

St Mary and St Michael Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131936
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	341254
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Barry Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Killington
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Faulkner
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
School address	Sutton Street Stepney E1 0BD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried by four additional inspectors. Twenty-one teachers were observed either teaching whole classes or working with groups of pupils. The inspection team held meetings with staff, governors and two groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents and policies, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The responses to 118 parental questionnaires were analysed as well as responses to staff and pupils' questionnaires.

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

- whether standards have continued to rise and why
- how effectively the school promotes good attendance and behaviour
- how well teachers plan work to meet the needs of different pupils
- how well the school promotes pupils' understanding of other faiths and global issues.

Information about the school

This large, popular primary school has high proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language. There is no predominant group but White British and pupils of African heritage are the largest ones. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost three times the national average. There are more pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than in most schools. The school has a number of awards including National Healthy Schools status, an Activemark and a quality assurance award for its after-school provision and out-of-school activities. Half of the class teachers have taught for less than two years.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school has improved considerably since being judged to be satisfactory in its previous inspection. It now provides a good quality of education and pupils' achievement is outstanding. A major factor in its success is the resolute determination and drive of the headteacher, and she is ably supported by a core of dedicated, passionate senior managers and governors. This is appreciated by parents and carers, most of whom are very supportive of the school. As one wrote, 'The school provides a caring, nurturing learning environment for my child.'

Children join the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. They make an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' levels of attainment in Year 6 national tests have risen sharply in the last three years and are now above average. This reflects outstanding achievement given their low starting points. This is partly explained by good teaching which means that pupils make good progress in lessons. A further significant factor is the high quality support and challenge given by senior leaders and the effective, high-quality intervention programmes. The tracking of pupils' progress is meticulous which means that dips in performance are identified early, and timely, well-targeted support provided. This accelerates progress so that most pupils make outstanding progress over time.

The school is a very harmonious community and has excellent links with its local community and the Church. It also works very effectively with a range of partners and agencies to promote the well-being of pupils. Consequently, this is a happy school where pupils feel safe and enjoy their work. Attendance is no more than average, but levels are improving as a result of strenuous efforts by the school.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. It has established an excellent induction programme for new teachers. This has helped to maintain good standards in teaching despite a high turnover of staff. Combined with its track record of improvement, the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - tasks are matched to the individual needs of pupils
 - marking in mathematics gives constructive feedback to pupils on how they might improve further.
- Work with parents and carers to raise attendance levels.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' levels of attainment have improved from being significantly below average in 2007 to being significantly above average in 2009. Observations in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show that this good attainment is being maintained. Pupils' progress in reading is particularly rapid. Attainment in writing lags a little behind that for reading but this is being addressed robustly by the school. Pupils with English as an additional language receive well-targeted, effective support. Consequently, they make outstanding progress in acquiring English language skills and in their other subjects, too. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support and they make the same progress as their peers. There are no significant differences between the achievements of different minority ethnic groups.

Pupils express pride in their school. They say that their views are valued. Members of the school council met with councillors during democracy week to discuss President Obama's inaugural speech. Pupils contribute generously to fundraising. They have a good understanding of healthy-living issues. Pupils acquire good numeracy, literacy, computer and social skills. Consequently, they are prepared well for their next stage in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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 make learning intentions clear so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Classes are managed well, and pupils respond enthusiastically and contribute positively to their own learning. Good practice is shared with other teachers which is particularly useful in the case of inexperienced teachers. It helps to channel their enthusiasm and energy and contributes to the good quality of teaching seen. In an outstanding Year 2 English lesson, planned tasks were matched carefully to pupils' different abilities. Lower-attaining pupils were able to complete rhyming couplets; higher-attaining pupils were developing their sentences to include 'wow' words. In some lessons, however, the work is not planned for different ability groups and the pace slackens. The quality of marking in English is consistently good and gives constructive feedback on how pupils might improve further. Marking in mathematics is more variable and patterns in pupils' errors are not always identified by the teacher.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and some aspects are outstanding. Provision for promoting reading is excellent and includes the use of specific reading programmes which are targeted well. The school makes good use of local authors to stimulate pupils' interests in writing. The school plans to provide more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects in order to raise attainment further. Good attention is paid to promoting cultural awareness through the curriculum. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities that adds to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support are good and have some outstanding features. There are strong procedures for monitoring attendance which is consequently improving, having been low in previous years. However, the school does not receive the full cooperation of all parents and carers in its drive for high attendance. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to support vulnerable children. They are cared for well and this enables them to play a full part in school life.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 have been very effective in driving up pupils' levels of attainment in the last two years. The monitoring of teaching quality is rigorous and identifies strengths and areas for development. This informs training programmes and is reinforced by effective support and challenge for individual teachers by phase leaders. Staff turnover

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is high but the school meets this challenge well with an excellent induction programme for new teachers. Newly qualified teachers and others new to the school speak highly of this support. Phase leaders are excellent teachers and so help to disseminate good practice with team teaching and demonstration lessons when necessary. Staff are hardworking and perform well as a team. A strong commitment to equality of opportunity helps to ensure that there is no difference between the performance of different groups of pupils; the school analyses their progress carefully and takes positive action if needed. The safeguarding of pupils is good. There are strong arrangements for risk assessments which contribute to pupils feeling safe. Governors give strong support but further training on child protection issues is planned. The school's promotion of community cohesion is exemplary. It has excellent links with the local community, is forging links with other local schools and is actively developing links with schools in Zambia and Rumania.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills which are well below those expected for their age. From their first day, they, and their parents or carers, are made to feel very welcome. As in the main school, there have been considerable improvements in the last three years. This is partly because of the excellent leader who was appointed three years ago and also because of the successful move to one September point of entry for all children. Provision is very well organised to give the children a rich range of stimulating experiences. Adults work exceptionally well as a team. There is a good balance between

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teacher-led activities and those designed to help children work independently. Assessments are meticulous and are well used to provide challenging activities. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving children's literacy skills. Daily guided reading is skilfully delivered and additional support provided where required. Children make excellent progress and attain skills beyond those expected for their age by the end of Reception.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. A minority of parents and carers do not agree that pupils' behaviour is good. This was discussed by the inspectors with the school. The school accepts that it will investigate a few reports of some misbehaviour on buses. The inspectors found no evidence of misbehaviour in school. Pupils were courteous and behaved well in class and around the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary and St Michael 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 118 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 465 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	61	39	33	3	3	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	60	51	55	47	1	1	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	64	54	51	43	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	51	50	42	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	50	55	47	2	2	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	47	52	44	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	41	60	51	5	4	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)	45	38	59	50	7	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	47	51	43	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	36	63	53	7	6	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	36	68	57	6	5	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	64	54	47	40	2	2	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	76	64	36	31	2	2	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



30 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School, Stepney E1 0BD

Thank you for your help and cooperation when we inspected your school. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe there. Your school council members represent you well and told us that their views are valued. We agree that you go to a good school. It is improving and there are several excellent features. The things we particularly liked are:

- you do better than pupils in most schools
- you make excellent progress in your work
- you behave well and get on well together
- the headteacher and other senior staff work exceptionally well on your behalf
- you have good teachers who make the work interesting for you
- the school makes an excellent contribution to the local and wider community
- the school forms excellent partnerships with others to ensure that you are looked after well.

The school is not complacent and is working hard to make things even better for you. However, because too many pupils miss school, we have asked the school to work with your parents and carers to improve attendance levels. You can play your part, too! We have also asked the school to ensure that teachers always set you challenging work and help you to improve through their marking of your work.

We wish you continuing success in the future. Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

Barry Jones

Additional Inspector

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