

St John The Divine Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 100614 |
| Local Authority | Lambeth |
| Inspection number | 307423 |
| Inspection date | 19 June 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Margaret Coussins |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 233 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Father D Bradshaw |
| Headteacher | Mr C Cosgrave |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 February 2004 |
| School address | Warham Street Camberwell New Road London SE5 0SX |
| Telephone number | 020 7735 4898 |
| Fax number | 020 7735 7179 |

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|--------------------------|--------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- achievement and standards
- leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, school information and records and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires, and discussion with pupils, staff and the Chair of Governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

St John the Divine is an average size primary school which serves a community with a diverse multicultural and stable pupil population. The majority of pupils are from Black African backgrounds and almost one quarter are of Black Caribbean heritage. A very large majority speak English as an additional language and approximately one in five are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average and these relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social or speech, language and communication needs. Twenty six children attend the Nursery on a full time basis. The school has a Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school of which pupils and their parents are, justifiably very proud. Pupils' achievement is outstanding because teaching and learning are excellent. Pupils' personal development and well-being are also outstanding. Pupils develop as very well rounded individuals who are happy and confident. The strong links with the Church, inclusive ethos and excellent care, guidance and support all make a very positive contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they really enjoy being at school and they are very positive about all it offers. One pupil said, 'The school is great, I can't think of anything that would make it better.' Attendance is well above average.

Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are friendly and enthusiastic. There is a strong sense of community within the school. The school council is very active and influential and pupils said that adults listen to them. They relish their responsibilities and take them very seriously. Pupils feel very safe and secure and that they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. They understand exceptionally well the need for regular exercise and a healthy, balanced diet to keep fit and well. The level of their personal and basic skills means they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

From their generally low starting points, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Very effective intervention and support is given to pupils to ensure that they all have the same opportunities, whatever their backgrounds or abilities. As a result pupils with specific learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to others. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Outstanding teaching and an excellent curriculum are the reasons why pupils do so well academically and personally. Teachers successfully plan to meet the needs of all pupils and provide interesting and exciting lessons. The progress each child makes is carefully tracked so that challenging targets are set and reviewed regularly. Pupils know their targets and because of consistently effective marking and feedback, they know how they can improve their work to achieve them. Pupils are very enthusiastic about all their learning particularly when they have opportunities to solve problems and carry out their own investigations. One pupil commented, 'Teachers make lessons fun and we get to learn by playing games.' Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and there are excellent relationships throughout the school.

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. All staff and governors realise that the challenge they face is to maintain very high standards and they have been especially successful in this, yet constantly strive to improve things further. The governing body provides very good strategic leadership, supports the school very well and holds it to account for its performance. At the heart of the school's success are the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher who is extremely well supported by a very effective and strong team of senior leaders. They share a commitment to meeting the personal and academic needs and aspirations of every single child. One parent wrote, 'Through excellent leadership and management, the headteacher leads a strong, dedicated and hard working staff who in turn provide an extremely high standard of education, discipline and care for the children in this school.' The headteacher's firm belief that everyone in the school community matters is a strong motivation for staff, pupils and parents. Although there were no improvement points in the last inspection, the school has not rested on its laurels and it identified and succeeded in

initiating many improvements. These include very successful strategies using the skills of additional specialist teachers to raise standards further, an increase in the numbers of pupils reaching higher levels in their work and strengthening the partnership with parents. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are robust and enable staff to have a very clear view of the school's strengths and initiatives they wish to develop. The school's self-evaluation is highly effective and clearly demonstrates its relentless drive for excellence and outstanding capacity for further improvement from its existing secure and successful position.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children make very good progress from their low starting points, in all areas and by the end of the Reception Year almost all reach the goals expected for their age and many exceed them. This is because of a very well planned curriculum and outstanding teaching which help them to achieve exceptionally well. Children benefit from a carefully planned induction process that helps them settle very well once they start school. They quickly learn to work together and develop independence in their learning. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is excellent and enables all staff to work extremely well together to create an environment where children can thrive. A parent wrote, 'My child has improved so much over a few months. Teaching at the school has influenced his mental capability and his progress is in no doubt.'

What the school should do to improve further

The school has no major weaknesses and has outlined its priorities for development in its improvement plan. As well as maintaining high standards, these include developing the richness of pupils' language and further developments to the curriculum. The inspector agrees that, in order to build on its success, the school should implement these priorities.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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

02 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John The Divine Church of England Primary School, London, SE5 0SX

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed my visit to your school and what I found out. Thank you all for making me so welcome, for talking to me about your work and telling me what you think about your school. I found out that yours is an outstanding school and these are the reasons why.

- You really enjoy being at the school; you showed me that you are proud of your school and you care about everyone in it.
- I thought your behaviour in class and in the playground was excellent. It was great to see that you get on so well together and help each other in your work and play.
- You are very good at making decisions and taking responsibility to encourage everyone to be fit and healthy.
- Your achievement in your English, mathematics and science work is outstanding.
- Your teachers make sure your lessons and all the other activities that go on in the school are interesting and exciting.
- Everyone in the school works very hard and look after you extremely well and they help you develop your confidence and the belief that you can succeed in whatever you do.
- Your headteacher does an excellent job and knows how to make the school even better in the future. I agree that the school has identified the right issues to improve even more.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly and polite and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector