similar standards to others of their age by the time they start Year 1.

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. The lessons are well planned, pupils' progress is rigorously monitored and individual targets are set. Teachers increasingly use assessment information to match work to all pupils' needs. As a result of the implementation of excellent monitoring procedures, poor teaching has been eradicated and the skills of the current staff have been improved. In the past the school has had difficulties in recruitment and retention. This situation has now stabilised and has contributed to the improvements.

Pupils' personal development and well being are excellent. Pupils behave responsibly and work well together. All pupils make excellent progress in developing their personal and social skills. Pupils are interested in learning and they work with confidence, at ease in pairs and larger groups. Their attendance is good and they enjoy coming to school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the schools high quality provision. The leadership wishes to develop it even further by placing its four core values of, independence, spirituality, creativity and communication at the heart of its work.

An outstanding range of learning activities in the creative curriculum and after-school clubs meets pupils' needs and equips them well with the skills and knowledge they need for the future. The pupils say, 'We enjoy the clubs because that makes learning fun'. The care, guidance and support that pupils' receive are excellent. Pupils benefit from the strong ethos of caring relationships and the strong partnerships with parents.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that teachers identify strengths and weaknesses and plan for interventions to support pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are average by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils now make good progress throughout the school. This is part of the improving picture of standards over the past three years. Many of the current Year 6 pupils reached the higher levels in English

and science. This represents very good progress from their very low starting points. Similarly, pupils in the current Year 2 have achieved well in the light of their attainment on entry. Their standards then were very low and at Year 1 were still low in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Their current standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average. Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as good in Key Stage 2 as it is in English and science. Steps have been taken to address this issue through the use of formative assessments and intervention strategies, which also involves the pupils more in their own assessment. Many pupils, with lower attainment and those who are learning English as an additional language join the school during the academic year. Whilst these pupils make good progress it depresses overall standards. The improvements extend to the Foundation Stage, and children's standards are now average by the end of the Reception Year.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils behave responsibly and work well together in a purposeful atmosphere. Attendance is good and reflects pupils' positive attitudes to school. Relationships are excellent and lunch times and playtimes are sociable occasions when pupils play together amicably. The racial harmony is very good. Pupils feel that the school is a safe place and know that they can talk to staff if they have any personal concerns. For example, members of the school council stated that the toilets were unacceptable, and the school accepts the need to remedy the situation. Pupils are well involved in the school and the local community through the school council. Pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy eating and taking exercise is outstanding. They make healthy choices for lunches and most walk to school on one day a week. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Through this they contribute very effectively to the wider community by various activities including performing drumming to different community groups and have designed and made a mural in the local high street.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning is good and in some lessons it is outstanding. However, the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2 lacks the consistent use of assessment for learning and this has been identified by the school as an issue to be addressed. Planning and preparation are thorough and ensure that pupils make good progress in lessons. Teachers use a good range of resources to stimulate pupils' interests; for example a letter from a colleague asking for advice to light a bulb and the appearance of 'Wonder Woman' as was seen in two literacy sessions. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, who respond positively and with enjoyment to the challenges they are set. Teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils' good behaviour helps them to learn well. Assessments are undertaken frequently and are used to plan work which meets the needs of different groups. Teachers' effective questioning to check learning meets the needs of all pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum for pupils of all abilities is outstanding. It is creative and is effective in raising standards. The curriculum planning is excellent. As a result, standards in literacy, numeracy, information and communications technology (ICT), music and other foundation subjects have improved since the last inspection. Now the school is in a good position to further improve its curriculum by embedding its core values in all aspects of its work. ICT is used effectively to engage pupils in their learning. Increased emphasis on physical education and healthy eating encourages pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. Pupils have many opportunities to participate and enjoy a wide range of outstanding enrichment activities. After-school clubs including the breakfast, Black History, sporting and the home-learning clubs extend the curriculum. The curriculum is brought to life by visitors to school such as story tellers and drama groups.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of care and academic guidance and support offered by the school is outstanding. Vulnerable pupils at risk are very sensitively supported. Links with several specialists and agencies are very strong and these support pupils very well. Pupils whose first language is not English are well supported and consequently they make similarly good progress to other pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are strong, and child protection procedures are firmly established with all staff having received training. Pupils are given a 'voice' in the school through the democratically elected school council. This prepares pupils very well for active citizenship. Pupils' academic needs are identified quite early. Marking of pupils' work is outstanding and clearly informs pupils about what is good and what needs to improve. The procedures for tracking individual pupils' progress and setting targets to improve achievement and standards are excellent. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language are integrated very effectively into school life. They have clear education plans with appropriate targets for development that are monitored regularly.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are excellent. The outstanding headteacher shares responsibilities with a highly effective deputy and together their outstanding leadership, dedicated senior management and challenging but supportive governors are strengths of the school. They are active in seeking the views of parents and pupils on a regular basis. Subject leaders monitor their areas effectively and know the strengths and issues for improvement. Senior management are vigilant in ensuring that staff acquire the appropriate skills to strengthen their teaching, develop new skills to meet pupils' needs and this has resulted in an improvement in standards. The leadership has identified that personal development can be even better and is looking to embed its four core values of independence, spirituality, creativity and communication. Since the last inspection over seven years ago, issues have been robustly addressed and the capacity to improve is excellent. The recently implemented creative curriculum is successful in improving achievement and standards.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you so much for making us feel very welcome in your school. We really enjoyed being in your lessons and talking to you about your work. We think you behave well and work hard and we were impressed by the way you look after each other. Well done. You like your lessons and all the extra things that teachers plan for you to do like going out of school on trips. Your teachers are expecting a lot from you and you are rising to the challenges and learning more quickly. You think your school is good and we agree with you.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher, the governors and all the teachers and helpers in the classroom work together very well to make sure your lessons are fun. The interactive whiteboards and some of the people who visit your school, such as Wonder Woman in Year 1, are helping you to learn and make lessons more interesting. They all want you to learn as much as you can and to get along happily with each other. Your parents want this for you too and give you and the school lots of support. Everyone at school takes good care of you and works hard to make you feel safe and happy at school. Your school council wants to help to make things even better so keep telling them what you think. We know you are not happy with the state of the toilets and we have asked the school if they would do something to make them nicer. You are good at taking on responsibilities and are keen to do even more. We think that the school is right to want you to work hard at developing some even more grown up skills of swapping ideas, being more imaginative, is looking to address the four core values of independence, spirituality, creativity and communication growing up and learning to look after yourself and respecting others.

The headteacher and the teachers have already decided that they want you to be even better at your work so that you can achieve the best that you can. We agree with them. We have asked that they keep a close check on you in your maths lessons and help you learn even faster than you do now.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. Keep working hard and enjoy your time at St. Thomas.

Terry Mortimer

Lead inspector