

St Aidan's Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102132
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	286282
Inspection date	19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Jewel-Terrington
Headteacher	Mrs Rosetta Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2003
School address	Albany Road Stroud Green London N4 4RR
Telephone number	020 8340 2352
Fax number	020 8341 2350

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than average and draws pupils from a wide area of mixed social circumstances, but with pockets of severe socio-economic deprivation. A higher than average proportion of pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds but the percentage of those who have English as an additional language is only just above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above average. The percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties is below average but the proportion of those with a statement of educational need is higher than the national average. The school has achieved the National Healthy School Award, Intermediate International Schools Award and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Aidan's is an outstanding school. In the words of one parent, 'Even though the school is small, it seems to work really hard to have a rich and diverse range of activities and opportunities for the children - really impressed!' Most parents share this view. The school is successful because it is very well led and managed. Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons, enjoy school and contribute well to both the school and wider community. The importance of making healthy eating choices and taking regular exercise is well understood and pupils have a genuine concern for others.

Achievement is outstanding. Throughout the Foundation Stage, pupils achieve well and make an excellent start to their education. Until this year, pupils' progress slowed in Years 1 and 2 but, because of effective measures put in place by the headteacher, achievement is now good. Excellent progress is made between Years 3 and 6 because of the outstanding teaching pupils receive and an outstanding curriculum which is flexible and highly enriched. The needs of pupils are very well met, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and this contributes much to the high standards by the end of Year 6. However, the school has rightly identified that standards attained at the end of Year 2 have not been as high as they ought to have been. Measures are in place to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics and they have already had an impact. The school is equally focused on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being, which are outstanding, and ensuring that they are well cared for and supported.

Teachers are committed and hard working and have the interests of each and every pupil at heart. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils which makes them keen to learn. Lessons are planned in detail and serve to meet the needs of all learners well. A particular strength is the way teachers challenge the higher attainers, which results in high percentages of Year 6 pupils gaining the higher level 5 in national tests in English, mathematics and science. Feedback given to pupils in their books is of high quality and really helps them to know what steps to take to improve their work in order to achieve their targets. Exemplary use is made of skilled teaching assistants, particularly in helping pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior leaders is sharply focused on the impact on pupils' progress and they keep a keen eye on standards and achievement. The areas for improvement are regularly reviewed and there is a clear link to teacher training. Subject leaders provide clear direction for others and provide action plans in order to raise standards which are clear and effective. Governors involve themselves well in the life of the school and are knowledgeable and efficient.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards have been consistently high across the school for a number of years and inspection evidence points to this continuing in the future. The skills and abilities of children entering the Foundation Stage are average and, because of consistently good teaching and the competent leadership of the Foundation Stage coordinator, most children reach or exceed the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Until relatively recently, the progress made by pupils in

Years 1 and 2 has not been as good as it should have been, resulting in pupils achieving just above average standards by the end of Year 2 in 2006. This is because of a legacy of weak teaching which has now been tackled well by the school. Although not reflected as yet in the school's results, inspection evidence shows clearly that pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2 this year is good. Progress really takes off in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Y6. Pupils meet highly challenging targets.

Those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent support from well trained teaching assistants, and the high quality leadership offered by the inclusion manager. This enables them to make excellent progress towards achieving their targets. No groups of pupils underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has developed strong links with the church and behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and secure and adopt healthy lifestyles. They are very aware of what constitutes healthy eating and they talked intelligently about what is good for them and what should be eaten in moderation. Some feel that there could still be improvements made to school lunches. In the words of one pupil, 'I don't normally eat lasagne because it's really greasy.' A suggestion box enables pupils to write their thoughts and feelings in confidence about what they would like changed in their school. Pupils carry out their many responsibilities very conscientiously. Contributions to the school and local community are numerous. There is an effective school council. Pupils spoke of the 'friendship bench' and how 'playground buddies' are trained to help others feel safe and secure in the playground. Pupils also raise money for a number of charities. Links with businesses such as a high profile 'west end' store and a local estate agent are highly beneficial to the pupils. These links enable them to learn about business and finance. Year 6 also organised a lunch for staff, advertising and preparing a three course meal. Staff were charged a nominal fee and received silver service treatment. The money raised funded a school trip. These activities, along with above average basic skills, equip pupils extremely well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching overall is outstanding. A real strength is the way teachers plan their lessons carefully and in great detail, taking the abilities of each individual pupil into account. Questioning is good and challenges pupils to think hard. High quality paired work features in all lessons and is carefully planned for.

Good use of interactive whiteboards motivates pupils to want to learn, although pupils expressed a desire to be able to participate more actively themselves. Teachers take great care to prepare resources for their lessons which help to maximise pupil progress. In one lesson, the teacher's innovative use of 'multilink' enabled pupils to round numbers to the nearest 10 in a visual way. A variety of short, sharp activities, including games, and a focus on developing speaking and listening aid achievement. An excellent example of how the school links subjects together was seen in a French lesson, where pupils were taught about the properties of shapes.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities learn very effectively because teachers and teaching assistants spend time supporting their progress through well designed individual work programmes. This ensures that they make as much progress as possible.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The very well planned curriculum gives pupils a multitude of opportunities to achieve as well as possible. French is taught throughout Years 1 to 6 and is very successful. The school's model of teaching modern foreign languages has been commended by the Local Authority and is being implemented in other local schools. Music teaching is particularly strong and the curriculum is highly creative. Pupils were keen to tell the inspector about their participation in the choir and how they had been able to sing in a recording studio and make their own CD. Extra curricular activities are many and varied, and are attended well. Year 5 and 6 pupils also participate in competitions against other schools and all pupils in Years 3 to 6 are given the opportunity to go swimming. Special projects, such as the recent visit to Finland, serve well to motivate pupils and focus their attention, contributing very well to their personal development. A high number of other excellent visits are organised throughout the school year which enhance learning well, including an annual residential stay. A visit to the 'Imax Cinema' prompted a pupil to say, 'That was cool'. Visitors to school are valued and used well to make learning fun.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding, with assessment and academic guidance being real strengths. Risk assessments, and the checks performed on adults who have contact with pupils, are rigorous and ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils are looked after very well and the school has the confidence of most parents. Pupils know who to come to if they have any problems and are confident that things will be effectively dealt with. Most pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do to reach the next level of learning. However, some of the younger pupils know their targets but can't explain what they mean. Assessment systems and data are used well by all teachers, marking is thorough and pupils appreciate the comments teachers make in their books. They are given time to think about these comments so that they can put them into action the next time they tackle a piece of work. Pupils say, 'Our teacher always says we must read them.' Vulnerable pupils are particularly well cared for and one parent commented, 'my child has special needs and the responsiveness and sensitivity of the staff to his condition has been very impressive.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding, as many parents agree. The headteacher's vision for the future of the school is clear and shared with all members of staff. Monitoring and evaluation processes are robust and the school has already implemented plans to raise standards at Key Stage 1. Leaders know clearly what they need to do. The headteacher and her deputy work well together as a team and they lead by example. Therefore, strong teamwork filters down to managers and leaders at all levels so that it features highly in all that they do. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is rigorous and involves staff at all levels who efficiently carry out their duties. This links well into further training for teachers.

Self-evaluation is effective and accurate. Governors are fully involved in all the school does and have a discerning understanding of what the performance data show. The track record of improvement over the last three years demonstrates that there is excellent capacity to improve further.

The majority of parents support the school. They feel that they are involved well with what the school does, that they are listened to, and that their views are taken into account. A small number feel that communication between home and school could be improved and the school is aware of the need for this to become better.

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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	1
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	1
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	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

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

2 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aidan's Voluntary Controlled Primary School, London, N4 4RR

I would like to say how much I enjoyed my visit to your school recently. Those of you who took the time to speak with me were really helpful and told me lots of interesting things about your school. I was particularly fascinated by your recent visit to Finland which appears to have been very successful! I was also interested to hear about the 'friendship bench' and how you act as 'playground buddies'. This is highly commendable, well done! You also raise money for charity and some of the Year 6 pupils prepared a meal for the teachers, served it to them and charged them. These are very useful skills which will help you as you grow older. Most of you behave well in and out of your lessons and enjoy learning. You particularly like the way the teachers use the electronic whiteboards to help make learning fun. You told me that you enjoy coming to school.

I think that yours is an outstanding school because of the high standards you reach by the time you leave and the way that all your teachers really care about how well you all achieve. You are able to learn French and have a particularly excellent music curriculum. Some of you recorded a CD when you sang in the choir. How impressive! Your headteacher and her staff do an excellent job. Even in a school like yours there are things to do and I have asked that your school makes an improvement in the results the children get in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Once again, thank you for all your help and I wish you all the best for the future.

Kind regards,

Glynis Bradley-Peat
Lead Inspector