

# Saint Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100171
<b>Local Authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	307315
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Watson

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 category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev G Stephens
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Claire Veal
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2002
<b>School address</b>	Kingsman Street London SE18 5PW
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8854 3531
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8854 4351

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school which is over subscribed. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) is very high; a third of the school population is at an early stage of learning English. The school is ethnically diverse. The largest ethnic groups are from a Black African heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLD) is well above the national average. The number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs is high. The number of vulnerable pupils who attend the school is increasing. The characteristics of each cohort varies considerably, especially in terms of the number who leave or enter the school at different times of the year. A third of the school's teachers joined the school in September 2007. There are agreed plans to rebuild the school in the near future. In 2007, the school received both the Basic Skills and Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school and feel confident that their children are well looked after and educated. As one parent wrote, 'It is a good school. Keep it up'.

The headteacher and deputy fully appreciate that many pupils at the school have problems when they try and learn. The school's leaders have formulated a clear plan to fulfil their vision of providing high quality care and education in an effort to overcome them. All staff, governors and parents share this vision. Governors provide good strategic support and often challenge the school about its performance. The creation of a new and dynamic leadership team is sustaining a climate of high expectations and an ethos firmly based on Christian values. This enables pupils to achieve well and contributes to their good personal development and well-being.

To overcome many pupil's poor social skills, their personal development is rightly given a high priority. Both the behaviour policy and the school rules reflect the school's strong Christian ethos. Behaviour in and around the school is good. Most pupils have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Pupils usually respect each other, often work together well and enjoy coming to school. Levels of attendance are good and reflect the pupils' positive attitudes. The trusting relationships that staff build with most pupils, along with good levels of care mean, that they feel safe and secure. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to be healthy. They are also proud of their school community and are closely involved in its development.

The headteacher and deputy, through rigorous self-evaluation, have accurately identified both the wide range of problems that many pupils have and areas of underachievement. A good range of effective strategies have been put in place to raise achievement, especially for EAL and LDD pupils. However, high numbers of staff and pupils joining and leaving the school and constraints of the building, often dilutes their impact.

Careful thought has gone into modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. It now offers a good balance of basic skills, personal development, creativity and practical activities. This has helped improve pupils' concentration and interest while specific projects such as the 'Big Write' have improved progress in pupils' writing. As pupils' performance is constantly and thoroughly monitored, underachievement is quickly identified and tackled. An extensive range of interventions, and the use of the many well-qualified teaching assistants, supports those pupils with difficulties so that they make good progress. Activities in lessons often match the needs of most pupils well. However, the more able are not always stretched to their best abilities. EAL pupils make good progress because appropriate emphasis is placed on language development in all lessons. There is often a good pace of learning in lessons. Pupils know what they need to do to improve due to the careful marking of their work.

From their low levels of attainment on entry to the Nursery to the end of Year 6 many pupils, except the more able, make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. However, although some pupils achieve above this level, more are capable of doing so. Most pupils, therefore, have gained the necessary skills well that are required for transfer to secondary school or later in their life.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The vast majority of children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. Because of the caring environment into which they enter, they settle quickly and happily. Adults work well in teams, although the separation of Nursery and Reception in two buildings weakens the identity of the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is good. All adults carefully monitor each child's progress, accurately identify their individual needs and provide them with appropriately challenging activities. Children, inside the well-organised classrooms, experience a wide range of interesting and enjoyable learning experiences. However, the outdoor space is inadequate and this limits the range of experiences offered and limits children's development. The plans for the new school addresses this issue. By the end of Reception, although all children have made good progress in all areas of their learning, many are not securely working at the expected level for their age.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress that higher ability pupils make by providing more challenge and support so that a greater proportion reach higher levels in national tests.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Many pupils starting in Nursery have low levels of basic skills, especially in language and mathematics. Over the last couple of years, standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been broadly in line with the national average. Standards have not been higher due, partly, to a legacy of underachievement. Progress is improving due to recent initiatives, such as the introduction of a new approach to the teaching of writing, and is now usually good. The progress made, and standards achieved, are slightly better in English than in mathematics and science.

Both EAL and LDD pupils make good progress. However, although higher attaining pupils always progress satisfactorily, they do not consistently make the good progress of which they are capable. There is little difference in the achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic groups. Those pupils new to the school often make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are happy to come to school and talk enthusiastically about what they are learning and how they enjoy attending the after-school clubs. Most pupils behave well, although a few pupils that have complex behaviour problems occasionally disrupt the school's calm atmosphere. Pupils feel safe in school and know that that can turn to an adult if they have any concerns.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are good and pupils are respectful of different cultures and beliefs. They exercise responsibility well. One school council member commented, 'We try to help make the school a better place to work and learn in.' Pupils enjoy sports and know what constitutes a good diet. However, some have still to develop a taste for vegetables at lunchtime. Through good links with outside agencies, such as the Church, pupils are well aware of the wider community and the diversity within it.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Most teachers manage their classrooms and pupils well so lessons are purposeful and pupils learn quickly. On a few occasions in mathematics and science, the pace of teaching does not match pupils' needs and learning is not as effective as it could be. A strength in much of the teaching is time spent on explaining key words and phrases. This is a principal reason that EAL pupils make good progress. Teachers know individual pupils well and offer appropriate activities for the large group of less able ones. However, they do not always use this information to plan suitably challenging activities or questions for the more able pupils. As a result, some more able pupils do not always make the rapid progress they are capable of achieving.

Marking is often good, especially in English. It always makes clear what pupils have to do to improve, and teachers give pupils time to respond to their comments.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school devotes additional time to the teaching of numeracy and literacy and it is used well. Pupils enjoy the links that have been made between subjects and opportunities to work creatively. A wide range of clubs, visits and residential trips are very popular; some like the computer club are hugely oversubscribed. This enrichment makes a significant contribution to broadening pupils' horizons as well as their knowledge and personal development. Pupils say they would like more clubs, but there is not enough room at present to enable this to happen. Pupils usually undertake a couple of science experiments a term, but this is not enough to accelerate progress in this aspect of their learning. Recent improvement to the provision for ICT enables pupils to develop the expected skills. However, because of the school's current layout, it is difficult to move laptops around the school. Consequently, the pupils computing skills are not used very widely across the curriculum.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school is a very caring community. The school's close partnership with specialist agencies supports the school's strong pastoral care. As one pupil said, 'It is a very caring school that will help with problems.' Through an established use of 'buddies', new arrivals to the school quickly settle and begin to learn. Child protection and welfare systems are rigorous. Early identification of the many pupils with difficulties enables them to receive good quality additional support quickly. There is an extensive range of support and specific learning programmes for pupils who struggle with learning, although not for those who are more able. Each pupil's target is accurately set through the careful tracking of their progress. In English, pupils know their targets well, but this is not always the case in other subjects, such as mathematics.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The monitoring of teaching, pupils' work, progress and teachers' planning is frequent and rigorous. Using this information, the headteacher and deputy have successfully improved progress and maintained standards during increasingly difficult times. Extensive monitoring has also supported well the induction of many new staff, ensuring that high quality care and provision has been nearly seamless. The process through which pupil targets are set is robust. However, the school's challenging targets are not always met because of the impact of the number of pupils who join the school between Years 2 and 6.

The headteacher, with the involvement of governors, staff, pupils and parents, has accurately identified areas for improvement and taken appropriate action. This has been instrumental in improving provision and raising achievement. However, the criteria on which success is judged are not always specific enough to measure how effective the school's actions have been. Members of the new leadership team are given the opportunity to raise achievement and influence developments.

Governors know the school well. They provide the headteacher with good support, as in the case of allocating money to improve resources in ICT. However, they are too accepting of the targets used in the school improvement plan.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2

<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.

**Annex A****Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

14 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School, London, SE18 5PW

Thank you all so much for the warm welcome when the inspection team recently visited. We really enjoyed spending time in your school, watching you work in lessons and chatting with you in the dining hall. This is a good school and we can see why many of your parents are so pleased with the way it helps you.

These are some of the things that we especially liked:

- Most of you work hard and achieve well.
- Many of you come to school every day and this is good.
- The teaching is good and helps you to learn lots of new skills.
- You are growing up into confident, polite, well-behaved young people.
- Teachers and other adults take good care of you and give you help if you need it. This makes you feel safe and happy in school.
- You are proud of your school and take your responsibilities seriously.
- You are gaining a good understanding of how to live healthily, although some of you do need to start eating more vegetables.
- Adults organise lots of exciting events and activities for you to enjoy, including all the clubs after school.
- The school is led well by the headteacher and the deputy.

Your school could be even better if:

- Those of you who find school work easy had more support and your work is made a little harder.

With best wishes and have a happy Christmas

David Whatson

(Lead inspector)