

St Paul's Whitechapel Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100959
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	307539
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Graham
Headteacher	Mr Terry Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2003
School address	Wellclose Square London E1 8HY
Telephone number	020 7480 6581
Fax number	020 7702 3426

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a culturally diverse community just to the east of Tower Bridge. Virtually all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and nearly two-thirds are from Bangladeshi backgrounds. Very many have a home language other than English. The proportion of pupils who need extra support with their learning is well above average. Just over half of the pupils are eligible for a free school meal. The school experiences much greater pupil mobility than most schools, and many later arrivals speak little English. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award and is working towards Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school is continuing to improve under the headteacher's astute leadership and the guidance of the senior staff team. They keep everyone focused on how to improve, and are fully committed to helping all pupils achieve the best they can, whatever their background and circumstances. The school serves the needs of its diverse community well. Parents are very happy with the school. They value the support provided, including classes to help them to learn English and to develop their computer and parenting skills.

Parents appreciate the school's commitment to their children's care and welfare. Pupils come to school happy and ready to learn because all adults make every effort to develop their confidence and help them feel safe. They make all newcomers and visitors welcome, are proud of their school and the contribution they make to its improvement. They enjoy lessons and the additional activities such as clubs and educational visits. Pupils respond well to the respect all adults show them by behaving well in lessons and at other times around the school. They understand very well how to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle as recognised by the Healthy Schools award, and enjoy the nutritious and tasty school meals.

Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Teaching is generally interesting and focused on moving pupils forward from their carefully assessed levels. This, and their motivation, results in pupils achieving well, so that standards are in line with the national average by Year 6. Having successfully improved achievement in science and writing, teachers are now turning their attention to reading. Actions such as 'reading recovery' and the input of reading partners from a city firm are raising standards. Teaching develops well the key skills of literacy and numeracy but does not consistently exploit links between subjects to reinforce these or information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively.

Pupils who have difficulty with learning, particularly in literacy, or who are new to speaking English, make good progress. This is because resources are directed carefully to meet their needs, which are identified after thorough assessment. Pupils new to the country make good progress, particularly once they have settled and gained confidence and skills in English. The school is developing marking and the use of targets to help guide the learning of all pupils, but this has not reached the point where it is consistent in helping pupils to see precisely what they need to do to improve.

Monitoring is well embedded. Consequently the headteacher, senior staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's qualities, using this to plan how to tackle priorities for improvement. This, and its recent record of improving achievement gives the school a firm platform from which to reach its goal of being outstanding in all that it does. The capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start their school lives well in an interesting and exciting environment where they are secure, happy and their individual needs are catered for well. All adults focus sharply on the children's personal development and encourage their language skills. The classrooms are full of activities and resources to stimulate young minds. From skills below those expected of three-year-olds, children make good progress in their learning, although a significant proportion do not reach the goals expected of them by the time they leave Reception. The children learn

to become independent and to work together because of the good balance between activities led by the adults and those initiated by the children themselves. The outdoor provision for pupils in the Nursery is rich and vibrant, but opportunities for Reception pupils to have free access to this are restricted by the layout of the school. All adults work closely as a team, although improvement has slowed recently during a period of change in leadership.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop key skills more effectively across subjects and make learning more interesting by strengthening links between subjects.
- Use targets and marking more effectively to help pupils understand the next steps to take in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school builds well on the children's good start in the Foundation Stage. From low starting points and often arriving higher up the school with limited English, pupils make good progress. There are some variations from year to year caused by the different characteristics of each cohort. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 have varied. They were average for writing and mathematics in 2007, but below for reading. Concerted action, including intensive support for individual pupils, has led to improved achievement in reading not just in the lower years but also across the school. Year 6 test results in 2007 were above average in English and in line with the national average in mathematics and science. One reason for this difference, identified and tackled by the school, was that the more able pupils had not been stretched enough in science. By focusing teaching on developing pupils' enquiry skills, more are now working above the expected levels for their age in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very friendly and polite. They talk with enthusiasm about the many things they like about school and the opportunities they have. One pupil said, 'Many wonderful and exciting things happen here.' Pupils' excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles is illustrated by their food choices at lunchtime as well as their enthusiastic participation in physical activities. They feel safe and secure and are confident that adults will help them to resolve any difficulties that arise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respect each other's backgrounds and willingly take on responsibilities such as the roles of prefects or playground buddies. They feel that their views are listened to, for instance, there is now a healthy food tuck shop and the daily piece of fruit has been extended, at their request, across the school. Pupils are attentive in lessons, work hard and develop positive attitudes to learning. Despite the school's efforts, attendance remains broadly average in part because parents take their children on extended holidays during the school term.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers base their lessons on the careful identification of each pupil's learning needs. They then adopt methods and activities that help to move learning forward. Pupils are generally

aware of the purpose behind each activity and are happy and confident because teachers praise and value their answers and ideas. They enjoy working with others, and sharing thoughts with their 'talk partners'. Through this, group work and role-play, teachers help pupils to develop their English language skills. They make creative use of visual aids such as new technology to help put over new ideas. Teachers involve pupils through careful questioning, but they do not always check everyone has understood a new idea before moving the lesson on. The large numbers of support staff make a valuable contribution, although they are not always effectively deployed to support learning in all classrooms during sessions led by the teacher.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A real strength of the curriculum is the excellent provision of activities, including educational visits that enrich the pupils' experiences and contribute considerably to the pupils' learning, enjoyment and personal development. An extensive range of sports enable pupils to play some less common activities such as golf, mini-fencing and ice skating. In addition, weekly clubs enhance learning for pupils with talents in areas such as art, mathematics or ICT. There are close links with outside agencies and an exceptional partnership with a local company provides over 40 volunteer reading partners who work with pupils each week. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well in English and mathematics, but not consistently through other subjects. Similarly, the school has not exploited links between subjects to develop the pupils' ICT skills more rapidly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Thorough systems safeguard the pupils' welfare and promote their safety and security. Arrangements to smooth the entry of pupils and their movement through the school are much valued by pupils and their parents. The school rigorously identifies the pupils' varied academic and personal needs, particularly newly arrived pupils who speak limited English. This helps the school to cater for any who need extra support to learn or to improve their behaviour. The school checks regularly how well pupils are doing and employs effective strategies to help them catch up if they are falling behind. Pupils know their individual targets and most, but not all, know how they can use these to improve the quality of their work. Marking is thorough, but does not consistently help pupils to identify the next steps to take or involve them in assessing their progress towards personal targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strong team of senior managers is effective in raising achievement and in maintaining a high level of care. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and uses this knowledge effectively in making improvements. Monitoring of performance is thorough, but does not always focus sharply enough on the impact of specific actions on pupil achievement and any emerging patterns. Subject leaders are appropriately trained to carry out their role well. They are making an impact on achievement in their areas of responsibility. The school has instigated several projects to promote effective partnerships with parents such as a DVD narrated by pupils to encourage parents to promote reading at home. Governors are involved in the day to

day life of the school and hold the school to account well. They have a good understanding of the school's qualities and the steps it needs to take to improve further.

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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 ¹ 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

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?	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

05 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Whitechapel Church of England Primary School, London, E1 8HY

I am writing to let you know what we found out during our recent visit to your school. Before that, I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome. We believe yours is a good school.

We have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite. It was great to hear how much you enjoy school and the clubs and other activities provided for you. It was also good to hear about how safe you feel in school and that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried. You are lucky to have such tasty and nutritious school meals.

We liked several things about your school. Teachers and other staff make learning enjoyable, which helps you to achieve well. Most of you reach the standards expected of you by the time you leave. All adults take great care of you, particularly when you are newly arrived in the country or if you find learning difficult. We were impressed with your behaviour, your enthusiasm, how you know so much about keeping healthy and the way that you make a difference in school through the school council.

Even a school as good as yours can improve. We have asked your teachers to help you further by providing opportunities to develop your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in different subjects, and use marking and targets better to help you see more clearly the steps you need to take to improve your learning.

The staff and governors want the school to continue to be successful and we know you will play your part by continuing to behave well, attending regularly and working hard. We wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector