

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101537
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	335742
Inspection dates	14–15 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Natalia Power

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr David Clues
Headteacher	Ms Susan Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation and plans, the data it has collected on pupils' progress, and the minutes of the governing body. They considered the responses in 58 questionnaires that had been returned by parents and carers.

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

- the quality of teaching and learning and the role of leaders and managers in ensuring consistency across the school
- the extent to which the school meets the needs of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of the school's measures to improve attendance.

Information about the school

This school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than usual. Nearly all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A third of pupils are from Black Caribbean backgrounds, a quarter from Black African heritages, and the rest are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly half of pupils speak first languages other than English, and those at an early stage of learning English most commonly speak Somali, Yoruba and Twi as their mother tongue. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Of these, pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties form the largest group. The governing body manages the after-school club, which is provided by an external partner.

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

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils.

- The school is welcoming and inclusive and has a happy ethos. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning and their overall achievement are satisfactory. They reach standards which are broadly in line with national averages and make satisfactory progress in lessons, although they do better in English than in mathematics.
- Good care and support ensure that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially vulnerable children, all make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.
- Pupils behave satisfactorily in lessons and around the school. Behaviour in lessons is best when pupils are fully engaged in their tasks and are offered challenging work. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community by taking on a range of responsibilities and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe in school.
- The school promotes community cohesion well, ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of other people's faiths and cultures. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, and is stronger on the spiritual side. The school has taken effective measures to raise attendance so that it is now broadly average.
- Teaching varies in quality but is satisfactory overall and leads to satisfactory learning. Sometimes teachers dominate the lessons too much and pupils sit for too long on the carpet. Tasks are not always sufficiently matched to individual pupils' needs. Marking is stronger in English than in mathematics, where pupils are not always given sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- The curriculum provides exciting enrichment activities. Its focus on key skills is adequate and this contributes to pupils making satisfactory progress. In mathematics, some pupils are given too many unchallenging worksheets.
- Leaders, managers and governors have made adequate progress in addressing key issues from the last inspection. They have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and work effectively in partnership with many outside specialists. Because of this good self-evaluation, plans identify the correct priorities for improvement. Leaders and managers track pupils' progress adequately but do not always ensure that the information is used in the classroom to match work to pupils' capabilities. Consequently, classroom monitoring is not always focused sufficiently on the quality of pupils' learning. Nevertheless, with the positive improvements, this shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained

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improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - implementing an improved programme of classroom monitoring, with a sharper focus on how well pupils are learning
 - improving pupils' pace of learning in lessons, with more opportunities for pupils to contribute.
- Ensure that work is consistently matched to pupils' different capabilities, and that it provides sufficient challenge, by making better use of information collected on pupils' progress.
- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - pupils are given every opportunity to make calculations and to solve problems independently, with less reliance on unchallenging worksheets
 - pupils are given clearer guidance, through better marking, on what they need to do to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory. Their achievement and enjoyment depend strongly on the extent to which they are given opportunities to join in and contribute to their own learning. When pupils are offered good opportunities to contribute, their behaviour improves as they become engrossed in their tasks, and they then make faster progress in their learning. For example, pupils learn Latin with a real sense of excitement, because tasks are challenging and the teacher engages all pupils, ensuring that they are alert and responsive throughout the lesson. In such lessons, pupils make faster progress than in some others where they spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average at both key stages, and they make satisfactory progress from broadly average starting points. Pupils do best in English, reaching standards which are a little above average. They do less well in mathematics, because tasks are not always challenging enough, and because marking in this subject does not always make clear how pupils can improve. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. The attainment of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is generally in line with that of other pupils. Those at an early stage of learning English catch up quickly because of good support, and they, too, make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall, and is better when pupils are engaged fully in their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, and it is stronger on the spiritual side, where pupils are encouraged to pray to their personal God and have the option to recite the Lord's prayer. Pupils feel safe at school and know to whom to turn if they have any worries. They are willing to embrace

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a healthy lifestyle. They contribute well to the school community, for example by helping younger children and by taking a range of responsibilities as prefects, playground friends and security monitors. The school takes effective steps to promote regular attendance. As a result, attendance is now broadly average after two years in which it was low. The satisfactory progress pupils make towards learning basic skills prepares them adequately for the next stage of schooling.

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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants are supportive and there are warm relationships in the classroom. One pupil commented, 'All of the teachers are kind and helpful and we learn a lot in this school.' In some lessons, there is a brisk pace of learning with good opportunities for pupils to contribute. In some others, however, the pace slows and pupils lose concentration and become restless. This is especially the case where the information on pupils' progress is not used to provide sufficiently challenging work for their differing capabilities. Teachers mark English books thoroughly, so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve, but do not always provide such detailed

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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guidance when they mark mathematics books. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with additional needs.

The curriculum has a sound focus on the basic skills, and the many activities to enrich the basic curriculum are exciting and wide ranging. The clubs, trips and visits to places of interest are appreciated by the pupils and are important in raising their aspirations. Languages are a strength of the curriculum, and pupils learn French throughout the school and Latin in Years 3 to 6. Information and communication technology is used creatively to enhance the curriculum. The school recognises that not enough is done to develop pupils' mathematical skills. For example, in some lessons an over-reliance on unchallenging worksheets means that pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to develop problem-solving and calculation skills.

Pupils are cared for well and given strong support. Vulnerable children are looked after particularly well. The school works effectively with a range of professionals to ensure that pupils' needs are successfully met. For example, pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are given sensitive support through various agencies, including the 'Place2Be'. Pupils benefit from good transition arrangements when they join and leave the school. Though attendance has improved since the last inspection, a few pupils with families abroad take too much time off school.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has created a cohesive and happy school where staff and governors, in the words of one governor, 'work well together and share a common vision for the school'. Relationships are good between the school and the Church. Leaders, managers and governors promote community cohesion well, ensuring that pupils have a good understanding, not only of their own faith and culture but of those of others in the world. Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective, and that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They promote equality of opportunity adequately, ensuring that all pupils, whatever their background or needs, make satisfactory progress overall.

The ambition of leaders and managers to improve the school is sound. They track pupils' progress accurately and use the information to put in place support which is especially beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, they do not sufficiently ensure that the information is used in the classroom to motivate teachers

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to provide tasks which raise the level of challenge. The classroom observations made by leaders and managers adequately identify the aspects of teaching which are satisfactory and those which are good. However, observations are not sharply enough focused on how pupils learn, and leaders and managers do not sufficiently follow up observations to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better.

Leaders, managers and governors have a realistic understanding of their school's strengths and areas for development. Their planning accurately identifies strategies for improvement. The school has adequately tackled areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, for example by raising the attendance of all pupils apart from a handful of persistent absentees. Governors provide sound support and are ready to challenge the school and hold it to account. The school works in effective partnership with a range of outside organisations to promote pupils' learning and well-being. For example, in partnership with the Male Development Service, the school offers an after-school club which provides valuable role models to raise boys' aspirations.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle into the Nursery quickly and happily. This is because good partnerships with parents are established early and maintained well, enabling the children to feel confident. As a result of good teaching in the Nursery, they make good progress in their learning. Some children leave the Nursery before the Reception year, and a new influx of children enters Reception, some with little or no pre-school experience. Induction procedures for these new arrivals are adequate, but the lack of information about the children's previous experiences means that it takes the adults longer to get to know the

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children, and this slows their progress. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception year, entering Year 1 with language and number skills which are broadly average. The outdoor play areas are not as inviting or as well used to promote learning as in the Nursery.

Children are safe and secure in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and adults promote children's welfare well. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The adults prepare inviting activities for the children to choose for themselves, but do not always guide children towards tasks which provide sufficient challenge. The tracking of children's progress, though based on thorough observation of each child's activities, is not always used sufficiently to bring out the best in each child. Sometimes the work is too easy for the children's capabilities, and opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage children to develop basic writing skills or to speak and listen as much as possible. The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led, and the manager has identified raising standards through improving the quality of the tracking of children's progress as a priority for improvement.

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

Nearly all parents and carers who returned questionnaires were happy with the school. A few parents and carers felt that the school does not take sufficient account of their views and suggestions. Inspectors found that the school's partnership with parents and carers is adequate but agree that the school could do more to reach out to parents and carers and seek their views. Parents and carers all agreed that their children enjoy school and that it keeps them safe. Parents valued the care and support provided by the staff. Inspectors agree that the school provides good care and support for its pupils and that it has a warm and inclusive ethos.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 308 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	67	19	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	60	22	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	53	27	47	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	57	23	40	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	53	26	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	47	27	47	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	45	31	53	1	2	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)	25	43	24	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	33	36	62	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	45	29	50	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	41	26	45	6	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	50	24	41	3	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	48	28	48	1	2	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.



17 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, London NW10 9JA

Do you remember that four inspectors recently visited your school and talked to some of you? We very much enjoyed our visit, and this is what we found:

- Your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education, which means it does some things well but some things need to be improved.
- Your school keeps you safe. All the adults take good care of you.
- You have a good understanding of how other people in the world live and worship. Your school is inclusive and everyone is valued. One pupil told us that your school, 'Gives us a good way of making Muslims and Christians get on together'.
- You understand what it means to be healthy. For example, even Year 1 pupils know that raisins are better for you than sweets!
- You are happy in your school, though a few of you say that behaviour is not always as good as it could be.
- You make satisfactory progress. Most of you do better in English than in mathematics, and we have asked those in charge to make sure that you are always given tasks that help you to do your best.
- You love your clubs and trips and visits. The adults that come into your school help you to raise your sights and aim higher in life.
- Those of you in Years 3 to 6 showed how much you enjoy a challenge by your enthusiasm in your Latin lessons. We have asked the adults in charge to make sure that all your lessons are just as exciting. We have also asked them to make sure that all your tasks are matched to your individual abilities and really make you think.

You can play your part in helping your school become even better. Make sure you work hard and ask your teacher if you don't understand anything. Tell your parents and carers that every day at school is important and that you should not miss a single day, if at all possible!

We hope you always remain as happy and cheerful as you are at St Mary's. We wish you all the best in your journey through life.

Yours sincerely

Natalia Power

Lead inspector

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