



# St Faith's CofE Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 101043  
**Local Authority** Wandsworth  
**Inspection number** 285953  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sheila Nolan

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 address</b>	Alma Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		East Hill, Wandsworth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		London SW18 1AE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02088742653
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	178	<b>Fax number</b>	02088719559
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Gee-Pearson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephan Cook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	13–14 September 2006	285953

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Saint Faith's Church of England Primary School mainly serves families worshiping in nearby parishes. Numbers on roll have declined over several years. In the last 18 months there have been major changes in school leadership and in teaching staff.

Well over half of the pupils have a minority ethnic heritage. Although a higher than average proportion, has a home language other than English, the overwhelming majority speak fluently. Twice as many pupils as nationally are eligible for a free school meal. More pupils than average have learning difficulties and disabilities.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

'This school has come on in leaps and bounds' a parent commented at the start of the school day. Saint Faith's is, indeed, a happy, safe and improving school that offers pupils a satisfactory quality of education, a judgement recognised by the school. Parents and pupils appreciate greatly the caring family atmosphere.

Since the last inspection, Saint Faith's has faced a range of serious difficulties. Not least have been three changes of headteacher in as many years. Other challenges included a very rapid changeover of staff and a subsequent decline in the number of pupils. Standards within the school stagnated, remaining average or just below average overall. Although many pupils achieved adequately, particularly in English, progress in mathematics and science has not always been fast enough. More able pupils have not always done as well as they should nor some of those with difficult circumstances.

Under the new headteacher, in post for just over two terms, the school has recovered rapidly in many areas. Good teamwork between the effective governing body, the senior leadership group and other staff has raised expectations and co-ordinated the way things are done. 'Children's learning is a top priority' noted a parent. Middle leaders recognise rightly the need to develop further their management skills. Parents and pupils feel that their views matter. 'The head is always available to us and listens' confirmed a group of parents. A reviewed curriculum matches pupils' needs more closely and information and communication technology (ICT) resources are readily available. Pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes continue to get a good start.

The school's current checks on its performance are very rigorous and accurate and recent improvements indicate that its capacity to improve is good. Teaching and learning are rightly judged at least satisfactory. Teachers and classroom assistants manage pupils very well and build enthusiastically on warm working relationships. Pupils' personal development is good and they feel secure and well looked after although erratic attendance is not uncommon. Staff give high priority to the welfare and support of pupils. 'The pastoral care is second to none' wrote a parent whose child has complex needs. The school rightly acknowledges that current provisional test results at Year 6 do not yet fully reflect recent improvements. Overall, standards are close to average and progress is just satisfactory mainly because pupils do not achieve as well as they should in mathematics. The school recognises that an important next step is to build in better guidance to pupils on how to improve work and to check pupils' progress more effectively.

### What the school should do to improve further

- \* raise standards in mathematics throughout the school, particularly for the more able
- \* make checks on learning more consistent so that pupils' learning needs are met more precisely
- \* extend rapidly the capacity of middle leaders through continuing professional development

\* work with parents to improve attendance

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils attain average standards and their achievement is satisfactory. From a starting point of generally below average skills, children in the Nursery and Reception progress well so that the majority are working securely within the expected early learning goals before entering Year 1. They make particularly fast progress in their creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Reading and writing, however, are lower than is typical for the age group.

Good progress continues throughout Years 1 and 2, with provisional assessments for 2006 indicating that pupils in Year 2 achieved well, particularly in reading and writing and in science. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Pupils' rate of progress slows in older year groups. Although they achieve well in English and now make satisfactory progress in science, pupils, particularly the more able, underachieve in mathematics. Previously disrupted teaching, the way pupils are grouped and too cursory checking of their understanding of day-to-day work have contributed to a decline in standards in mathematics.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well being of pupils are good. Saint Faith's has created a harmonious community where pupils feel happy and secure. 'There isn't much bullying now. If you tell someone, they deal with it quickly' reported the school council. Pupils are confident that their views are listened to and justly proud of their influence in securing newly re-furnished toilets, for example. Although pupils enjoy school, attendance while improving, is still lower than expected, despite the school's best efforts. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with notable strengths in spiritual and moral development because of the school's established Christian roots. The 'friend of the day' award raises self-esteem and encourages positive social relationships.

Pupils know about healthy life styles and many appreciate recent improvements in school dinners and enjoy the purposeful physical activities and games organised for lunch and breaks. Fund-raising activities for charities, joining in local theatrical events and links with other schools enable pupils to contribute to the community. Their preparation for future economic well-being is supported by the new 'workplace visitors' programme and sound literacy skills give them a solid start.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

'What are we doing tomorrow Miss' asked a Year 4 pupil on his way home. Because teachers provide children with interesting activities, they are enthusiastic in class and enjoy lessons. Teachers expect hard work and good behaviour and pupils respond well. Well-judged praise, careful modelling of presentation and recent good attention to extending vocabulary support pupils' learning well, particularly their literacy skills. 'We like reading and writing best because we are good at it' said Year 6.

Despite the above good aspects, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Partly because of the mixed-age grouping of pupils, made necessary by budget considerations, tasks in lessons are not always pitched closely enough to challenge all pupils, particularly the more able. This is especially so in mathematics classes for older pupils. Although teachers plan very conscientiously, in some lessons they do not pinpoint clearly enough the learning expected. Because of this, opportunities are missed to check, guide and extend work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. ICT provision has been much improved since the last inspection through up-to-date resources. Improvements to the school site are helping to integrate classroom and play-area learning. Regular trips and outings, including local museums, a range of sporting activities and theatrical events, broaden pupils' experiences. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme provides sound opportunities to learn about healthy living and keeping safe. There are good links with a school nurse and the community police officer. Plans are in hand to develop the outdoor area for the Reception year as it is now too small and there are too few opportunities to grow plants.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. The school provides a very secure environment with particular care for safety at the end of the school day. Movement around the school site is well supervised. Pupils talk positively of the help they get and of how they are encouraged to think independently. The school works well with external agencies to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils as best it can. Experienced teaching assistants support well those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at the very early stages of learning English.

Arrangements for pupils' academic guidance are new. Secure starting points have been established as have procedures to identify underachievement. Individual and group targets are being refined to provide tasks better matched to ability.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff, governors and parents alike comment on the distinctive and very effective leadership of the headteacher. He has 'made a huge difference' to Saint Faith's and 'is determined to pull the school up'. It now has a very clear sense of direction. The impact on standards of his good leadership and management is not yet fully evident, however, because of the school's earlier difficulties. Links with local parishes have been revitalised and with improved parental confidence, the school roll is beginning to increase. Although the drop in numbers still affects the budget, the school no longer has a deficit. Professional development is taken seriously so that senior and middle managers have a growing understanding of their accountabilities.

Governance is satisfactory. A core group are very actively involved in improving the school. The school's current evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is incisive and the comprehensive analysis of pupils' performance is laying a crucial foundation against which to check pupils' progress. Classroom practice is better monitored with staff now determined that pupils achieve of their best.

Parents have welcomed the recent opportunities to express their views. The overwhelming majority have nothing but praise for the school. Issues are dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils' views are sought regularly through the school council.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

You may remember inspectors visiting your school recently. I am writing to thank you all for your very friendly welcome and for sharing your ideas and opinions with us. You will also want to know what else we found when we joined you in classrooms and exciting play areas.

We think Saint Faith's is a satisfactory school that is improving very quickly and we know you and your parents agree. We are pleased that you are proud of your school, enjoy the company of friends and teachers, and feel that they all take good care of you. Although you are happy in school, some of you take too much time off. This disrupts your progress and makes it more difficult for teachers to help you with your work.

Included in the many things that are good about Saint Faith's are your success in English and the improvements in science. Your headteacher leads you especially well and all staff want to help him improve the school. To make things even better, we have asked teachers to do more to raise standards in mathematics and ensure you always get the best guidance on how to improve your work.

We hope that you continue to thrive at Saint Faith's and feel sure you will grow as confident, happy learners.

Sheila Nolan

Lead inspector