

St Mary and St Pancras Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100043
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	285711
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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 on roll	
School	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Seyan Tills
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila McCalla-Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2005
School address	81 Werrington Street London NW1 1QP
Telephone number	020 7387 6117
Fax number	020 7383 4874

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary and St Pancras is an average size primary school. It serves a diverse urban community behind Euston station in central London. Approximately 10% of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities which is lower than average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than average as is the percentage whose first language is not English.

Approximately a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above the national average. The school had the official opening of its new building in the week prior to the inspection.

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 many outstanding features. The headteacher and senior leaders provide outstanding leadership. The impact of this is seen in the improvement since the last inspection when the school was taken out of the category of special measures and judged to be satisfactory. The school has been successful in raising standards and eliminating a legacy of underachievement. Achievement is now good, standards are rising well and are average overall by the end of Year 6. Standards are better in English and science than in mathematics because, although improving, they are not as high as they should be. There are relative weaknesses in teachers' expertise in mathematics that partly account for the slower rate of progress pupils make in mathematics.

Teamwork is excellent. Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective role models for their colleagues and provide exemplary guidance and support for the pupils. As a result, teaching and learning have improved and are good. All staff know the pupils very well and relationships are excellent. Support staff make an outstanding contribution to pupils' development. Teachers monitor pupils' progress and their achievements very carefully so that the work they plan is well matched to the needs and abilities of all learners. Good teaching and an interesting and rich curriculum ensure that pupils achieve well. They make good progress and, from their well below average starting points, reach standards which are broadly average by the time they leave. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes with excellent leadership from the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the time and focus given to this by all the staff. By the time they move into Year 1, many exceed the goals expected for their age in this area of learning. In the other areas of learning almost all the children reach the expected levels. Across the school pupils' achievements in music, art and sports are very good. One parent commented, 'I am extremely impressed with the progress my daughter is making especially musically. She absolutely loves school. The staff are wonderful and always look happy and enthusiastic.'

Parents and carers are very positive about what the school offers and feel, as do the children, that the school cares for everyone very well. Pupils feel safe and are given excellent guidance and support in their personal and academic skills which helps them learn well. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. By the time they leave they have developed into well-rounded individuals. Behaviour is exemplary. The school is an impressive learning environment. Displays of pupils' work are of a high quality and pupils are very proud of their endeavours. A parent said, 'St Mary and St Pancras can be a really joyous and uplifting place that the children, parents and staff are proud to belong to.' The impact of the outstanding leadership and management as shown by excellent improvement since the last inspection and the relentless drive for nothing less than the best for its pupils, means the school is very well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by improving teachers' expertise and giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Children's attainment when they start school is well below average and they make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage. The results of the 2006 national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were above the national average. In the current Year 2 standards are average although achievement is very good given pupils' starting points. Pupils' challenging targets have been exceeded. National test results in Year 6 in 2006 were broadly average. The impact of the work of leadership and management in raising standards is most evident in English. This has been the focus for the whole school. The school is now focused on providing the same level of training and support in mathematics and as a result, standards are improving though are not yet as high as in English or science. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language make similar progress because they receive very good additional support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy their life at school and speak highly of their teachers and of the opportunities which are offered to them. They feel safe and secure and develop confidence and self-esteem. Pupils work and play very well together. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Visits to local mosques, temples and museums help pupils to develop a good understanding and awareness of faiths and cultures other than their own. There are strong links with the local churches and, once a year on Ascension Day, pupils release their own prayer balloons into the sky. Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils take on responsibility within the school community. The school council has a strong voice in the school. Pupils contribute both to the local and wider community in a variety of ways, for example, fundraising events, performances by the choir and gardening in the grounds of the local church. Pupils have an excellent awareness of living healthy lifestyles through physical activity and healthy eating. Their basic skills and their increasing self-confidence and ability to collaborate and debate, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding aspects. Most lessons are planned very well to provide interest, enjoyment and inspiration. One said, 'We learn best when the lesson is interactive, doing drama or investigating something and finding out for ourselves.' Pupils gave the use of interactive whiteboards a huge vote of confidence for helping them learn. A group agreed with one child who said, 'We love them and they work all the time!' The quality of teaching in English is often excellent. This is because of the focus on training and support in teaching reading and writing and as a result standards in English have risen more quickly than those in mathematics. On occasion pupils have to sit and listen to their teachers for too long in some lessons, particularly in mathematics. This slows the pace of progress. The school is aware of this and is focusing on training and support to develop teachers' expertise in mathematics. Skilled support staff work very well with pupils who have particular learning needs

so that they can participate fully in lessons and achieve as well as others. Tracking and assessment systems give teachers clear information about where their pupils are and what they need to do to improve. They mark work regularly and provide useful information so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are excellent and contribute well to children's outstanding achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with many outstanding features. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well planned. In all year groups speaking and listening skills are promoted well. Pupils have good opportunities to engage in debate and discussion, for example, by presenting arguments for and against zoos. The school has worked successfully to integrate different subjects so that pupils use their literacy and information and communication technology skills well to support many areas of the curriculum. The school's own evaluation identified that the use and application of mathematics was a gap in the curriculum and the current focus in training and support is dealing with this effectively. Enrichment opportunities are exceptional, particularly in the arts. Excellent links with various groups and individuals with specialist expertise provide a wide range of music, art and design opportunities. Events such as themed weeks, opportunities to learn French, visits, visitors to school and residential trips add to the richness of the curriculum. These aspects strongly promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and develop social skills important for their future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school is a caring community where pupils feel safe and able to share any troubles they have with staff. Racial harmony in the school is excellent. Pupils' work is monitored very carefully to ensure good progress is made and challenging targets are set. Pupils know their individual targets and what they need to do to improve their work. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection and health and safety procedures are robust. Excellent support is provided for pupils whose first language is not English and for those with learning difficulties. Systems for identifying and supporting pupils who are at risk of underachieving are comprehensive and well thought out and support is carefully targeted to meet individual needs. There are excellent links with external agencies to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and senior managers work exceptionally well in partnership with each other. Together they have driven the improvements in pupils' achievement, teaching and learning, particularly in English. The headteacher's firm belief that everyone in the school community matters provides strong motivation for the enthusiastic and hard working staff. There is no complacency and the school is constantly seeking to improve further. There are exceptionally comprehensive and effective systems of monitoring, evaluation and review involving all staff, governors, parents and pupils. Staff respond eagerly to new initiatives and the particular skills and expertise of staff are recognised beyond the school which means training within school is always up to date and of a high quality.

Governors are supportive and challenging as they hold the school to account well for its performance. They are involved in the process of school improvement planning through monitoring and observation. Decisions taken by the Governing Body with the headteacher have had a very positive impact on the school. For example, appointing a deputy and assistant headteacher who are not based in the classroom has enabled the hugely successful teamwork in leadership which has been crucial to the improvements made.

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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>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and St Pancras Church of England Primary School, London, NW1 1QP

I am writing to let you know how much my colleague and I enjoyed our visit to your school and what we found out. Thank you very much for making us so welcome, for talking to us about your work and telling us what you think about your school. We did appreciate all the help and comments which you offered.

I am glad to tell you that we think your school is good and there are many things which are outstanding. We were particularly pleased with these things:

- you all clearly enjoy being in school, are very well behaved and get on well with each other
- you work hard, listen carefully to your teachers and make good progress with your work
- your teachers make sure your lessons and all the other activities you do are interesting and exciting
- everyone in the school looks after you extremely well and they help you to develop your confidence and the belief that you can succeed in whatever you do
- your headteacher and all the staff do an excellent job in organising the school and living up to the school motto of Together Everyone Achieves More.

Your teachers are always trying to help you do even better in lessons and we have asked them to make sure you do as well in mathematics as you do in English.

We were lucky enough to be in school to hear your fantastic singing and listen to the orchestra and Big Band, which we really enjoyed. We also thought the work displayed around the school was very impressive, including the artwork by you and your teachers.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly and polite and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins Lead Inspector