

St James's and St Michael's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101132
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	276457
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2006
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bill Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie de Angelis
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2000
School address	4 Craven Terrace London W2 3QD
Telephone number	02076416218
Fax number	02076416220

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St James's and St Michael's CE Primary is a smaller than average school. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups. Over 80 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language and many arrive at the school with little or no English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion who join and leave the school other than at the normal starting points is high. About a quarter of the pupil population are asylum seekers or refugees. A much higher than usual proportion live in temporary accommodation. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St James's and St Michael's CE is a good school providing good quality education for all its pupils. Pupils achieve well and they make good progress in their personal development. Parents hold very positive views about the school. They praise the headteacher's leadership, the school atmosphere and the care and support provided. The school is approachable and has parents' confidence. As one parent wrote, 'This is a well run school with a great community spirit. The International Day was excellent and shows how rich and diverse the school is'.

Effective leadership and management are the key to the school's success. The headteacher provides clear direction and is effectively supported by the deputy. Other leadership roles are developing well. Strong leadership has developed good teaching and learning and has resulted in improvements to assessment. Through rigorous self-evaluation, this school has a good understanding of its performance and takes effective action to bring about improvements. Governance is satisfactory and improving.

Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start and make good progress in all areas of learning because of effective provision in the Foundation Stage. Good teaching and learning, and an interesting and effective curriculum enable pupils to make good progress throughout the school. Even pupils who are at the school for a short time make good gains in their learning. Standards in Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science but pupils have made good progress from their starting points. Good assessment means that teachers have a clear picture of what pupils know and can do. They usually use this information well to match work to pupils' abilities and needs so that they are challenged and learn at a good pace. Occasionally pupils are not challenged enough and their rate of learning slows. The marking of pupils' work helps them to improve but not all pupils are sufficiently aware of their individual learning targets to guide improvements in English and mathematics.

Good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. Well-planned induction procedures enable new pupils to settle quickly. In this positive and harmonious school community, all pupils are valued and thrive. Their needs are carefully assessed and guidance and support for pupils learning English as an additional language, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the gifted and talented are all good. Pupils clearly enjoy their time at school and have positive attitudes to learning. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now at average levels. Relationships within the school are good and pupils are friendly and polite. They show appreciation and respect for different backgrounds and cultures. Clear expectations and positive rewards give rise to good behaviour. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons are suitably challenging for pupils and that learning maintains a good pace.
- Extend the use of individual learning targets in English and mathematics so that the good practice is consistent across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Across the school, pupils' achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress but, because of their low starting points, not all reach expected standards. During the past three years, standards and progress have improved in Years 1 and 2. Standards in Year 2 rose to average levels in reading, writing and mathematics in 2005. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 can fluctuate because of the high numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school. Effective assessment means that the needs of new pupils are swiftly identified and good guidance and support is provided. Good teaching, effective support and a relevant curriculum enable all pupils to make good progress. There are effective support and provision for pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and gifted and talented.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very happy at school and this is reflected in the improvement in attendance and punctuality. Attendance is now satisfactory. Behaviour in lessons, and around the school, is good and pupils are friendly, polite and helpful. The attractive, well maintained environment contributes to this sense of well-being. Pupils know how to stay safe and talk knowledgeably and with enthusiasm about the importance of healthy eating, and the need for regular exercise. The wide and rich variety of cultures, languages and religions in the school are celebrated and valued. These contribute significantly to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are acquiring essential literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. These skills with their good social skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching and learning contributes to pupils' good achievement. Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides a good blend of direct teaching and opportunities for children to explore. Across the school, teachers plan lessons well and share learning intentions with the class so pupils know what they are to learn. Teachers promote new vocabulary and provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work. Consequently, pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing well. Teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils thinking and check their understanding. Assessment is usually used effectively to match tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged, interested, and make good progress. However, this is not always the case. In the odd lesson, work is not well matched to pupils' needs, pace and challenge are not as high and so pupils' learning slows. Teachers direct teaching assistants well so they can give good quality help to those who need it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A well planned and interesting curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and enables them make good progress. Links are being developed between subjects to make learning more

meaningful to pupils. Effective action is being taken to increase the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects and more opportunities are being provided to develop problem-solving skills in mathematics. Good advantage is taken of the wealth of interesting places in London like museums, St Paul's Cathedral and Kew Gardens. These visits enhance and reinforce learning in school. As one pupil commented, 'Trips make learning more fun'. Visitors to the school like the fire brigade, police and others share their specialised expertise with pupils and help them develop life skills.

There are good links with the local community. The recently opened Foundation Stage in the basement of the church provides good provision. The school takes part in sports activities with other schools and all classes in Years 2 to 6 go swimming at some time in the year. After school clubs include football, chess, art and computers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe. An excellent tracking system is used to monitor attendance and punctuality. This has improved these aspects and has helped to recognise and support families in difficulties. New pupils and their families are inducted well and the home-school liaison officer makes a valuable contribution to this. The 'welcome pack' designed by the pupils and written in different languages is a very useful. Pupils and parents quickly become part of the school community. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed and this enables teachers to understand individual needs and adapt their teaching accordingly. Year 6 pupils talk with confidence about setting targets and know what they have to do next to extend their learning. They are taking responsibility for their own learning but this understanding and good practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The well-respected headteacher has high expectations of pupils and staff. With staff, she has successfully created a positive and inclusive school climate for pupils to learn. The headteacher and deputy have formed a strong partnership where their skills complement each other. Together with other staff they are focused on raising achievement and improving educational provision. Teamwork among the staff is good. Some leaders are new to their post and their roles are less well developed but the school is addressing this.

Teaching is effectively monitored and developed by senior leaders and the local authority. Good feedback and coaching are helping to ensure that most shortcomings in practice are remedied. School self-evaluation is thorough. Some of the school's judgements about its performance are modest because of the high expectations set by the headteacher. Findings from self-evaluation are used well to guide improvements. Improvement planning is good and contains specific criteria to measure the success of the plan. Improvements to assessment, attendance, and to teaching and learning demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

The governing body are committed and supportive. Governors are well informed and are beginning to offer greater challenge in holding the school to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed the visit and would like to tell you what we found out. We think that St James's and St Michael's CE is a good school and one you can be proud of.

These things were pleasing:

- the school is a very pleasant and positive place to be
- you thoroughly enjoy school and the activities provided
- you are making good progress because you receive good teaching
- you are friendly, polite, and your attitudes and behaviour are good
- the headteacher and deputy run the school well
- you get on with other pupils and adults
- staff know you well; they take good care of you and support you well
- your parents are very pleased with the school

These are a few things that could be improved:

- sometimes your teachers could challenge you more and ensure that the lesson moves on more quickly.
- in some year groups, you need to be clearer about your English and mathematics targets so that you make even more progress.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards,

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector