

St Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100836
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	276401
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Andrew Marfleet

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 on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Charter Mrs Mary Keeble
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	48 Brayards Road London SE15 3RA
Telephone number	02076391724
Fax number	02077324276

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

A very high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, chiefly with African-Caribbean and African heritage, attend the school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is high. The school's social and economic context is unfavourable and mobility rates are high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

* Provide more challenge in lessons for all pupils, and particularly the more able, so that standards rise further.

* Seek funding to improve the accommodation so that it not only looks attractive but is more conducive to good learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching is good and is leading to better achievement and improved standards. In the best lessons, pupils do well because they are sufficiently challenged and motivated. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of what pupils can achieve. They value pupils' contributions, which raises self esteem as well as levels of enjoyment. Relationships are very good and positive working atmospheres are created. This was particularly evident in an outstanding Year 4 mathematics lesson, where the teacher's calm approach ensured that all pupils concentrated very well and made excellent progress. Teaching assistants offer a good level of support to less able pupils and those with learning difficulties. Pupils who use languages other than English are also well supported.

In mathematics and English, teachers plan particularly thoroughly for different levels of ability within the class, and this is helping more pupils to make progress. Tasks in these lessons are mostly well matched to ability, but the more able pupils are still not challenged enough in other subjects.

In most cases, pupils work towards specific targets, based on thorough assessment. They are often given the opportunity to assess their own work, and teachers' marking informs them well of how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

A full and inclusive curriculum, along with a good range of visits, visitors and clubs, extends pupils' experiences and enjoyment effectively. Music and art feature strongly, and have a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and self esteem, as seen in the enthusiastic singing in assembly and the Gospel Choir and the high quality artwork on display. The talents and expertise of teachers, the learning mentor and visitors are effectively utilised by the school in these areas.

There is a sharp focus on English, mathematics and science, where underachievement in the past had been identified and addressed. Subject leaders are involved in monitoring provision

and identifying areas for development in order to raise standards. As a result, there is an increased emphasis on applying skills and on investigative activities, especially in mathematics and science.

Links are made across subjects in creative ways, maximising pupils' learning and application of key skills. So, for example, when pupils learn about the Aztecs they gather information from the internet, judge the healthiness of the Aztec diet and consider techniques used in their artwork. As one pupil put it, 'This makes learning fun.' The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned, engaging children in purposeful activities, which prepares them well for the next stage of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

Pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support whilst at school, including a good programme of personal, social and health education. There are thorough arrangements for child protection and risk assessment. The school achieves a good balance between security and being open and welcoming. The mission statement refers to, 'making school a calm but exciting place to be, where children feel safe and special and where the goodness of Jesus Christ is shown by example', and it strives to do just this.

The provision for spiritual and moral development is very evident, as are the various cultural opportunities. The impact on social development of the work of lunchtime supervisors and the learning mentor is significant. The principles of 'Every Child Matters' are taken seriously, and are reflected in the pupils' good personal development. Confidence and self-esteem are boosted in many ways, including the announcement of 'star' pupils of the week at Friday assemblies, and a display of their photographs. All are made to feel part of the community. Pupils get good academic guidance, through a thorough system of assessment and tracking; they know what they are achieving and realistic targets help them see what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. A special thank you to those who talked to us. We really enjoyed looking at your work and watching you in lessons and assemblies: your singing was brilliant! The inspection showed us that you go to a good school which has improved a lot.

Why we believe your school is good:) You make good progress in your work :) You are developing extremely well as young people:) You behave well, and really enjoy being at school:) You have a very good headteacher and she has a great team to help her:) You are taught useful and interesting things:) The teachers and other staff help you to learn well:) They support and look after you extremely well:) Your parents are very happy with the school.

What we have asked your school to do now* Help everyone to do their best, including pupils who have lots of ability* Try to improve the buildings so that you are not so cramped.We wish you well in the future and hope that you will always be as happy as you are at St Mary Magdalene.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Marfleet

Lead Inspector