

St Luke's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100443
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	323282
Inspection date	14 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	236
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Forsdick
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Dwulit (Executive) Ms Cassie Moss (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Radnor Street London EC1V 3SJ
Telephone number	020 7253 3880
Fax number	020 7490 7483

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated:

- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and how well issues that arise are addressed
- how well pupils achieve at different ages
- how effectively the school has tackled the issue of poor attendance.

Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, break times and assemblies, discussions with staff, pupils and governors, examination of the school's records and other documentation, the results of national assessments, and questionnaires filled in by parents.

Not all the school's work was investigated in detail but the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. It makes provision for younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a full-time Nursery, and for older EYFS children in a Reception class. The school is in a 'soft' federation with another local primary school, with the headteacher of St Luke's being the executive headteacher of both schools. A very high proportion of pupils are from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups and about half have a mother tongue other than English. A high and increasing proportion of younger pupils are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Their difficulties cover a wide range but most struggle with basic skills, or have social, behavioural or emotional difficulties. The school has won a number of awards including Artsmark Gold and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Luke's continues to be an outstanding school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. A major element contributing to this consistency is rigorous self-evaluation, which provides a very accurate picture of strengths and relative weaknesses. The staff and governors are quick to seize on any issues that arise, and work together very effectively to address them. As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding and their personal development and well-being are excellent.

The school works hard to involve parents, who are strongly appreciative of what is provided for their children. Written comments reveal that parents believe the school is '...one of the very best in London', '...a great school...' and '...so family friendly'.

All pupils, regardless of ability, ethnic origin, gender or home language, make exceptionally good progress during their time at St Luke's, and the achievement of all groups is excellent. Pupils who struggle with aspects of their learning make the same outstanding progress as their classmates because of the high-quality support they receive. Attainment when children start in the school is wide-ranging but, overall, is below that expected for their ages. In some years, attainment on entry is very much lower than that usually found. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average.

A very firm basis of learning is established in the younger classes, and most pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 2. By then, pupils have developed very positive attitudes to learning and have a secure grasp of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Those who are new to speaking English when they start at the school have become confident in the language by this time. Building on this firm foundation, during Key Stage 2 pupils shoot ahead in their learning and make exceptional progress before they leave at the end of Year 6. For several years, the achievement of pupils during this key stage has been in the top 5% nationally. Any problems are addressed swiftly. For example, disappointing results in writing in the 2008 tests for Year 6 have been analysed thoroughly and effective action has been taken to improve writing across the school.

A key contribution to pupils' achievement is the excellence of teaching. Lessons are at least good, and a considerable proportion are outstanding. Lessons are fast-paced and orderly, so pupils learn a lot in the time available. Positive relationships and clear routines ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and are keen to please their teachers by doing their best. Teachers make lessons interesting and exciting, particularly by the effective use of practical work. They make excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) to generate interest and clarify their explanations. For example, groups of Year 6 pupils used video clips to record themselves making presentations for a particular argument. In an outstanding session, they reviewed each other's work, commenting incisively but sensitively on each other's performance. High-quality questioning by the teacher ensured that pupils made exceptional progress in their social skills, their speaking and listening skills, as well as in their understanding of constructing an argument. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and, particularly through the use of skilled support staff, help them to meet these high standards.

Another major contribution to achievement is made by the excellent systems for supporting and guiding pupils academically. Individuals' progress is monitored frequently and carefully, and challenging targets are set. These are shared with pupils, who are clear about how they can improve their performance and what they are aiming for. Any pupils who need extra help to succeed, or who are not making the progress expected, are given support through a variety

of intervention programmes. The further progress of these pupils is monitored particularly closely, and records shows that the help they are given is extremely effective. The outstanding help provided to pupils in Years 5 and 6 in the 'Learning Zone' is especially helpful in ensuring that all pupils leave St Luke's well prepared for secondary school.

Both pupils' personal development and their achievement are enhanced by the excellent curriculum. A careful match of tasks to pupils' needs supports their strong progress in literacy and numeracy. The award of Artsmark Gold shows there are particular strengths in the arts, exemplified by the high-quality painting and drawing on display around the school. The arts are enhanced by the work of specialist teachers, for example in dance, where the expertise and enthusiasm of the teacher are reflected in the enjoyment, rapid learning and high standards achieved by pupils. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs and visits available. They also appreciate the way that teachers link work in different subjects together to make learning more meaningful and exciting. The use of ICT in this way is a particular strength. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including a programme of 'philosophy for children', greatly enhances pupils' personal development and well-being.

The many strengths in provision lead to pupils' outstanding personal development. They are growing up into friendly, lively, articulate and caring young people. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they thoroughly enjoy school. They get on extremely well with each other and with adults, and boys and girls from different ethnic groups play and work together happily. Pupils have extremely good collaborative skills, but also work very well independently when they need to. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' personal development are excellent. They are very knowledgeable about different religions and cultures and have a very well-developed sense of fairness. They feel very safe and secure in school. One pupil explained that the adults, '...care evenly about each child, even if that child is a bit naughty! Everyone is treated equally.' Another was clear that the adults, '...don't allow bullying'. Pupils make a strong contribution to the community, particularly through the school council whose views they know are valued and acted upon. The only issue with pupils' personal development, their relatively weak attendance, has been addressed extremely vigorously by the school. A huge amount of work has been undertaken with pupils and their parents. A wide range of innovative measures has been introduced to promote better attendance and very good use has been made of outside support. After a slow start, these measures are taking effect, and attendance is rising. Well-targeted extra support to pupils whose attendance is relatively weak is very effective in minimising any impact on their achievement.

All the school's strengths stem from outstanding leadership and management. The excellent leadership of the executive headteacher is complemented very capably by the head of school, the deputy headteacher and other colleagues, whose hard work is characterised by consistently effective teamwork. The quality of teaching is maintained at a high level because of rigorous monitoring of lessons, planning and pupils' work. Staff are then given clear feedback to help them improve their practice. Governors provide strong support, are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and hold it to account very well for its performance. The school is extremely well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many of the strengths in the main school are evident in the EYFS, particularly in promoting children's personal development. A strong partnership with parents helps ensure that children are happy in school and enthusiastic about learning. Parents praised the quality of the induction

process. Children start with attainment that is very variable, but is generally below that usually found, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal, social and emotional development. An increasing number of children start in the EYFS with very little knowledge of English, but staff are very skilled at helping these children settle in and they soon feel at home in school. All children achieve well, but attainment is still below average by the time they go into Year 1. A good range of interesting activities is provided indoors and there is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those where children choose things for themselves. The outdoor area is spacious and includes a large covered section. However, the activities available are not always challenging enough for all the children. The adult-led activities are very well taught and organised, have a good pace and make a major contribution to children's good progress. Adults make very effective use of skilful questioning to reinforce learning. However, children's free-play activities sometimes do not provide them with sufficient challenge. The EYFS is led and managed well, and the leader has already identified the need for further training for staff to improve provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is sufficient challenge provided for all children in the activities they are able to choose for themselves, particularly when they play outdoors.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Luke's CofE Primary School, London, EC1V 3SJ

Thank you for your warm welcome and all your help when we visited your school. You told us that you enjoyed school and we could see this when we watched you in lessons and at playtimes.

Your school is outstanding. You are all making great progress because the adults are very good at helping you to learn. The teachers are particularly good at using ICT to help you to understand things. The staff keep a very careful eye on how everyone is doing, and make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets it. You have plenty of exciting and interesting things to do in class, in clubs and on visits. We know that you particularly enjoy your dance lessons, and you are reaching high standards as a result.

We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour, your concentration and hard work in class, and by how well you all get on together. Everyone seems to really enjoy school. We were pleased to find that you are making more effort in always coming to school when you should, so that attendance is going up.

The children in Nursery and Reception classes also have a good time and are making good progress. We have agreed with the staff that, sometimes, children need things to do that are harder and make them think more. The adults are going to make sure this happens in future.

The staff and governors are very good at organising the school and are always trying to improve things. They have a long list of ideas that they hope will make the school better. You can help by keeping up your hard work, and making sure that attendance keeps on improving.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at St Luke's.

Yours faithfully

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector