

St Gabriel's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101129
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	285979
Inspection date	4 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Henry Pickthorn
Headteacher	Miss S McMahon
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001
School address	Churchill Gardens Road London SW1V 3AG
Telephone number	020 7641 6300
Fax number	020 7641 6334

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Gabriel's is a very popular, average sized, inner city primary school. Half of all pupils have a mother tongue other than English, and more than 27 languages are spoken. A high proportion of refugees and vulnerable pupils attend the school. White pupils make up the largest single group in the school, although half of the school population come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Other large groups include Black British Caribbean, Bangladeshi and pupils from mixed heritages. There is considerable deprivation in the locality and many pupils experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Since the last inspection, when the school was found to be very successful, the school won three 'Achievement Awards,' became a 'Beacon School' and gained the 'Gold Artsmark' and 'Healthy Schools' awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Gabriel's is an outstanding school. Pupils agree that it is a very happy and wonderfully caring place to be. The headteacher and governors summed the school up well when they said, 'It is a haven of tranquillity within a dense, high rise estate.' The strong Christian ethos promotes inclusion, so that pupils are treated as individuals.

Pupils make immense progress and their achievement is outstanding. From their very low starting points they develop the confidence and the skills needed for their future lives. Teaching and learning are outstanding and are greatly enriched by an exciting curriculum and very strong links with the community. One pupil commented, 'I love this school so much, it's brilliant, we learn, have fun and are very safe.' Parents have confidence in the school and work enthusiastically to support their children. One parent summed up the views of many when saying, 'Thank you staff for the kind, caring ways and for making my child feel special'.

Exceptionally strong leadership and management underpin the success of this school, as the headteacher and deputy lead the school outstandingly well. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection and the accommodation has been greatly improved. The capacity for improvement is outstanding. The highly effective governing body and skilled staff contribute greatly to the success of the school.

The school's work to support the whole family is exemplary and demonstrates outstanding care, guidance and support. As a result, despite often deprived or vulnerable circumstances, pupils blossom and reach their potential. Pupils learning English as an additional language, vulnerable pupils and the many refugees thrive. One refugee was eager to say, 'The school helps me to learn, be happy, safe and have friends.' Pupils with learning difficulties also make very good progress.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children get off to a strong start developing their speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills. Notably, children grow in confidence and gain the social skills that ensure that they can work successfully with others. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above average. They have good skills in many subjects, especially English, mathematics and science. These skills, when combined with outstanding personal development and excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensure that pupils are very well prepared for their future lives. The school is sensibly working to improve pupils' handwriting skills because not enough pupils use joined handwriting to help them to write quickly.

Pupils' have very positive attitudes. Their behaviour is excellent and they respect and care for each other. Governors are correct when they said, 'Every child matters'. Leaders provide an oasis of calm, which pupils value. One said, 'The garden is really beautiful, especially listening to the birds sing. We feel proud and can plant our own flowers and take care of it'. Pupils adopt healthy and safe lifestyles and, most significantly, they thoroughly enjoy learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils learn and regularly use joined handwriting.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement in the school is outstanding, leading to standards that are above average. When children start in the Foundation Stage their skills and knowledge are much lower than expected because many children have little experience outside their own homes and have very weak speaking and social skills. Despite children's good progress, especially in language, communication, mathematical understanding and in their social skills, standards are still below average at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Between Years 1 and 6, pupils make outstanding overall progress. Standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, ICT and, design and technology. Singing is of very high quality, as was evident in the 'tingle factor' created when pupils sang 'Fill Your Hearts with Joy and Gladness.' English skills are very well promoted. The focus on speaking, reading comprehension, spelling and writing ensure that pupils quickly gain the skills needed for life. Although pupils' work is neat, not enough use joined handwriting.

Pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well and often reach the expected average standard in their work. There is a good focus on the provision for boys; as a result, they do very well. Pupils from all cultural backgrounds make similarly very good overall progress because staff have very high expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Parents commented that, 'Assemblies are inspirational.' Children make a strong start in the Foundation Stage, as they learn to share, communicate, and work effectively with each other. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate outstanding behaviour. They are polite and respect each other, despite some pupils showing challenging behaviour. Attendance is much higher than in many other schools in Westminster, but is average when compared nationally. Pupils take part in many community activities and have a good understanding of healthy life style options. Pupils feel safe from racism and bullying and show respect and concern for others. They develop high self-esteem and confidence, and take responsibility enthusiastically because of the inspirational encouragement of staff. For example, Year 6 pupils presented and won 10 bids gaining ten thousand pounds to establish a community dance club, a healthy tuck shop, a vegetable garden and a gymnastics club.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils say that lessons are, '...fun and educational.' Staff have especially high expectations and very good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Pupils are keen to learn and value their teachers. Lessons are very well planned so that pupils are challenged, sustain interest in their work and have the opportunity to learn in different ways. Teachers ask thought provoking questions, so that pupils become more skilled in their use of English. In mathematics and science, pupils thoroughly enjoy investigation and problem solving work. Information and communication

technology (ICT) successfully supports learning. Parents are working hard to support their children's learning. For example 100 parents helped in school to produce poems for a recital that reflected the cultures represented in the school. Learning is good in the Foundation Stage with an interesting range of activities and an excellent focus on reading and the use of letter sounds for spelling and writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very skilfully planned to combine basic skills with many opportunities for pupils' wider personal development. An excellent range of clubs and visits help pupils to enjoy school and aim high in their ambitions for the future. Pupils regularly work with local theatres and have close links with 'The Serpentine Gallery', and 'The Film Institute'. These links inspire pupils to develop many new skills and their imaginations. Links between subjects are very well established and this is a factor in why pupils achieve so well in English, mathematics and science. The strong focus on sport is helping pupils to become fitter and daily ICT presentations help pupils to select their choices for a healthy lunch. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well organised and interesting. It encourages children to find things out for themselves, work in a more focused way with adults and engage in challenging and purposeful activities. Leaders are currently working to further enrich children's creativity in the Foundation Stage in their drive to improve provision from good to outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent and, as a result, they feel happy in school, grow in confidence and are encouraged to become successful learners. Friendship skills are promoted very well. Child protection and safety procedures are rigorous. Pupils value the help that they receive. One said, 'We get so much help, if we are struggling the teachers keep helping until we get it'. Pupils' work is very carefully marked so that pupils are given help to see the next steps of learning. Pupils have clear targets for development, teachers are constantly checking pupils' progress and, as a result, pupils work hard to reach their targets and achieve very well. Over 60 volunteers from business and the local community help with reading and many specialists help vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties. Pastoral support is outstanding. Pupils and their families benefit from sensitive and very caring help, especially from the headteacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management result in pupils' excellent achievement and personal development. Leaders, show enthusiasm, vision and drive in all that they do. Excellent organisation, clear routines and their highly effective assessments contribute greatly to pupils' success. The school's evaluation of itself is accurate.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership demonstrating a rigorous focus on standards, the promotion of pupils' enjoyment in learning and the enrichment of their personal development. The role of middle managers has developed very well in the last year. All leaders

contribute considerably to evaluations of the school's performance and the planning for improvement.

Governance is excellent. Governors' outstanding work is helping to ensure that pupils gain the skills that give them a strong start in their lives. Notably, their work on the environment, the promotion of healthy life styles and an exciting curriculum contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
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

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

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	1

The quality of provision

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gabriel's CofE Primary School, London, SW1V 3AG

You may remember that a school inspector came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

Your school is outstanding, which means that it does many things especially well and there is very little that needs to be done to improve. This is because your headteacher, teachers, assistants and governors are working incredibly hard to make the school very special for you. Your teachers give you many exciting activities, which make learning fun and you work very hard at learning. This is outstanding and helps you to make very good progress. Clearly you enjoy coming to school and like learning. I especially enjoyed hearing you sing 'Fill Your Hearts with Joy and Gladness' it made me tingle with joy to hear such a high quality performance. I also enjoyed seeing you all at play. You have so many exciting things to do and your garden areas are very special. In particular, you all get on well together.

Well done for behaving so well - please keep this up, as it is excellent! I know that you value being in such a happy, caring school. You do especially well in English because you take part in many activities that help you to discuss your ideas, use new and difficult words and accurately read and write. Your headteacher and all of the staff and governors are working amazingly hard for you. We agree that the following important thing will improve the school even more.

- Help you to use joined up writing, so that you can write quickly.

You can help them with this, by practising as often as you can. Keep up the very good work. Well done! You are a great credit to your school and your parents. You are learning the things that will help you to do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons Lead inspector