

The Stepney Greencoat Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100946
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	335629
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Burke
Headteacher	Vivian Onwubalili
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited ten lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and plans, pupils' work, staff and pupil questionnaires and 69 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- attainment in writing at Key Stage 1
- the effectiveness of the school's systems to monitor and promote good attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism
- the effectiveness of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school
- how well the school provides equal opportunities for pupils' academic and personal development.

Information about the school

This smaller than average inner-city school serves pupils from a wide area within the borough. About a third come from Bangladeshi families and a further third are from White British backgrounds. Other ethnicities are present in small numbers. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. More pupils than in most schools of this size have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many of these pupils have difficulties with speech, language and communication. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is much higher than average.

The school has won a number of awards in recent years including Investors in People, Healthy Schools Status and Activemark.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This school is providing pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage varies widely but most have skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make satisfactory progress and more than half reach expected levels for their age by the end of the Reception year. However, the remainder are still below expected levels by the time they move to Year 1.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been average in recent years, but they fell significantly in writing in 2009. The school has taken action to address this, implementing a range of support strategies for pupils who have fallen behind. These are already showing early signs of success. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Pupils make the most gains in their learning in Year 6 because of good teaching. In other classes, progress, though satisfactory overall, varies because teaching does not always provide challenging enough activities, especially for the more able pupils. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6, although standards in English are often slightly above average.

Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that there is always an adult to turn to in the school if they have any concerns. They know what to do if bullying occurs, although they say that this happens rarely. They understand the dangers of drugs and how to use the internet safely. Pupils are well behaved in class and around the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils carefully consider different beliefs and faiths during acts of worship and produce sensitive poems and artwork on a range of topics.

Pupils confirm that they enjoy school, especially the wide range of opportunities beyond lessons in which they can develop their individual skills and talents. Good partnerships with parents and outside agencies benefit pupils' learning and personal development. Staff from a local bank, for example, work in school every week, helping pupils with reading, and supporting an Enterprise Club for gifted and talented pupils.

School leaders have a reasonably accurate view of performance, although they are too generous in their judgements about teaching. Weaknesses in writing at Key Stage 1 have already been identified and additional support provided for lower attaining pupils. However, the school lacks robust systems to monitor the progress of different groups throughout the year, in order to identify trends in performance, so that the curriculum and teaching can be adapted accordingly. Attendance has improved as a result of rigorous measures introduced to monitor absence and support individual families. Inconsistencies in teaching have been noted and plans implemented to try to improve

practice. These actions demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that lessons provide challenging activities that meet the different needs and abilities of pupils, especially in writing in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Improve the management of teaching and learning by:
 - establishing systems to allow teachers to observe examples of good practice within and beyond the school
 - extending senior leaders' skills in coaching so they can provide better support for teachers
 - ensuring that, when monitoring lessons, senior leaders focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, including different groups of pupils within the class.
- Analyse pupils' progress more rigorously over the year to evaluate the performance of different groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and the overwhelming majority enjoy their education. Bangladeshi pupils and those of other ethnicities all achieve at similar levels. In the lessons observed, most pupils responded well to the tasks and activities set by teachers. In a Year 4 science lesson for example, the pupils approached their investigation with great enthusiasm, working well together to find different ways of separating a mixture of rice, sand and pasta.

Children make satisfactory progress through Reception, although this is improving as activities planned for the children take more account of their needs. Year 2 pupils reach broadly average standards, reflecting satisfactory progress across Key Stage 1. A dip in writing standards last year has led the school to provide more small group support in Years 1, 2 and 3 to help pupils catch up on skills that are weak. However, in lessons, the more able pupils are sometimes not challenged by the activities provided.

Achievement in Years 3 to 6, while satisfactory overall, varies according to the quality of teaching that pupils receive. Sometimes, pupils' learning is hindered by the lack of challenging activities and tasks. In such cases, pupils are not so well motivated and lose concentration.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements, make satisfactory progress. The school has recently tightened up procedures to monitor the effectiveness of the support provided in lessons and this is beginning to have an impact on teachers' planning and pupils' progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils treat one another very sensitively, supporting their friends and showing great respect for different cultures and

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

opinions. They have a strong awareness of right and wrong and a good sense of fairness and consideration for others. They make a strong contribution to the school and local community, keenly accepting responsibilities as prefects and helping elderly residents in the neighbourhood. Average levels of basic skills and attendance mean they are satisfactorily prepared for their future education.

The school's efforts to gain Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark have meant that pupils develop a sound knowledge of how to keep healthy. They participate eagerly in physical education lessons and sports clubs outside school hours. However, although school lunches are healthy and nutritious, packed lunches often contain sweets, chocolate and crisps, showing that not all pupils have adopted healthy lifestyles.

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	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils which enable them to manage their behaviour well. This ensures that lessons proceed in a calm and orderly manner. A wide range of exciting activities outside the school day really motivates pupils to develop individual skills and talents to high levels. This can be seen in some of the excellent art

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

work throughout the school and the high standards in singing and musical performance generally. The choirs have won many awards, most recently for their performance at the Royal Albert Hall.

Subjects are often linked to make learning relevant to pupils. Pupils in Year 6, for example, wrote compelling newspaper articles about workplace conditions for children during Victorian times. Visitors to school, for example clergymen from two neighbouring churches and volunteers from local businesses, help pupils to understand about the local community and the importance of independence and determination. The school arranges many visits to extend pupils' experience in, for example, the arts and sport. Residential trips in Years 2 and 6 are extremely popular and provide good opportunities for pupils to learn how to live together away from home.

Teachers assess pupils' progress systematically and give them targets for improvement. However, they do not always use this information effectively to make sure that activities are sufficiently challenging for the pupils, especially those who are more able. This leads to pupils losing concentration which slows their learning.

Pupils with speech and language difficulties benefit greatly from the support provided by therapists who visit the school weekly. Therapists also give advice to staff about how best to support these pupils and this is beginning to have an impact on their progress in lessons.

Pastoral support is good. Pupils and their families are well known to staff, who often go the extra mile to ensure that they take a full part in the life of the school. An overwhelming majority of parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire agree that their children are well cared for and enjoy coming to school. Staff, governors and the local authority have worked well in partnership to reduce persistent absence.

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
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?

Senior leaders set a satisfactory agenda for school improvement and involve staff, parents and governors in planning the way ahead. They have a reasonable picture of pupils' individual performance gained through well-established tracking and assessment procedures. They promote equal opportunities through monitoring the standards attained by different groups of pupils, for example those from different ethnic backgrounds, at the end of each year. However, they do not monitor the progress of different groups regularly enough throughout the year to identify those that are at risk

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

of underachievement. Targets for different cohorts present a moderate degree of challenge.

Senior leaders monitor teaching regularly but there is insufficient focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning for their evaluations to be totally accurate. This has led to learning not always being as effective as it should be.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. There are productive links with bodies and organisations in the local community. Links with schools in East Sussex and Malawi are developing to extend pupils' understanding of life in communities further afield.

Governors bring many skills with which to support the school's work, for example in finance and community relations. They contribute regularly to school self-evaluation, and visit often to check on the progress of initiatives. Governors are presently developing more formal methods to record the outcomes of these visits. They have regular contact with parents and the community to gauge their views and opinions. They have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures, which are robust and well established.

The school enjoys good partnerships with parents and positive links with agencies outside the school that contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development. Workshops in mathematics have helped parents to support their children more effectively at home. Close involvement with parents has reduced persistent absence and has enabled vulnerable pupils take a more active part in school life. Links with a special school in the borough have helped staff to develop strategies to cater more effectively for the needs of children with significant learning difficulties. Links with the Metropolitan Police, Docklands Light Railway and Neighbourhood Watch all contribute effectively to pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
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

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class. Good induction procedures help them to settle in quickly and provide a positive start to building strong relationships with parents. The children develop independence and confidence quickly because they are encouraged to choose from a range of activities indoors and outdoors.

They make steady progress in learning letters and sounds, and enjoy finding out about different cultures and customs when, for example, they examined a sari and photographs about Eid. They develop confidence in handling numbers, excitedly telling the teacher which numbers have 'disappeared' from the number line.

New staff have reviewed provision and have begun to make improvements to planning and assessment procedures. This is helping to increase progress in some aspects of learning, for example communication, language and literacy, as the teacher asks questions and structures activities at different levels, based on her knowledge of the children. However, these initiatives are at the early stages of development and are not yet firmly embedded in daily routines. Leadership is developing as new staff grow in confidence and put into practice the skills and knowledge gained from attendance at local authority courses.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are very happy with their children's experience of school. A small minority are concerned about how their children's individual needs are met. Inspectors found that overall, pupils' needs are met adequately. The school has recently improved its systems to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the right sort of support. A few parents think that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns but inspectors found that parents have a great many opportunities to express their views and that these have been taken into account when prioritising areas for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Stepney Greencoat 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 inspector received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 184 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	60	24	35	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	36	52	30	44	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	55	27	39	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	44	29	42	6	9	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	27	39	31	45	7	10	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	41	34	49	4	6	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	42	31	45	7	10	1	1
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)	21	30	32	46	4	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	35	33	48	8	12	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	39	29	42	5	7	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	30	33	48	9	12	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	28	41	31	45	3	4	6	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	49	25	36	7	10	2	3

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.



1 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Stepney Greencoat Church of England Primary School, London E14 7TF

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. Thank you especially to those pupils who talked with us to give us their ideas and opinions about the school. Your views, along with everything else that we saw in lessons and around the school, helped us to form a clear view about how well your school works.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. These things are good.

- Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- You know your targets and are working hard to achieve them.
- You know how to keep safe inside and outside the school.
- Good links with your parents and other people outside the school, such as the business partners and the police, help you develop and grow into responsible young people.
- Your teachers organise a wide range of exciting extra activities and clubs for you to enjoy.
- Adults in the school care for you really well.

There are a few things about the school that could be better. We have asked the teachers to make sure that activities are set at the right levels to make sure you all make good progress, especially in writing in some of the younger classes. We have asked the people in charge to check your progress more regularly over the year to make sure you are all doing as well as you can. We have also asked them to support your teachers even more so they can teach really good lessons to help you all make even better progress.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead Inspector

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