

St James' Church of England Primary School

Old Jamaica Road, Bermondsey, London, SE16 4SU

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in mathematics, reading and writing is above that seen nationally.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their education and make good progress from their low starting points.
- The quality of teaching phonics (the sounds letters make) is improving, which is helping pupils to improve their reading.
- Pupils feel safe at school and their good behaviour and attitudes impact well on their learning.
- The headteacher is highly ambitious, and leaders and managers work effectively as a team to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and the links with parents and carers are strong and improving. As a result, attendance has improved markedly.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Governors know the school well and provide the appropriate support and challenge to bring about improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' progress in reading, although good, is not as fast as it is in writing or mathematics.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons to work at and achieve higher levels.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils make improvements to their work following teachers' feedback and marking.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils' work is tidy and well presented. ~~present their work neatly.~~
- Teachers' questioning is not always sharp enough to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 23 lessons, of which nine were joint observations with the deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils at breaks and lunchtimes and attended two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with different groups of pupils. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1 and 2 and discussed their reading with them.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair. A telephone discussion was also held with a local authority representative.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's information on pupils' performance, improvement plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, safety, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' written work to see what progress they make and to judge the quality of marking and feedback.
- The inspectors took account of 17 responses received from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke to parents and carers in the playground at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors also considered 40 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Joyce Lydford

Additional Inspector

Lisa Farrow

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St James' Church of England Primary School is larger than the average sized primary school.
- Early years consists of a full-time Nursery and three Reception classes.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups with the largest group being from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- In September 2012, the school amalgamated with a local primary school that was judged by Ofsted as requiring special measures. The school is located at two sites, with Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 on one site and Key Stage 2 on a different site, about one mile away.
- A substantial amount of building work has taken place at both sites since the amalgamation.
- There has been a substantial turnover of staff since the amalgamation.
- The school is a lead school for School Direct teacher training with nine partner schools.
- The school works with other schools as a National Support School to improve teaching and learning.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that pupils make rapid and sustained progress by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are always challenged in lessons, so that they can work at and achieve higher levels
 - pupils can regularly make amendments and improvements to their work following feedback from teachers and other adults
 - all pupils routinely produce work that is neat and well presented
 - teachers' questioning is always probing to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning.
- Raise pupils' achievement in reading by:
 - giving pupils opportunities to develop and apply their thinking skills further to strengthen their understanding of the meaning behind the words they read, in order to extend their reading
 - ensuring there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to gain the skills and confidence in responding to a range of texts.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is ambitious and provides a clear vision for the school that is shared by leaders and managers, including governors.
- The leadership has been successful in managing the changes in relation to amalgamation, building works and staff turnover to ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good.
- The middle leaders work effectively with senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching through observing teaching, sharing effective practice and undertaking learning walks and book scrutinies.
- There are effective systems in place to check and track pupils' progress. As a result, those pupils who are at risk of falling behind with their learning, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged, are given timely and effective support to improve. This ensures that pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed and there is no discrimination.
- The quality of teaching is monitored regularly, and there is good support and training in place to improve teaching. The management of staff performance is effective, with clear links between the quality of teaching and decisions on salary increases and promotion.
- The leaders have identified the main priorities for the school in the school improvement plan. However, there is not enough focus on improving the quality of teaching, and the timescales for actions are not always sharp enough.
- Leadership of the provision for children in the early years is good. As a result, children, including different groups of children, make good progress with the learning.
- Subjects are planned thoughtfully to promote the application of skills in literacy, mathematics and communication, and to engage pupils effectively in their learning. Children learn about different cultures and religions, and British values are effectively promoted to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. The school has embraced the new curriculum for primary schools, and leaders, managers and staff are working effectively to implement it in full.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural development is effectively promoted. There is a range of after-school clubs, school visits and sporting activities for pupils to promote their learning and physical well-being. Pupils enjoy art and there is a rich display of their artistic work around the school.
- The school uses the primary school sports funding well to encourage pupils to adopt more healthy lifestyles. The installation of more playground equipment, including climbing frames, promotes physical fitness and has a positive impact on improving behaviour. There has been a greater uptake of sports, for example in cricket and netball. The school employs two secondary sports specialists to teach physical education and sports. However, teachers do not always observe the sports specialists and their good practice to further enhance their skills in teaching physical education.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, and staff receive the appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection.
- All the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors and responded to the Parent View survey are highly supportive of the school and say that their children feel safe and happy at school. All say that they would recommend the school to other families. Staff are also highly supportive of the school's leadership.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to help further improve this good school. However, the work of the local authority's school improvement service has helped in improving the teaching of phonics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are highly committed to the school and are ambitious for the pupils. They have been successful in effectively managing the changes during the expansion of the school through amalgamation, and overseeing the building work at both of the school's sites. They know the school's strengths and areas for development through school visits and the information they receive from senior leaders and managers. They have the appropriate skills and attend training, for example on the use of performance data and safeguarding, to fulfil their role in supporting and challenging senior leaders in the work they do. They know about the link between the quality of teaching and decisions about salary increases for and promotion of staff. They are supportive of the headteacher's robust stance on addressing any weaknesses in teaching and staff performance. The management of financial resources is effective, and they know how the pupil premium funding is used to raise the achievement of the disadvantaged pupils. They know how the primary school sports premium is used to increase pupils' participation in sports and promote their physical well-being. Governors ensure that all the safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very polite, courteous and friendly and engage well with staff and visitors. For example, they were eager to talk about their learning with inspectors, including children in the early years. Their good behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute well to their good learning.
- Behaviour is consistently good around the school, at break time and at lunchtime. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other and pupils say that bullying is rare; they feel safe and well cared for.
- School records of behaviour indicate that behaviour overtime is good, with very few incidents of poor behaviour. Exclusions are rare and there have been no incidents of extremist behaviour.
- However, behaviour is not yet outstanding because, occasionally, a very few pupils lose concentration and become restless during lessons, and have to be reminded by staff of how to behave. As a result, their progress slows. Some pupils do not always take enough care to present their work neatly.
- All parents and carers responding to Parent View, including all those that inspectors spoke to, say that behaviour and safety are good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in the school and can approach a member of staff easily if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.
- Pupils are taught well about unsafe situations and how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know how to keep themselves safe when using the computer and crossing roads, and about the risks associated with fire. They know about different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say racism and homophobia are rare, but if there were any such incidents staff would take the appropriate action quickly and effectively.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance has markedly improved to above average. The school celebrates good attendance, and the school's use of early help and family support workers has been effective in engaging parents and carers and improving attendance. Punctuality of pupils to school is also good.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and leaders and managers work effectively to bring about further improvements. As a result, pupils make good progress across the school.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons that engage pupils in their learning, with rich opportunities for promoting speaking and listening and reinforcing vocabulary. This helps pupils to make good progress, particularly those who speak English as an additional language.
- Teachers create a stimulating environment for pupils to learn in, with good relationships and engaging display work in the classroom. For example, pupils are able to refer to the vocabulary, descriptive words and mathematical concepts displayed on the walls to support their learning.
- Teachers monitor pupils' work closely, and any misconceptions are quickly picked up to move their learning on. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher reinforced children's knowledge of adjectives after finding some of them were not secure with using them in descriptive words.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across different subjects and to write at length. The development of early writing can be seen in the early years with opportunities for children to 'mark-make'. As a result, pupils make at least good progress in writing.
- Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of mathematics, and pupils are taught a range of calculation skills which they confidently use to solve mathematical problems. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were able to apply their understanding of finding the area of a simple object to find out the area of a compound shape.
- The teaching of phonics is improving, giving pupils the confidence to read. However, pupils are not always encouraged to develop and apply their thinking skills further or to deepen their understanding of the meaning behind the words they read. Sometimes, the texts that pupils come across in their learning are limited in range and so their reading skills are not always extended.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils, particularly the disabled pupils and those with special

educational needs and those who are disadvantaged. As a result, these pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates.

- Teaching in the early years is always lively and engaging. Teaching is consistently good, and adults provide good care and support for children. As a result, children make good progress.
- Although teachers make good use of questioning, sometimes it is not probing or rigorous enough to check the understanding and extend the learning of different groups of learners. As a result, some groups of learners, especially the most able, do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged to enable them to work at and achieve higher levels. In some lessons, the most able pupils start off doing the same work as other pupils and those who complete their task are not moved on quickly enough to harder tasks. This slows their progress.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils are very effective in some classes but lack consistency across the school. Not all teachers provide clear enough advice for pupils about how to further improve their work. They do not always make sure that pupils follow up this advice, showing that they have understood.
- Occasionally, some pupils produce work that is untidy and teachers do not always pick up on this. As a result, they continue to produce untidy work. For example, in mathematics the steps pupils take to work out their answers are not always clear to follow.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is above average and improving. All groups of pupils make good progress in these subjects as they move through the school, although their gains in reading are not as fast as those made in their writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average in writing and mathematics, but below average in reading.
- Inspection evidence from scrutinising the work in pupils' books and work seen in lessons and displayed on walls supports the school's own information indicating that all groups of pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, are making good progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they receive effective support, with rich opportunities in lessons to further develop their speaking and listening skills.
- The school has carried out its own analysis to show the impact of amalgamation in September 2012 on the achievement of pupils, when class sizes increased by about 50% in both of the key stages. The school's performance information shows that pupils joining the school had lower levels of attainment in all of the subjects on entry, and made less progress than pupils already in the school. This has impacted adversely on the national results in both of the key stages. However, pupils who joined the school after the amalgamation are now making up the lost ground from previous years.
- The disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are effectively supported by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, they make similar progress overall to that of their classmates.
- More-able pupils are not attaining as well as they could. This is because they are not always stretched in lessons to help them work at and achieve higher levels.
- In recent years the attainment gaps between the disadvantaged pupils and their classmates at the end of Year 6 have been small in mathematics, reading and writing, with the widest gap in writing at just above three months. These gaps are closing quickly and disadvantaged pupils are making faster progress in English and mathematics than similar pupils nationally. In 2014, they were about six months ahead in mathematics and reading and about 10 months ahead in writing.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the Nursery and Reception with skills and knowledge that are at significantly below what is the levels typical for their age, especially in personal, social and emotional aspects of learning, speaking, literacy and understanding of the world.
- The strong links with parents and carers, good quality of care and support from committed adults ensure children's smooth entry to the school. As a result, children quickly settle in to the routines of the classroom and are ready to learn.
- Teaching is good across the early years. As a result, children make good progress by the time they leave Reception. The proportion of children achieving the good level of development by the end of their Reception Year is steadily rising. In 2013/14, about two thirds of the children achieved the good level of development. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education in Year 1.

- Behaviour is good and children have good attitudes to their learning. Children interact well with each other and there are strong relationships with their adult workers. As a result, they show confidence in making decisions about their learning. For example, they are able to decide between indoor and outdoor learning and choose the activities they want to engage in.
- In one of the Reception classes, children made good use of information and communication technology to video each other's learning. In the Nursery, children were eager to talk about subtractions and used word sentences to subtract a number from 10.
- Adults interact well with children to develop their speaking and listening skills, and model language and extend their vocabulary. This particularly helps children who speak English as an additional language to make good progress.
- The leadership of early years is good. Information about children's progress is used well by staff to enable them to identify and address any potential underachievement. As a result, all groups of children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged, make good progress. However, their achievement in literacy and mathematics is weaker than in other areas of learning.
- Children are kept safe and all the safeguarding requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100829
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	444160

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Hughes MP
Headteacher	Karen Willis
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2009
Telephone number	020 7237 3111
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Email address	headteacher@st-james.southwark.sch.uk

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