

St James's Hatcham CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100727
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	335590
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	David Whatson

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

The registered childcare provision, 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 of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Edwards
Headteacher	Sonia McFarlane
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2006
School address	St James's New Cross London SE14 6AD
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Age group	3–11
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, data on pupil performance, development plans, minutes of governors' meetings, curriculum plans and school policies covering pupil safety as well as 97 pupil questionnaires and 32 parent questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils in Year 6 have performed in the past and how well pupils in the current Year 6 are performing
- how successful the school has been at increasing the rate of progress for casual admissions, Black Caribbean pupils, those who are more able and those with special educational needs/disabilities
- how much pupils contribute to and understand the national and international communities
- whether teachers' expectations and the use of assessment contribute significantly to pupils learning
- the reasons for the school's leadership having more success in raising standards in English and science than in mathematics.

Information about the school

St James's is an average size primary school. Fifteen attend full time and ten part-time in the morning and another ten in the afternoon. There are currently 12 children in the Reception class; this will rise to 30 with the January 2010 intake. The Nursery and the Reception classes make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The school is ethnically diverse. Most pupils are of a Black Caribbean or Black African heritage. There is a much greater proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language than is found at most other schools, although few are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is lower than usual. Most of these have emotional and behavioural or moderate learning difficulties. The rate at which pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual time is slightly higher than at most other schools. There is a Family Learning Centre on site managed by the governors but this was not part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St James's provides a satisfactory level of education. It is an improving school that already has some good aspects. The school's strong leadership has strengthened the school's provision and embedded high quality care that reflects its Christian ethos. As one pupil said, 'Adults treat you as if you are one of their own children.'

In the last few years, pupils' progress has been improving and standards at the end of Year 6 which were once low are now broadly satisfactory. Attendance is now high and the quality of teaching has been improved markedly. In English and science, many more pupils now achieve the expected levels for their age. However, although the percentage of pupils who exceed them in English, and gained the higher Level 5, is above the national average, few pupils exceed this in mathematics or science.

Improvements in English have been most consistent because pupils have many opportunities to develop their literacy skills across a wide range of subjects and strong subject leadership and staff training has been focused on improving teachers' subject knowledge and the use of assessment. Following the recent appointment of a science specialist, results have improved dramatically, although too few pupils achieve the highest level in tests. Improvements in mathematics have been slower and more fragile; standards dipped in 2009 and were low. Generally, pupils did not have sufficient time to practise their basic number facts. Currently, all pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in English, and many, although not always the more able, are also making good progress in science. However, progress in mathematics, although satisfactory, remains slower, especially for the more able.

Teachers' expectations are higher in English and science than in mathematics, where the pace of learning is slower and teachers are less confident. Although teachers challenge pupils well in English and science by asking them demanding questions and giving them the opportunity to discuss their work, this is not as common in mathematics. In English, pupils know what they need to do to improve and teachers provide increasingly detailed guidance when marking their work. This is not as evident in mathematics or science.

The school has modified its provision well and target their support so that Black Caribbean pupils and those who join the school at different times now perform at the same rate as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also beginning to make better progress as they receive increasingly personalised support.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education. From their lower than expected starting points, they make good progress and achieve standards at the end of the Reception class in line with the national average.

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Pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their much improved and excellent attendance. They have a very good understanding of what it means to be healthy, including an awareness of mental health issues. They can explain how it feels to be depressed and know the strategies that they would use if they were feeling particularly sad, including turning to adults in the school. Pupils relish the many opportunities they are given to contribute to school life. They get on well together and have a good understanding of the issues that face their local community and the world, such as climate change. However, their contributions to, and understanding of, the diversity of the wider community in which they live and the common values they share, although satisfactory, are less well developed.

The school has a good capacity for further improvement, as reflected in its progress since the last inspection. The school has a very accurate view of its successes and areas for development and has used this well in conjunction with an all-encompassing vision of success to overcome weaknesses on several fronts. However, its plans for school improvement, including those at a subject level, are not always precise about what is to be done or how success is to be measured at different points in time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in mathematics so that by summer 2011 they meet or exceed national averages, including those for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5.
- Improve standards in science so that by summer 2011 the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 meets or exceeds the national average.
- This is to be achieved by:
 - increasing staff subject knowledge and confidence through training and support, increasing the pace at which pupils learn and asking more challenging questions of the more able
 - making better use of assessment and pupils' targets when marking, talking to pupils, and planning activities for pupils of different abilities
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their basic number facts in mathematics and to apply their mathematics across the curriculum
 - sharpening the focus on the more able in the school's plans for improvement, and making the milestones by which to measure the school's success more specific.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

During the inspection, pupils learned well in English lessons and enjoyed their work because much of the teaching was engaging and the activities interesting. This was also true of the science lessons observed, although it was not as evident in pupils' books. However, in mathematics, pupils were not as engaged, were not as enthusiastic and did not learn as well. Much of the teaching was mundane and did not demand enough effort from pupils.

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When in conversation with pupils, they convey a strong sense of belonging to 'St James the Great'. They say they like to learn and appreciate the sense of peace and security that the school gives them. They are proud of their school, appreciative of its staff and respect each other regardless of their background. Pupils spoke well about how they had helped recent arrivals from Poland and China to settle into their classes. Pupils are very eager to take on responsibilities such as membership of the influential school council or acting as respected and well-trained peer mediators whose role it is to resolve disputes.

By the time pupils get to Year 6, they need no gentle reminders about how to behave and this makes a strong contribution to their learning. Pupils think carefully about the consequences of their actions and use the reflection areas in each class, as one pupil said, so 'you can talk to yourself or to God'. Although pupils' attendance is excellent and they have some good social and entrepreneurial skills (running a healthy tuck shop to raise funds for the summer ball of 2009), their preparation for their future is merely satisfactory because of the average level of their basic skills. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers are adept in using the interactive whiteboard and other resources to engage pupils in their learning. In a science lesson on dissolving solids, the investigation was linked to the real-life experience of making jelly for a party. On many occasions, but not all, additional adults are used well. Sometimes they help specific pupils to remain focused on their learning and on other occasions, as seen when pupils made clay pots, they supported the learning of the whole class. Although teachers usually share the lesson's learning objectives at the start of the lesson, success criteria are not consistently identified or returned to at the end of the lesson for pupils to evaluate their learning. Teachers, usually in mathematics, tell or show pupils what to do rather than encourage pupils to think for themselves and explain themselves. This limits their learning, especially for the more able.

The curriculum has been designed to broaden pupils' experiences and give their learning relevance. Following a trip to the British Museum, as part of their topic on the Ancient Egyptians, and a visit from a local artist, pupils in Year 3 are designing and making their own clay tiles. In an attempt to improve standards in mathematics, pupils are now taught in ability groups, but for the more able there still remains insufficient challenge. There is a wide range of popular after-school clubs. Some of these such as the drumming workshops were specifically started to help reduce any possible tensions between Black Caribbean and Black African pupils.

The school provides a safe haven for many of its pupils and helps them to manage their behaviour and feelings. There is a strong emphasis throughout the curriculum on developing pupils' social and emotional attitudes to learning. For example, the 'Black Boys Project' was aimed at raising the achievement of these pupils by developing their self-esteem and confidence. The learning mentor makes a significant impact on the lives and learning of individual pupils by helping to induct new arrivals and providing anger management sessions which have helped reduce the incidents of poor behaviour.

Rigorously applied systems to support good attendance, coupled with pupils' desire to learn, has improved attendance and reduced persistent absenteeism to zero. Pupils' individual needs, including for those with moderate learning difficulties, are carefully targeted and the provision tailored to their needs so that they can learn along with their peers. This is more evident in English than in mathematics. When needed, a full range of specialists and support agencies are called upon in the school's efforts to support its vulnerable pupils. The school works hard and successfully to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning, as demonstrated by the well-attended curriculum evenings. The breakfast club provides a sound start for those who attend.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A clear sense of direction is well established and this has seen the school's outcomes improve and its potential for further improvement grow. Because of decisive actions taken by the school's leadership there is now no inadequate teaching. Steps to improve standards in English and science have been successful. However, mathematics has not had the same high profile or injection of energy seen in the other two subjects. The governors play an important role, particularly through their 'Strategic Committee'. At the moment they are holding the school to account over performance in mathematics and are playing a key role in planning for improvement. They and the school ensure that there are comprehensive systems in place to promote pupils' safety. However, governors are not as proactive or effective in communicating with parents or in systematically evaluating the effectiveness of some of their policies. As a result of the introduction of a new system of recording and analysing pupil progress, the school has become acutely aware of the performance of different groups of pupils and, when necessary, has taken swift and effective remedial action. The school has a close working relationship with its local church that enriches pupils' learning. A number of agencies and other partnerships play an important role in supporting pupils' development. The school has evaluated and planned how it promotes a sense of community within the school but it has not done this as effectively at a local and global level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage acknowledges that when children start Nursery, many of them do so with a lower level of skills and abilities than usual and has developed a setting that meets their needs well. Children and their parents are given a warm welcome and time and guidance on how to adapt to their new environment. Parents appreciate that their children feel safe and secure. Parental involvement is being enhanced by increasing the amount of home-school contact before a child starts attending. A cornerstone of the good progress that children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage is high quality teaching. Teachers and other adults provide enjoyable activities, such as learning the sounds that letters make by wearing 'Super Hero' vests or by engaging children in conversations about real fruit and vegetables. There is a good balance between adult-focused activities, such as changing the bedding for the class stick insect and child-initiated learning, for example playing basketball in the Nursery. The indoor space of both the Nursery and Reception classes is bright, colourful and well displayed and in Reception, all six areas of learning are catered for in their recently covered outdoor area. The Nursery also has a well-equipped outside area but children do not have free access to this, which limits their learning. Children's learning, especially in Reception, is well tracked. The planned development of identifying one adult in the Nursery who is responsible for the learning and well-being of each child will strengthen this further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was quite small. Nearly all the questionnaires were wholly positive, although a few expressed concerns about whether children are making good progress and whether the school meets pupils' individual needs. The inspection team found that progress is satisfactory overall but improving, with some pupils making good progress. It also found that although the school was good at meeting the individual needs of many pupils, it did not always meet the needs of the more able pupils. A few parents also suggested that the school does not deal with poor behaviour well. The inspection found that the school has many good procedures that are used well to deal with poor behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St James's Hatcham Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	78	5	19	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	63	11	16	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	75	7	34	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	59	10	22	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	69	7	31	2	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	60	9	22	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	41	16	28	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	38	16	50	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	41	14	44	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	34	16	50	3	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	31	17	53	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	41	15	47	2	6	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	75	4	13	3	9	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James's Hatcham CofE Primary School, London, SE14 6AD

The inspection team really enjoyed visiting your school and we would like to thank you for your warm welcome. We found that your school has improved and that you are now doing better in English and science. Although standards in these two subjects are similar to those of children in other schools, you do better in writing. The teaching is better too, and many more of your lessons are helping you to learn. Our main finding is that the school provides you with a satisfactory education, but it also has many strong features.

- Your attendance record is excellent. You therefore get to benefit from being at school, so keep it up!
- You have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and you enjoy eating healthily in school and taking part in lots of sports and exercise. Well done!
- Your teachers give you interesting things to learn and this helps you to enjoy school.
- You behave well and know how to keep yourselves safe.
- You carry out your responsibilities well, such as being peer mediators and in your work on the school council.
- There are lots of interesting activities for you to explore in your English and science lessons.
- Your headteacher is good at thinking of ways to make your school better. It is therefore well placed to get even better.
- The children in the youngest classes get off to a really good start because there is so much for them to do and to enjoy.

At the moment, your standards in mathematics are lower than in English and science and occasionally the work you are given is too easy. So I have asked your school to give you more exciting mathematics lessons, more time to talk about your mathematics and more opportunities to use your mathematics in other subjects. For those of you who sometimes find the work in science and mathematics easy, I have also asked the school to give you more challenging work from the start and for teachers to ask you some harder questions.

Teachers know what needs to be done and have plans to get things moving. We are

sure that you will help them to help you, because that is one of the best things about your school!

Yours faithfully

David Watson

Lead Inspector

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