



St George's Cathedral RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100828
LEA Southwark LEA
Inspection number 283043
Inspection dates 13 September 2005 to 14 September 2005
Reporting inspector Carmen Rodney HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	33 Westminster Bridge Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Southwark
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		London SE1 7JB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7525 9250
Number on roll	370	Fax number	020 7525 9251
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Pauline McAlpine
Date of previous inspection	5 October 1998	Headteacher	Mrs Ann Higgs

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Introduction

The school was re-inspected by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector in September 2005.

Description of the school

St George's Cathedral RC Primary School is larger than most primary schools, with 370 pupils aged between 3 and 11 on roll. It serves a socially and economically deprived area. Over 79% of the pupils are from minority ethnic heritages with 40% of them speaking a first language other than English. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs is average, and the proportion entitled to free school meals is above the national average. When St George's Cathedral RC Primary School was inspected in 2004, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of school (HMI) subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Following the inspection in June 2004, the staffing of the school has stabilised and a number of key appointments has created a strong team; as a result, standards are beginning to rise. The school now provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The calm and determined leadership of the headteacher, and consistently good support from staff, governors, diocesan board and the LEA, are contributing to the school's improvement. Standards are low but recent improvements in teaching and the increasing use of assessment data have ensured that pupils, with the exception of some of the more able, make progress at the expected rate. The youngest pupils are given a sound start in the nursery. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and they respond well to effective teaching. Pupils enjoy coming to school but some would like more challenging work. The school has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report, though there is still scope to raise standards. The school is well placed to build on the improvements already made. The headteacher has an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and a good understanding of where further improvement is required. The school's self-evaluation closely matches the inspectors' judgements.

What the school should do to improve further

* continue to raise standards for pupils of all levels of attainment * continue to improve the quality of teaching* make effective use of assessment data to raise standards, by ensuring that: i) records of the pupils' progress are used to set clear targets for teaching and learningii) pupils know clearly what they must do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils' attainment when they enter the school is below average. The pupils in the nursery and reception classes get a good start and most reach the standard expected for their age group. While the pupils in other year groups make satisfactory progress, standards are below national expectations. The legacy of weaknesses in past provision has led to underachievement in English, mathematics and science and among some of the more able pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Over the last three years, results in the national tests at Key Stages 1 and 2 have fluctuated above and below the national averages. The 2005 national tests results were a significant improvement on the previous year, with a higher proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in both key stages. Nevertheless, too few reached the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Improvements in the teaching are leading to a gradual rise in standards. The achievement of different groups of pupils is too varied. Boys occasionally do better than girls but the trend was reversed in the most recent test results. Pupils of black African descent do less well than their peers. Given their starting

point, pupils with special needs make good progress, as do those learning English as an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges personal development and well-being to be good and the inspectors agree. In almost all lessons the pupils respond positively and behave well. Occasionally a few pupils fall short of their teachers' expectations for good behaviour. Attendance has improved over the last year and is now broadly similar to most primary schools. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. From the day they start school, the youngest children are encouraged to share and co-operate with each other and their teachers. By Year 6, pupils have mature attitudes towards each other's welfare. They speak with great sensitivity about the impact that bullying may have on individuals. Much has been done to increase awareness of bullying and, as a result, it has declined significantly. One pupil commented, 'there has been a big improvement'. The pupils enjoy lessons and some would welcome 'even harder work'. Their safety in school is given a high priority. Healthy meals and opportunities to participate in outdoor activities effectively enhance their well-being. The wide range of cultures represented within the school share their traditions to the great benefit of the whole-school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and has taken effective measures to secure improvements against a background of high staff turnover. The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall and occasionally good. The best teaching adopted an energetic and enthusiastic approach that drew on practical and theoretical work. This built on the pupils' interests and challenged them to think quickly and accurately before applying the taught skills. Some literacy and numeracy lessons used role play effectively. Most lessons were well planned; the pupils knew what they were going to learn and were given a suitable range of resources and support. Work was well matched to the pupils' learning needs. Questions were skilfully used to probe the pupils' understanding, and improve their speaking and listening skills. The weaker lessons were characterised by uninspiring work, slow pace and tasks that did not match pupils' learning needs. Marking of pupils' work has many good features but has been less effective than it might be because it does not always explain the next step for pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's evaluation of its curriculum as satisfactory is accurate. Recent improvements ensure that it meets the needs of most of the pupils, but there are places where it does not challenge the more able. For example, the skills of scientific investigation are now being taught regularly but opportunities to stretch the brightest pupils are sometimes missed. A wider range of after-school activities including sport, modern languages and music clubs enhance the pupils' enjoyment. The older pupils visit a residential activity centre, which they talk about enthusiastically and clearly enjoyed a great deal. The provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The curriculum is tailored well to the children's needs. When they first start school the emphasis is rightly placed on the pupils' personal and social development and their language skills. The support and resources for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English have improved. Consequently, many of these pupils make rapid steps in their learning of English. Nevertheless, the school is sensibly seeking to further extend its resources.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The inspectors agree with the school's judgement that it provides satisfactory care, guidance and support. Recently improved monitoring and target setting procedures provide a clear picture of how well each pupil is doing. While the school increasingly makes effective use of such assessment information, it is not yet ensuring that targets for the most able are sufficiently challenging. The school's pastoral care of the pupils reflects its strong Catholic values. Good and productive liaison with other children's services adds to the school's comprehensive welfare arrangements. A strong programme of personal and social education helps the older pupils to recognise the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking. The use of real stories to illustrate these dangers had a considerable impact on some older pupils. One commented how one of these stories had 'made me cry inside.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher's strong leadership has established a firm foundation for the school's future improvement. Since the inspection in June 2004, the headteacher has demonstrated determination and commitment to improving the school's performance. Procedures for monitoring and self evaluation are largely effective. They have, for example, enabled strengths in the teaching to be identified along with the training that is needed to improve its quality. In contrast, however, while assessment data is well managed and analysed the outcomes are not used rigorously enough to raise standards. There is a greater understanding among staff that the regular review underpins the school's work. A new, strong senior leadership team, well supported by subject coordinators, has

maintained the momentum for change. Staff are clear about what is expected of them and how they will be held to account. Planning for improvement appropriately involves pupils, their parents, a nearby school and governors. The governing body is well informed. Governors challenge the school on its performance, provide effective support and fulfil their responsibilities. The LEA and diocesan adviser have played vital roles in helping the school to improve teaching and develop and strengthen leadership at all levels. The governors, diocese and LEA constantly keep the accommodation under review as part of the long-term strategy to improve the building.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know what we think about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work and life in school.

* We believe your school is satisfactory and wants you to do well.* When the school was inspected last year, it was not doing its best for you and you were not learning as much as you should. * Your headteacher and teachers have worked very hard to put things right.* The school is now helping you to learn a lot more but some of you could do even better. * The staff pay very careful attention to looking after you and it is clear you like the healthy eating project. * There are many opportunities for you to take part in activities which you enjoy very much. You do important jobs as translators and play leaders which help the school to run smoothly. * We saw you enjoying lessons that were lively and interesting, but some of you told us you would like harder work and we think you could too.* We liked the sensible way you behave around the school as you work and play together. * You are proud of your school. Some of you would like it to have a garden and more equipment.

Your school needs to:* help more of you reach higher levels in the national curriculum tests;* make sure that you understand how you can improve your work;* make all lessons interesting and exciting so that you are challenged to do your best.