

St Andrew's (Barnsbury) Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100448
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	307392
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Michael Learmouth
Headteacher	Mrs Michelle Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Matilda Street London N1 0LB
Telephone number	020 7837 4049
Fax number	020 7837 1751

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized primary school provides for pupils who come from a wide range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Over half of pupils come from different ethnic groups, the largest being from Black African and Caribbean families. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is higher than average and rising, as more children from eastern European countries move into the area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. Families move in and out of the area more frequently than usual. The number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties or disabilities is about average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs.

The school holds the Silver Artsmark, Extended School Status, Investors in People and PE Activemark. The school has received Healthy School status and has a Leading Aspect award for information and communication technology (ICT).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education for pupils, where they meet the challenge of high expectations and thrive in a positive learning environment. This is an inclusive school where pupils are very effectively supported to enjoy their learning and achieve to the best of their ability. Every effort is made to include pupils with a range of needs and to support a diverse and often transient community.

The school has outstanding partnerships with external providers that help to ensure the very best provision for pupils' care and well-being. Leadership at all levels promotes the highest level of pupils' personal development and achievement. The inspirational headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and high expectations for raising pupils' standards and achievement. She is very effectively supported by the recently employed deputy headteacher who has already made a positive and significant impact on school improvement. Very effective self-evaluation and systematic monitoring of provision ensure the school clearly knows its strengths and what it has to do to improve. With a dedicated staff and well-informed governors, senior leaders have implemented strategies to improve provision and promote higher standards. The capacity to improve further is outstanding. Parents recognise and appreciate the school's positive commitment to their children. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said, 'I am extremely happy with my son's progress academically in school. He is very happy and enthusiastic about all areas of school life.'

Children enter Reception with levels of attainment well below national expectations. They get off to a good start and begin to make good progress in their academic and personal development. By the time pupils leave the school they are reaching average standards. This represents outstanding achievement for most pupils. The very effective support given to pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those needing support with their English ensures their progress is in line with their peers. This high level of achievement is the result of consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and learning, the excellent curriculum, and the outstanding care, guidance and support that pupils receive for their individual needs. Their outstanding personal development gives them confidence always to try their very best. Pupils are polite, friendly and eager to share their achievements. Their behaviour is consistently good and often outstanding. This is because of the excellent relationships between pupils and adults and the consistent management and clear expectations. This shows excellent improvement since the last inspection. Whole school data on pupils' progress is very effectively analysed, and is used well by teachers to set appropriate work for pupils. The school knows it has continually to strive for the highest quality in teaching and learning and to increase the consistency of outstanding practice to maintain the high levels of pupils' achievement.

Academic guidance is excellent and pupils are very clear what they have to do to improve. Pupils understand the purpose of target setting and are fully involved in monitoring and reviewing their own targets. A pupil was overheard to say in a lesson, 'I think I have achieved this target now; I need to talk to sir about changing it'. Pupils very clearly understand all about health and safety. They thoroughly enjoy their physical exercise and know what constitutes a healthy diet. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show empathy and support for each other and genuinely enjoy each other's successes as seen in the weekly 'celebration assembly'. Pupils relish taking responsibilities and the school council is actively involved in decision making. Pupils are involved in fund raising and recycling projects and their contribution to the community is outstanding. The governing body is fully involved

in the monitoring, self-evaluation and strategic management of the school, and clearly knows the school very well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle into Reception well because of close links with local nurseries and playgroups. Thoughtful support and relevant activities help develop childrens' confidence and they are well prepared for moving up the school. Relationships are excellent and children play and learn happily alongside each other in a safe and secure environment. Some learning activities for physical development are currently restricted due to the limited outdoor space, although there are clear plans to resolve this. By the end of Reception, children make good progress in relation to their starting points. They improve their communication and mathematical understanding and make excellent progress in their personal and social skills. A parent commented, 'My daughter has extended her skills and knowledge since starting and plays a full part in the school community'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the very best practice in teaching and learning is effectively shared across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils, including those at an early stage of learning English, have excellent attitudes to learning and work extremely hard to achieve outstandingly well in relation to their starting points. Standards reached by Year 6 are broadly average, but the school is determined that pupils will do better and has set aspirational targets, particularly in writing. These targets are underpinned by the very effective use of assessment and systems for tracking pupils' progress that ensure targets are based on accurate teacher assessments. This demonstrates excellent improvement since the last inspection. Pupils who have moderate learning difficulties achieve equally well in relation to their particular learning goals. The relatively high proportion of pupils joining the school throughout the year are not disadvantaged in any way and the school ensures that they too make excellent progress from their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development is effectively promoted by the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. There are valuable opportunities for quiet reflection in assemblies and within the curriculum that very effectively contribute to pupils' growing spiritual awareness. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and consider wider moral and social issues. A member of the 'Green Team' talked enthusiastically about raising awareness of environmental projects and of the recently completed mural the group had worked on with an artist in residence. Pupils' enjoyment is clearly evident in the enthusiastic way they talk about their school, of which they are very proud. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their break times because of the various games in the 'zoned' areas, the 'playground friends' and the interaction of the adults. Attendance is average and the school works hard to improve it further. Pupils say that any bullying or name calling, which is rare, is quickly and effectively dealt with. One pupil commented, 'If you are worried about anything, you tell someone and they listen to you

before sorting it out'. Pupils learn useful skills and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The proportion of outstanding teaching is rising and the school aims to ensure it becomes the norm to promote the highest level of pupils' progress and achievement. Regular monitoring of practice, and support and guidance, helps improve individual teacher performance. However, opportunities for sharing the outstanding practice are currently not fully maximized. Teamwork is excellent and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement. Staff know pupils very well and use this information effectively together with progress data to plan, set targets, and deliver activities to meet individual needs. Very occasionally, a lack of challenge in lessons means progress slows. Resources, particularly information and communication technology, are effectively used to support pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Activities are very well planned, creative, enticing and relevant to pupils' needs. The curriculum is constantly being reviewed to ensure it continues to engage pupils in their learning and supports their high achievements. There is a focus on learning skills and linking subjects to ensure that pupils learn in meaningful and exciting ways. This was seen in a Year 2 class where pupils were finding out about things in the past as part of their project on Time Detectives. The curriculum is effectively adapted to meet the needs of more able pupils and those pupils requiring additional support for their learning. As a result, all pupils are well engaged in their learning and are achieving as well as they are able. Visits to the local area and beyond and visitors into school are very effectively used to enhance pupils' experiences. Many pupils are able to develop their individual talents; for example, musical tuition, and learning about playing in an orchestra. An excellent and wide range of extra-curricular activities further support pupils' achievement and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Efficient and consistent school procedures and practice keep pupils safe and secure, while promoting their independent learning. This results in confident pupils with positive attitudes. The well-attended breakfast club provides an excellent start to the day and clearly demonstrates the outstanding relationships between staff and pupils. The very effective planning and teamwork between senior staff, learning mentors, teaching assistants and teachers ensure pupils' personal needs are very well met. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and carefully monitored to ensure their well-being. Parents report that communication between home and school is excellent. A parent wrote, 'All the staff are well respected because of the lengths they go to to ensure positive parent relationships'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are clearly focused on raising attainment. There is frequent and rigorous monitoring of all aspects of school life. The enthusiastic headteacher has high expectations of her staff and gives excellent strategic guidance and encouragement. All staff are consistent in their dedication to pupils, of whom they too have high expectations. This results in pupils doing the best they can and making excellent progress in their academic and personal development. Staff say their work is valued and morale is high. A teacher commented, 'Children come first. We are all involved in ensuring they get the best possible deal while they are with us'. A parent wrote, 'The attention and care given by staff to children is, I believe, exceptional'. Planning for school improvement identifies all the most important priorities and clearly emanates from effective self-evaluation and analysis of data. Governors could further support their knowledge of the school by increasing their focused monitoring visits to the school.

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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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

24 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's (Barnsbury) Church of England Primary School, London, N1 0LB

Thank you for making our visit to your school such a pleasurable one. We really enjoyed meeting and talking with you. I thought you would like to know what we found out. You are excellent representatives of your school, being polite, well behaved and friendly. You get on well together and we were very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. We agree with you and your parents that your school is brilliant and helps you to do your very best. We think that you make excellent progress in your work and personal development. All staff work really well together to make sure you get any extra help you may need. You can help by keeping a close watch on your targets and working as hard as you can to achieve them. Here are some other things we particularly liked about your school:

- you learn to do things for yourself and you consider the needs of others
- you really enjoy your lessons and work very hard to improve
- you clearly understand how to be safe and healthy
- you like to take responsibility and you very effectively support your community
- the curriculum offers you interesting and relevant learning opportunities that very effectively support your excellent progress
- you really like the clubs, playground activities, after school activities and the breakfast club
- you learn useful skills that will help you when you move to secondary school
- the school works very effectively with other people to ensure you receive the support you need
- the school is very well led and managed and all staff have your interests at heart.

Your headteacher, governors and all staff are always thinking how they can improve the school even further. For example:

- they are thinking of more ways to ensure that every lesson enables you to make the best possible progress you are capable of.

It was a delight being in your school and we wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Mr M J Smith

Lead Inspector